



ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF
SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICASM

Accreditation Guide

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I. Introduction

A school, in order to be recognized as an accredited Waldorf school, must demonstrate congruence with its own stated mission, the [AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools](#), and the [AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools](#).

What is Accreditation?

The accreditation process is a qualitative assessment of a school's congruence between its stated mission, the [AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools](#), and the [AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools](#). Congruence is determined by observation, interviews, and document review.

To become accredited, schools are expected to demonstrate congruence as described above through a process that involves self-study (reflection) and peer review. The period of self-study culminates in a *self-study report*. Peer review is the process by which congruence is evaluated.

The self-study and its material outcome, the report, are conducted with participation by all constituent groups in the school in Year 2 of the accreditation cycle. As outlined below, the self-study process is meant to bring awareness, understanding, and clarity to all members of the school community regarding the identity and mission of the school; to affirm that the school's policies and practices support this mission; and to determine congruence with the [AWSNA Principles for Waldorf schools](#) and the [AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools](#).

An important service AWSNA provides is the process of accreditation for its member schools as a tool to guide their progress toward an ideal of educational excellence. In providing this process, the association in no way limits, but rather strives to preserve the freedom of each individual school to practice within the principles for Waldorf schools.

AWSNA accreditation is a structured, cyclical process of self-study, peer review, and follow-up. The AWSNA accreditation process includes all aspects of school life, including Waldorf principles, independence and mission, self-reflection, students and families, faculty and staff, community, educational programs, decision-making, resources, health and safety, and legality. The goal is to strengthen Waldorf schools while maintaining the true and complete independence of each school.

In both philosophy and practice, the focus of the AWSNA accreditation process is on the development and nurturing of excellence. The principal objectives are to provide a stimulus for excellence, help the school assess its strengths and weaknesses, and help the school confirm the validity of its priorities and planning for growth.

Member schools that complete this process successfully may use the term "Accredited by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America."

AWSNA is a full member of the [International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation](#) (ICAISA), a partner member of [Cognia](#), and is an accredited member of the [National Council for Private School Accreditation](#) (NCPSA).

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this manual is to guide schools through the process of accreditation, including both initial accreditation and renewal. Additional information may be found on the AWSNA Community Hub in the section marked [AWSNA & Member Resources](#). If a school has additional questions, it is invited to contact the AWSNA Director of Accreditation at accreditation@awsna.org.

Section II of this manual presents an overview of the process.

Section III presents a year-by-year plan for the entire accreditation cycle.

Section IV is for schools that are planning a joint accreditation process with AWSNA and another agency.

Section V details working with the [Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North American](#), a necessary step in the accreditation process.

Section VI provides additional support and materials to help with the accreditation process.

A separate manual for [Visiting Team Members](#) is available on the AWSNA Community Hub.

Overview of Accreditation Criteria

The member schools of AWSNA have adopted eight [AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools](#) and ten [AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools](#) that form the basis of the decision to accredit.

AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools: These principles articulate the most important values that inform the policies and practices of Waldorf schools in North America. The school completes a self-study process based on these principles whereby the school articulates how these principles are living, how they are the basis of innovation, and how the school is addressing any compromises to these principles.

[Accreditation Documents:](#) All accreditation documents are available on the AWSNA Community Hub. From the home page please go to: Resources, AWSNA and Member Resources, Accreditation Process

AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools

1. The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.

Waldorf schools work actively with insights from Rudolf Steiner about the incarnating human being. One core insight is that the human being is a threefold being of body, soul, and spirit. Waldorf education enlivens the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, artistic, and spiritual capacities of the human being as the individual moves through the phases of this life.

2. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society.

Waldorf schools foster development so that, throughout life, individuals are motivated to serve humanity with strength of will, depth of feeling, clarity of thought, and the ability to work with others. The educational program is designed to strengthen these fundamental human capacities in our students.

3. Anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program.

Waldorf schools work with the gradual development of the human being from child to adult. This development follows an archetypal sequence of three seven-year phases. During this time, the soul and spirit progressively take hold of the physical body. Each child's development is a unique expression of the human archetype. Each phase has characteristic physical, emotional, and intellectual dimensions.

The educational program is developed out of this understanding. Core components of the educational program include the student-teacher relationship; the artistic approach; working from experience to concept; working from whole to parts; use of rhythm and repetition; and observation as the foundation for assessment. Each approach is tailored to meet the students in each phase of child development.

Thus, it is essential that teachers have formal preparation in Waldorf pedagogy or are engaged in such preparation.

4. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school's shared agreements.

The educational program of each Waldorf school is founded on Rudolf Steiner's insights about the growing child, informed by the teachers' ongoing study of anthroposophy and their professional development in Waldorf education.

The faculty of the school works collaboratively and cooperatively to develop, refine, and periodically review the educational program. Individual teachers work creatively with curricular, pedagogical, and assessment components of the program out of freedom and in a way that serves their individual students, the class as a whole, and the school community. This work reflects and respects the shared educational understandings and agreements of the faculty.

5. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.

Enduring human relationships between students and their teachers and among the children themselves are at the heart of Waldorf education. The teacher's task is to work with the developing individuality of each student and with each class as a whole within the context of the entire school. These relationships gain in depth and stability when they are cultivated over multiple years.

Healthy human relationships with and among parents and colleagues are essential to the well-being of the school. Members of the community are invited to join in developing meaningful, collaborative, transparent forms for working together. Each individual's self-development is encouraged since it is key to the well-being of the whole.

6. Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board.

Members of the faculty, staff, and board work in an ongoing way to cultivate their spiritual development with the help of anthroposophical and other study. Waldorf schools create opportunities for shared educational study, artistic activity, mentoring, and research to further this growth and development in service to the students.

7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.

Waldorf schools are self-administered. This work is strengthened by cultivating a shared anthroposophical understanding of social interaction. Faculty, staff, and the board share responsibility for guiding and leading the school in the following manner:

- a) The educational program is developed by the faculty under the guidance of the pedagogical leadership of the school.
- b) Administrative activities further the educational program.
- c) The board works strategically to enable legal and financial health in order to realize the mission and vision of the school.

Governance of the school is structured and implemented in a manner that both cultivates collaboration and is effective.

8. Waldorf schools honor and embrace human diversity and dignity.

Waldorf schools pursue a path of human dignity, social justice, and equity in organizational, leadership, and pedagogical realms. Recognizing this path is one of spiritual, moral, and educational importance, schools celebrate the diversity of humankind. Schools are engaged in understanding and addressing the current and historical contexts of marginalization. These endeavors are rooted in Waldorf education's founding vision, which included addressing contemporary social struggles within the context of the life of the school.

AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools: These policies and practices support the administration of our Waldorf schools, ensuring that our schools have adequate personnel, financial, student, and family support, and safety policies and practices to facilitate the healthy operations of our schools. As part of the self-study process, all schools are asked to identify and review their policies and practices in ten areas, and to provide them to the accreditation visiting team.

AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools

1. Independence. The school is established as a 'not for profit' entity, or equivalent in Mexico,

with an organizational structure that safeguards the integrity of its independence. Decisions to establish relationships with outside entities that affect the school's purpose, programs, governance, personnel, and community are made only after fully conscious discussion with appropriate members of the school community.

2. **Responsible Self Reflection.** The school is committed to a seven-year cycle of self-study and peer review. It is also committed to implementing the self-identified priorities for growth and change that emerge during the self-study process and the recommendations made by the visiting team.
3. **Support for Students and Families.** The school is committed to supporting students and their families by establishing and implementing documented policies and practices that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
 - a. Application and acceptance
 - b. Assessment, support, supervision
 - c. Graduation requirements, as applicable
 - d. Behavioral agreements and expectations, for students and families/adults, including communication protocol
 - e. Contracts, including refund policy
 - f. Tuition and tuition assistance, and as appropriate, financial accessibility
 - g. Family/adult commitments, including volunteerism and parent education
 - h. Record-keeping
 - i. Suspension, dismissal
 - j. Grievances, for students and families/adults
 - k. Conflict resolution, for students and families/adults
4. **Support for Faculty and Staff.** The school is committed to supporting faculty and staff by establishing and implementing documented policies and practices that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
 - a. Recruitment, hiring, and orientation
 - b. Mentoring, professional development, and assessment
 - c. Compensation, including benefits
 - d. Professional behavior and expectations, including communication protocol
 - e. Record-keeping
 - f. Dismissal
 - g. Grievances
 - h. Conflict resolution

5. Engaged Community. The school is committed to developing a healthy vibrant community in service of the school’s mission. The school consciously builds relationships with current and alum members of its community, as well as the community beyond the school. The school establishes and implements documented policies and practices that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
 - a. Friend and fundraising
 - b. Community events
 - c. Alumni/ae
 - d. Diversity statement

6. Articulated Educational Program. The school is committed to consciously creating a clearly described educational program by establishing and implementing documented policies and practices that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
 - a. Annual programming schedule
 - b. Curriculum
 - c. Methodology
 - d. Assessment methods
 - e. Supplementary programs

7. Articulated Decision Making. The school is committed to establishing and implementing a documented governance structure that defines and delineates responsibilities for each leadership position and group. The documentation includes a clear description of how these groups collaborate, communicate, and make decisions. The school establishes and implements documented policies and practices that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
 - a. Governance structure, including major areas of responsibility, authority, and accountability
 - b. Strategic planning
 - c. Crisis and risk management
 - d. Conflict of interest

8. Sufficient Resources. The school is committed to ensuring there are sufficient financial, human, and material resources to support the stated mission of the school. The school establishes and implements documented policies and practices that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
 - a. Financial, facilities, and material management

- b. Budgeting, including three to five-year planning
 - c. Annual audit reviews
 - d. A full audit, occurring within two years prior to the accreditation site visit
9. Prioritized Health and Safety Considerations. The school is committed to the health and safety of students, colleagues, community members, and other individuals on campus. The school establishes and implements documented policies and procedures that are effective and that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment is demonstrated in the following areas:
- a. Student safety and protection, including abuse reporting
 - b. Harassment prevention
 - c. Emergency preparedness, including natural or human-caused emergencies
 - d. Field trips
 - e. Medication management, including first aid
 - f. Allergy management
 - g. Public health notices
 - h. Visitor and volunteer screening
10. Prioritized Legal Compliance. The school establishes and implements documented policies and procedures in the following areas:
- a. Federal regulations
 - b. State/provincial regulations
 - c. Local regulation

Process Overview and Timetable

In general, AWSNA accreditation follows a seven-year cycle¹:

Year 1 - Application and orientation visit

Year 2 - Self-study

Year 3 - Peer review (team visit); decision on accreditation

Year 4 - First response report and action plan due; progress on all major priorities

Year 5 - Continue progress on all priorities

Year 6 - Second response report due – continue progress on all priorities

Year 7 - Complete all priorities

Note: The word "year" is an approximation. For example, the actual time for self-study may be 18 months. All accreditation terms expire on June 30, regardless of whether the team visit is in spring or fall.

A general timetable is on the next page.

¹ Schools that also pursue accreditation with another agency may be on an alternate cycle ranging from six to ten years. More information can be found in the section on dual accreditations.

1. General timetable

School Year	Fall Team Visits	Spring Team Visits
1	Application due November 1	Application due May 1
	Orientation in spring	
	Self-study begins after orientation	
2	Self-study continues throughout school year and concludes in summer	Orientation in fall
		Self-study begins after orientation and continues through spring and summer
3	Team visit in fall	Self-study continues through fall and concludes in winter
		Team visit in spring
4	First response report and action plan due by November 15	First response report and action plan due by March 15
5	No additional reporting required. *	
6	Second response report due by November 15	Second response report due by March 15
7	No additional reporting required. *	

*Note: The Accreditation and Review Committee (ARC) may require additional reporting from an individual school as a condition of maintaining accredited status.

2. Budgetary Implications

Please share this information with the appropriate people at your school (business manager, finance committee, etc.) so these costs can be considered in the budget process.

Fees: Schools filing applications for initial accreditation or for renewal will be billed for the application fee (\$200). After the remote orientation (Year 1), the school will be billed the administrative fee (\$1500). Additional fees may apply if a second orientation visit is needed, or if a school otherwise has an approved postponement to the timeline.

3. Self-study

Staff: the school may choose to hire additional staff during the year of the self-study, for planning the team visit and/or for document editing.

Financial audit: The school is required to have a full opinion financial audit for the fiscal year preceding the team visit. For fall team visits, if the audit report for the prior year will not be available in time for the visit, the school may submit a report from two years prior. Check with the Director of Accreditation if your school will not have the audit from the year to prior to the accreditation visit available.

Team leader's one-day pre-visit (2-6 months before team visit): School pays travel, lodging, meals, etc. for the visit.

Team visit: The school bears all costs of the team visit, including travel, ground transportation, lodging, and meals. There will typically be six to eight team members.

- Travel: airfare or mileage.
- Ground transportation: car/van rental, taxis, etc. May not be needed if one or more team members are able to drive to the visit, or if the school can provide drivers.
- Lodging: private room and private bathroom, each with locks, for each team member. Conference space at a hotel, which may be accomplished by reserving a suite for the team leader.
- Welcome reception: light refreshments or supper on campus Sunday following a campus tour.
- Meals and snacks: typically, breakfast at the hotel, lunch on campus, and dinner at a local restaurant. The visiting team may request that the school provide dinner on campus or at the hotel on some evenings.
- Computer equipment: consult with team leader regarding possible need for laptops, printer, and/or internet access in the team workroom during the visit.
- Honoraria: no honoraria are given to the team members or team leader.

II. The Seven Year Cycle - Year by Year

Year 1 - Preparation

1. Application

Schools applying for initial accreditation must be Candidates for Accreditation with AWSNA, as determined by the Regional Delegates Circle. Once Candidate status has been granted, the school has 12 months to complete the application for accreditation.

To initiate the accreditation process, complete the [Application for Initial Accreditation form](#). Email it to the accreditation office at accreditation@awsna.org. The director of accreditation will examine it for completeness and consult with the regional representative to the leadership council and Accreditation and Review Committee members if there is any question regarding readiness. Applications are due May 1 or November 1. The director of accreditation will discuss the timeline with the school and make every attempt to arrive at a mutually agreeable date for the team visit.

To apply for renewal of accreditation, complete the Application for Renewal of Accreditation and email it to the accreditation office 24-30 months in advance of the expiration of the term of accreditation.

Upon receipt of the either application form (initial or renewal), the school will be billed for the application fee (\$200).

A school that applies for initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation needs to be a member in good standing with the association, including being current with dues payments and the filing of the AWSNA annual survey (DASL).

An application for initial accreditation is good for three years. If the team visit does not occur within three years of filing the application, an updated application must be submitted, and the school will be billed \$200. If a re-visit by the director of accreditation and/or a member of the executive team becomes necessary (because of time lapse or the need to train a new in-house coordinator or steering committee), an additional administrative fee of \$1500 will apply. Note that these delays will also be reported to the AWSNA regional representative and delegates in the region to determine any impact on the school's membership status.

2. Selection of School Accreditation Steering Committee

The next step for the school is to select a steering committee of three to five members to provide coordination and leadership for the self-study and team visit. The committee serves as project manager for the process. The members of the steering committee should be well organized, should be able to write well, and should have sound rapport with the school community. It is helpful if the team members have varying responsibilities in the school and if one or more members have served on a visiting team and/or been involved with the school's prior self-study.

Alternatively, the school may choose to appoint an individual to serve as the on-site accreditation coordinator and manage many of the administrative details of the process. Otherwise, these tasks will be managed by the steering committee as a whole.

The steering committee should meet weekly until the process is well-defined and under way and may meet less frequently after that.

The following tasks are the responsibility of the steering committee and/or accreditation coordinator:

- Maintains ongoing relationship with the AWSNA director of accreditation.
- Chairs and sets agendas for meetings of the steering committee.
- Sets general timetable and deadlines for completing the school's self-study report.
- Obtains current accreditation guide(s) and forms.
- Establishes a self-study meeting structure and composition.
- Collects and coordinates review and editing of components of the self-study report.
- Plans the logistics for team visit: mailings to team members, and specific arrangements for the visit.
- **Most Important:** the steering committee keeps things moving, frequently checks progress of writing assignments, helps to keep faculty from getting "bogged down" in

unnecessary detail, and keeps school leadership informed of progress and potential problems.

- Ensures that the final self-study report has a cohesive voice and that it represents the school as a whole.

3. Remote Orientation and Site Visit

After completing the application process, the school needs to make arrangements for a remote orientation by the AWSNA director of accreditation. This training serves to inform the accreditation steering committee about nuts and bolts of the process. This is then followed by an AWSNA on-site visit and, additionally, the Accreditation Visiting Team Chair pre-visit.

The orientation will include:

- Live video meeting between the director of accreditation and the Accreditation Steering Committee to discuss specific planning for the peer review visit. This session includes discussion of the role of the coordinator and/or steering committee, establishing an overall schedule and timetable, the self-study instrument and materials, establishment of the necessary self-study committees, preparation of the self-study report, selection of the visiting team, etc.
- On-site visit by the director of accreditation, executive team member, board member, or leadership council member which will include:
 - a. A general orientation meeting for the entire administration, faculty, and non-teaching staff in addition to representatives from the board of trustees and parents (60-90 minutes) to provide an overview of the entire evaluation process.
 - b. Additional meetings with the board and/or school leadership can be set up at the request of the school.
- Typically, the on-site orientation visit can be completed in one day, and the entire faculty needs to be involved only for the 60-90-minute general briefing. The dates for the team visit may be set eighteen months to six months in advance of the accreditation visit.

The \$1500 administrative fee will be billed after the remote orientation.

4. Selection of Visiting Team

Following the orientation visit, the director of accreditation begins the task of selecting the members of the visiting team. Teams generally have five to eight members with a variety of experience in administration and teaching. Potential team members disclose possible conflicts of interest if they have a prior relationship with the school (i.e., student, teacher, staff member, board member, parent, etc.). If the school feels that a prospective team member cannot be fair due to a conflict of interest, the school should notify the director of accreditation within two weeks of receiving the team roster. Team members are provided with a manual and training

opportunities in advance of the visit. The school is provided a team roster two to six months in advance of the team visit.

5. Specific Tasks of the Steering Committee (Year 1)

- Schedule remote orientation with the AWSNA director of accreditation.
- See that the school and board review, revise (as necessary), and re-endorse the school's statements of mission, philosophy, and goals.
- See that the policy documents are revised and current.
- Undertake a survey of constituents (parents, board, faculty, staff, and others as applicable and appropriate). This survey can inform your self-study. It is a requirement of many co-accrediting agencies, and recommended but not required for AWSNA only accreditation processes.
- Create appropriate committees and assignments necessary to complete all elements of the self-study report. See Year 2 – School Self-Study.
- Create a calendar for the self-study that includes all assignments and due dates and allows for meeting time.

6. Note on Dual Accreditation

Dual accreditation (involving AWSNA and one or more other school accrediting agencies) may require that the other accrediting agency's protocol be the lead protocol for the accreditation process. When this is the case, the school must provide a guide of where to find the various components of the AWSNA self-study report in the final packet. All AWSNA components not addressed in the lead protocol need to be included in the final packet.

Details of joint processes will be worked out on a case-by-case basis with the AWSNA director of accreditation, who works with the relevant agency(ies) one to three years in advance of any dual accreditation(s) to establish agreements on joint format.

Additional information on dual accreditation can be found in Section IV: Dual Accreditations – Working with Other Agencies and in the [AWSNA Supplemental Guide for Dual Accreditation](#).

Year 2 - School Self-Study

Year 2 is devoted to the self-study process, culminating in the *self-study report*. Guided by the requirements of the report, the school will establish a structure that facilitates conversations and research around the various requirements as follows:

Part A: The school explores their mission and Waldorf identity. The focus is on the [AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools](#).

Part B: The school evaluates its policies and practices. The focus is on the [AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools](#).

Part C: The school reflects on what it has learned in the self-study process and looks at plans for the future.

1. Outline of the Self-Study Report

Part A: Mission and Waldorf Identity

- A1. Declaration and description of the school's mission and identity
- A2. Description of how the *Principles* are living in the school
 - a. Response to AWSNA Position Statements on [Teacher Preparation](#) and [Eurythmy](#) in narrative description of Principle 3.
- A3. Completed [Principles Assessment](#)

Part B: Policy and Practice Review

- B1. Response to *Policies and Practices* #1 (Independence) and #2 (Responsible Self-Reflection)
- B2. Completed [Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment form](#).
- B3. Documents necessary to support responses on the *Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment form*.

Part C: Reflections and Future Plans

- C1. Summary description of the school's major strengths
- C2. Description of priorities for future work
- C3. Summary of self-study process

Ideally, each member of the school finds his or her ideas and values reflected in the self-study report. Practically, portions of the report are completed by delegated groups and brought back to the larger group for consideration and approval. Ultimately, the self-study report needs to be recognized and embraced by the entire community as its purpose is to help the school move into the future with increased strength and clarity.

Part A: Mission and Waldorf Identity

- A1. Declaration and description of the school's mission and identity. This opening of the self-study report serves to introduce the school and set the context for the remainder of the report. It includes the school's history, mission, and a description of the school's unique identity. This identity arises out of the school's historical development, its location and environment, as well as the impulses of its founders (2-5 pages²).

² All page-length guidelines are based on 300 words per page. The guidelines are offered in the spirit of ensuring answers are comprehensive and concise.

A2. Description of how the AWSNA *Principles* are living in the school. This section of the report consists of a written narrative describing how each of the principles lives in the school.

For each principle, choose one to three Policy Areas, *or* for each Policy Area (3-10) choose one to three principles, and respond to the questions below. See Supplementary Materials for suggested mappings. Policy Areas 1 & 2 are treated separately; see B1 in the next section.

The narrative for each principle must address the following:

- a. How is the principle living in the school, as demonstrated through the school's policies, culture, and practices?
- b. In what ways has the school faced challenges or made compromises in relation to the principle? What, if anything, has been done to address these challenges or mitigate any compromises? What, if anything, are the plans to minimize or eliminate the challenges/compromises in the future?
- c. In what ways has the school explored innovation in relation to the principle?

Principles References provides a brief list of materials that may be useful for a deeper exploration of the *Principles*.

For definitions of some of the terms used in the *Principles*, see Definitions.

Position Statements: The AWSNA delegates approved these position statements that articulate a commitment of each school on the following topics:

[Eurythmy](#) (approved June 2017)

[Teacher Preparation](#) (approved June 2017)

Schools are asked to respond to these two commitments in their accreditation self-studies. Suggestions of where to include can be found in the suggested Principle and Policy Mapping for Self-Study.

AWSNA Position Statement on Eurythmy: Eurythmy, the art of making sound visible in movement, was developed by Rudolf Steiner as a performing art, a pedagogical practice, and a therapeutic activity. Steiner articulated the unique foundational importance of eurythmy to Waldorf schools, stating, “in the case of Eurythmy, body, soul and spirit work harmoniously together, so that here one has to do with an ensouled and spiritualised form of gymnastics” (Steiner, A Lecture on Eurythmy). He additionally stated that eurythmy in education “is entirely dependent on the successful development of Eurythmy as an art” (Steiner, A Lecture on Eurythmy). With this understanding, AWSNA member schools and institutes share a commitment to eurythmy, as both an artistic and pedagogical endeavor. This commitment is strengthened by an anthroposophical understanding of child and human development as described in principle 3 of both the AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools and the AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Institutes. AWSNA member schools and institutes value the inclusion of eurythmy in their educational programs; however, the shortage of pedagogically qualified and trained eurythmists makes it difficult, at this time, for all association members to currently make this art fully available. With this acknowledgement, members schools and institutes demonstrate a commitment to make eurythmy available as a part of their educational program. This commitment may look different in outcome depending on the community, location, and age of the school or institute, yet may have elements such as: faculty and staff study of or participation in eurythmy, hosting visiting eurythmy troupes or guest eurythmists, maintaining a budgetary line item for eurythmy, and exploration of how eurythmy can be offered partially or fully for students, among other possibilities.

AWSNA Position Statement on Teacher Preparation: The heart of Waldorf teacher preparation is a transformative experience, including the awakening of the teacher to “a living interest in everything happening in the world” (Steiner, Foundations of Human Experience). This task can be accomplished only if we view it “in the highest sense, as a moral spiritual task” (Steiner, Foundations of Human Experience). With this understanding, Waldorf teacher preparation is offered by AWSNA member institutes, WECAN member institutes, and other internationally recognized Waldorf teacher education programs. Waldorf teaching certificates from these institutes are recognized by AWSNA because the institutes have demonstrated that they meet membership expectations of the relevant associations. In North America this is demonstrated through collaboration with sister Waldorf schools and institutes and engagement in ongoing self-study/peer review based on the AWSNA and/or WECAN Principles for Waldorf Institutes. AWSNA member schools share a commitment to Waldorf teacher preparation; however, a shortage of pedagogically qualified and trained teachers may make it difficult, at this time, for all association schools to hire only trained teachers. With this acknowledgement, member schools demonstrate a commitment to hiring teachers trained, or in training, at AWSNA, WECAN, or other internationally recognized Waldorf teacher preparation programs. This commitment may look different in outcome depending on the community, location, and age of the school, yet may have elements such as: sponsoring Waldorf teacher training of newly hired teachers, increasing professional development budgets to support this training, and collaboration with AWSNA institutes to explore teacher preparation options, among other possibilities.

A3. Completed [Principles Assessment](#). For each of the principles, assess according to the following scale:

Vibrant – The principle is living and is an example for other schools

Established – The principle is living with consciousness

Aspiring – The principle is living but is not fully consciously implemented

Weak – The principle is not living

Any aspiring or weak principle must be identified as a major priority for future work in Part C2 (below).

Part B: Policy and Practice Review

B1. Response to *Policies and Practices #1* (Independence) and *#2* (Responsible Self-Reflection) (2-5 pages per criterion). The responses should clearly address the expectations for independence and responsible self-reflection outlined in the *Accreditation Policy Area Indicators* document. Schools identify strengths and challenges in working with these policy areas, and plans and priorities for strengthening the working based on their self-reflection.

B2. Completed [Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment](#). The school completes the *Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment*, demonstrating that Policies and Practices #3-10 are met and implemented. The indicators provided in *Policies and Practices Indicators* are meant to spark thought and conversation. The school has flexibility in demonstrating that the policies exist and are practiced.

Assessment of effectiveness of policy at the school: For each of the policy areas, assess according to the following scale. This policy is:

Highly effective

Effective

Somewhat effective

Not effective

Overall assessment of process; how, when, if the policy is actually practiced in terms of AWSNA criteria: For each of the policy areas, assess according to the following scale:

Exemplary – The policy exists and is an example for other schools

Meets – The policy exists

Partially Meets – Some components of the policy exist

Does Not Meet – The policy does not exist

Any policy or practice area that is partially or not met must be identified by the school as a major priority for future work in Part C2 (below).

Overall assessment of DEI policies and practices: whether the policy effectively meets DEI goals that the school holds: For each of the policy areas: assess according to the following scale:

Effective - The policy or practice is supporting the school's DEI goals

Needs Refinement - The policy exists and is moving towards supporting the school's DEI goals

In Discussion - The DEI related aspects of the policy are under discussion

Not Discussed - There has been no discussion of this policy area in relation to DEI goals that the school holds

N/A - the area does not have DEI implications

B3. Documents necessary to support responses on the *Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment*. See Site Visit Document Checklist in the Supplemental Material in this document.

Part C: Reflections and Future Plans

C1. Summary description of the school's major strengths. (1-3 pages).

C2. Description of priorities for future work. After completing all prior sections of the self-study report, including the assessment of the principles and policies, the school can look to its future, agree on the direction in which it is moving, strengthen its focus, and outline the path that it will follow. This description includes an annotated list of the top 3-5 major priorities and the top 5-10 minor priorities for future work, as identified by the school. It is expected that any principle that is deemed to be aspiring or weak, and each policy, or practice area that is partially or not met will be a major priority (1-3 pages).

C3. Summary of self-study process. This is a summary of how various school constituents—faculty, staff, board, parents, alumni/ae—were involved in the process (1-3 pages).

2. Self-Study Report Checklist

The following items must be included in the self-study report:

1. Part A1: Declaration and description of the school's mission and identity (2-5 pages)
2. Part A2: Description of how the [AWSNA Principles](#) are living in the school (14-35 pages)
3. Part A3: Completed [Principles Assessment Form](#)

4. Part B1: Response to *Policies and Practices #1* (Independence) & #2 (Responsible Self-Reflection) (4-10 pages)
5. Part B2: Completed [Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment Spreadsheet](#)
6. Part B3: List of documents necessary to support responses on the *Policies and Practices Inventory*
7. Part C1: Summary description of the school's major strengths (1-3 pages)
8. Part C2: Description of priorities for future work (1-3 pages)
9. Part C3: Summary of self-study process (1-3 pages)

The total package should be between 23 and 59 pages, plus supporting forms and documentation.

With the self-study report the school must also provide the following materials:

- Completed [School Decision Making Matrix](#)
- Documents to support Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment Spreadsheet
 - Documents should be uploaded into the Supplementary Materials Folders in the School Google Drive
- The nine required [DASL reports](#):
 - School and Staff Characteristics
 - Enrollment, Day Students by Grade
 - International Student Enrollment
 - Tuition, Fees, Financial Aid
 - Admissions and Attrition
 - Financial Operations
 - Employee Benefits
 - Teacher Salaries
 - Administrator Salaries

3. Specific Tasks for the Steering Committee (Year 2)

- Ensure that all committees keep on track with their charge and schedule and that all committee reports follow the instructions given above.
- Read all the results of any constituent surveys.
- Edit the committee reports to ensure consistency of style, tone, and format.
- Once the visit dates are established, ensure that teachers plan a normal schedule for the week, avoiding scheduling field trips, testing, special assemblies, etc.

Year 3 - Accreditation Visit

1. Preliminary Visit by Team Leader

The visiting team leader will make a one-day visit to the school two to six months prior to the peer review visit. The purpose of this visit is for the team leader to become thoroughly familiar with the school's history, its identity as a Waldorf school, its campus and vital statistics, the nature of the community, its financial condition, any special issues involved in the current self-study/peer review process, any problems it may be facing, and the results of the previous evaluation if the school is already accredited.

The visiting team leader will also use this visit to check on logistics (including transportation, lodging, meals, and meeting room for the team) and all preparatory arrangements for the visit. Since all visiting team reports are done electronically, there should be a discussion about the IT capabilities of the school, especially the ability of the school to provide a secure wireless network and printer for the visiting team's use. It also may be necessary for the school to provide a laptop for one or more visiting team members.

The visiting team leader will work with the school to create a draft agenda for the team visit and plan for the Sunday afternoon reception and/or dinner.

In addition to conversations with the school's accreditation coordinator and/or the accreditation steering committee, there should be a brief, general meeting with the faculty. In this meeting, the visiting team leader will say something about his or her experience with self-study/peer review and school accreditation, provide a general outline of activities during the visit, and do everything possible to engender a sense of confidence and comfort within the school.

Note on dual accreditation: if another agency is the lead agency, the AWSNA co-leader may or may not participate in this preliminary visit. Details on coordination between the team leaders for each accrediting agency will be worked out with the AWSNA director of accreditation.

2. Preparations by the School

Certain tasks need to be accomplished by the school. These include:

- Making arrangements for lodging and meals for the visiting team members and providing advice and/or assistance in making travel arrangements, including flights and ground transportation between airport, lodging, and school.
 - Coordinating communication with team members around transportation, housing and meals, and ensuring that they are reimbursed for their travel costs, aware of where they will be staying, and have an opportunity to share any dietary needs.
- Providing space at the school for exclusive use of the visiting team during the visit and providing equipment (such as computers) and supplies. Ensuring that there is meeting space available at the lodging that does not encroach on the private sleeping room of any team member.

- Uploading the self-study report, with all other required documents, to the designated Google Drive no less than six weeks before the visiting team visit. See Required Materials Checklist for more details.
- In the case of a dual accreditation where AWSNA is not the lead agency: Uploading the self-study report and required documents to a designated Google Drive owned by AWSNA.
- Meal planning: typically, the team members have breakfast at the hotel, lunch in the workroom and/or with students, and dinner on their own either on campus, at the hotel, or at a local restaurant.
- Seeing that the school operates on as normal a schedule as possible during the visit (avoid all field trips, examinations, special assemblies, etc.). *Teachers will need advance notice to plan their activities accordingly.*
- Ensuring that school personnel and representative groups (trustees, parents, etc.) will be available to talk with the visiting team members during the daytime.
- Planning of the campus tours and welcoming reception.
- Collection of supplementary documents for use of the team during the visit (see Policies and Practices Indicators).
- Additional documents (see Site Visit Document Checklist).

3. The Accreditation Visit

The principal purpose of the visiting team is to review, assess, and validate or modify the school's own findings as generated by the school's self-study process. Therefore, the visiting team will begin its work with the school's self-study report. The visiting team is looking to confirm that the school does what it says it does, that it is living the AWSNA *Principles*, and that the policies exist and are being practiced.

It is important that everyone understand a limitation, which is both philosophical and practical, of the peer review visit. The AWSNA evaluation cannot, and does not, attempt to evaluate individual performance of anyone at the school. While the visiting team will visit individual classes, this is for the purpose of sensing the school's overall instructional methods and style, and not to evaluate individual teaching effectiveness. The visiting team will review the school's own process for evaluation of individual performance of administrators and teachers and will communicate its effectiveness to those involved. The focus is on the school's evaluation process, not the content of specific evaluations. Another limitation of the team visit is that it cannot provide a "consultant's report," since it is the whole school that is being evaluated and all team members will be involved in the review of multiple areas. There will be a team report for each area, but it must be limited to principal impressions only.

The actual schedule for the evaluation visit will vary with the school and its program, but it will typically span a four-day period as follows:

First Day (Sunday) - Arrival and Orientation of the Visiting Team

- 12:00 p.m. Arrival of team, check-in at place of lodging
- 2:00 p.m. Brief preliminary meeting of the visiting team
- 3:00-4:30 p.m. Tour of the campus
- 4:30 p.m. Informal social hour for school community including administration, faculty, board, parents, and visiting team
- 5:30 p.m. Supper for visiting team, school leaders, and in-house accreditation coordinators
- 7:00 p.m. Organization, orientation, and planning meeting of the visiting team

Second & Third Days (Monday & Tuesday) - Visits and Meetings

- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:00-12:00 Visits to classes, talks with faculty, etc., meetings
- 12:00 Lunch at school, informal talks with faculty and students
- 1:00 p.m. Visits to classes, activities, athletics, etc., meetings
- 3:30 p.m. Meetings with special groups such as trustees, parent leaders, alumni representatives, faculty committees, departments, etc.
- 5:30 p.m. Supper (for visiting team alone)
- 7:00 p.m. Evening meeting of visiting team as a whole - discussion, examination of exhibits, preparation of reports, visiting team review of reports

Final Day (Wednesday) - Reporting

- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:00 a.m. Final visits, or re-visits, with emphasis on areas with questions or those not covered earlier
- 1 1:00 a.m. Meeting of visiting team - final review of subcommittee reports, agreement on major findings and recommendation on accreditation
- 12:00 Lunch
- 2:00 p.m. Exit interview with the school representative(s) and visiting team leader and assistant chair, sharing of major findings
- 3:30 p.m. Oral exit report of major findings to faculty, administration, and trustees, by the visiting team leader and team members

The actual schedule will be determined by the team leader in consultation with the school. It is essential that the visiting team have as much time as possible for visiting classes, meeting with faculty (and students), reviewing materials, and writing their reports during these four days. For this reason, it is inappropriate for the host school to attempt to entertain the visiting team, except for the one informal gathering of administration, faculty, trustees, parents, and team on the day of arrival. This social occasion can be an afternoon tea or reception followed by a dinner for the team and school community leaders. At the reception, the team leader will make a few

remarks and introduce the team. At the dinner, there should be a presentation of the school's philosophy and remarks of welcome from a school representative. Any such formal presentation, however, should be very brief and principal emphasis should be on informal conversation between community leaders and team.

The coordinator and/or steering committee from the school has an important final role during the visit, involving such functions as:

- Serving as liaison to the visiting team, ensuring that the team has the equipment, materials, and information it needs.
- Seeing that team members are reimbursed for their expenses in a timely fashion, preferably on the last day of the visit. If team members have paid for flight tickets in advance, it is a courtesy to reimburse them as soon as possible.
- Providing any needed special schedules or interviewing time with faculty, administration, part-time personnel, representative trustees, parents, or students, etc.
- Providing computers and/or secretarial assistance as the team prepares its reports.
- Daily checking, as necessary, on lodging, meals, refreshments, transportation, etc.

The visiting team as well as the school faculty and staff should wear name tags during the visit.

Report and Recommendation of the Visiting Team

At the conclusion of the peer review visit, the visiting team determines whether it will recommend to AWSNA that the school should be granted accreditation, and whether they recommend any conditions. **This recommendation is not shared with the school in the final meeting of the school and the visiting team leader. It is sent in a separate letter to the AWSNA director of accreditation.** The visiting team's recommendation is not an official action of AWSNA; rather, the decision is the responsibility of the Accreditation and Review Committee. On occasion, the visiting team's recommendation is modified by the Accreditation and Review Committee.

If the visiting team recommends that there are conditions or that accreditation should not be granted, there must be specific reasons, such as only partially meeting or not meeting the [AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools](#) and/or the [AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools](#), demonstrable inadequacy of disclosure of mission or program, significant inconsistency between the stated mission of the school and the program as observed by the visiting team, or lack of analysis in the self-study.

The recommendation of the visiting team can be in one of the following forms and should, ideally, be decided by a process of consensus:

- Recommendation for accreditation.
- Recommendation for accreditation with specific conditions for follow-up and remediation of problems by the school, with a specific timeframe.
- Decision postponed

- Recommendation that the school not be approved for accreditation, with specific reasons for this recommendation.

The team report will focus on how the school meets the criteria in *AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools* and *AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools*, and may also include general recommendations for school improvement. It is expected that the visiting team will report as a group, and every attempt will be made by the chair and the team to achieve consensus.

4. Accreditation and Review Committee

The Accreditation and Review Committee (ARC) is a standing committee appointed by AWSNA and consists of qualified, experienced Waldorf teachers and administrators. The ARC meets twice a year (in January and May) and is responsible for reviewing all school and team reports pertinent to accreditation. As such, the ARC is responsible for deciding the accreditation status of an individual school and may accept or modify the recommendation of the visiting team. The ARC may make one of four decisions regarding accreditation status:

- Full accreditation (with term length specified).
- Accreditation with conditions (including a schedule for meeting the conditions).
- Decision postponed (pending completion by the school of specific requirements of the ARC).
- Denial of accreditation.

Once the ARC has made a decision regarding accreditation status, the accreditation office will inform the school and the regional leadership council member of that decision, including any conditions and follow-up requirements.

In the case of a denial of accreditation, the school will be notified and will be given an opportunity to appeal if it chooses, before final action.

5. Action by the Delegates

Decisions of the ARC will be announced at the subsequent regional delegates' meeting.

6. Appeals

If the ARC denies accreditation, a member school is accorded the right to appear before the Accreditation and Review Committee to appeal this decision. Following the ARC meeting, the school will be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for denial of accreditation. The school may request to have its representative(s) appear before the ARC to lodge an appeal or to submit additional information. Such a request must be submitted in writing to the director of accreditation no later than 60 days following receipt of the ARC decision letter. Please see the [AWSNA Accreditation Policy Handbook](#) for a full description of the appeals process.

All formal decisions will be communicated in writing. At the discretion of the director of accreditation there may be a phone call.

Year 4 – First Response Report and Priorities Action Plan Due

1. Progress on All Major Priorities

The school is expected to make progress on all major priorities.

2. Annual Report

The [annual survey \(DASL\)](#) is to be filed. This should include any substantive changes in the school.

3. First Response Report and Priorities Action Plan

In the year following the AWSNA visit, the AWSNA visiting team report is reviewed by the administration, faculty, and trustees of the school, and the school develops a plan for school improvement, building upon what it has learned from its self-study and the visiting team report (especially the major priorities).

The school reports back to AWSNA, including the following components:

- Cover letter, including any major changes since the team visit
- [First Response Report](#): Responses to each of the major priorities in the team report
- Responses to any additional requirements noted in the ARC decision letter
- Plan for school improvement through the priorities plan

The priorities action plan should directly address the major priorities listed in the Visiting Team Report. The plan should include the steps the school will be taking to address the concern that led to the priority. This priority plan can be part of a strategic plan but should include specific work that the school is committed to taking, not be limited to general intentions in the area of the priority.

These reports are due to the ARC by November 15 for fall visits (October 15 if a mid-cycle visit is planned) and by March 15 (February 15 if a mid-cycle visit is planned) for winter visits. The cover letter, plan for school improvement/strategic plan update, and first follow-up report are reviewed by the Accreditation and Review Committee; any action is communicated to the school.

Year 5 - Continue Progress on All Priorities

1. Progress on All Major Priorities

The school is expected to make progress on all major priorities. If there were conditions on accreditation, there will likely be additional reports due in Year 5. This is also the year that any required mid-cycle visits are usually scheduled.

2. Annual Report

The annual survey (DASL) is to be filed. This should include any substantive changes in the school.

Year 6 – Second Response Report Due

1. Progress on All Major and Minor Priorities

The school is expected to make progress on all major and minor priorities.

2. Annual Report

The annual survey (DASL) is to be filed. This should include any substantive changes in the school.

3. Second Response Report

At the end of the third year following the team visit, the school submits the [Second Response report and Priorities Action Plan](#) to the accreditation office. In this report, the school describes progress made on **all major and minor** priorities.

The report is reviewed by the Accreditation and Review Committee. In most instances, this completes the school's responsibility for reporting to AWSNA for this accreditation cycle, but AWSNA may require a supplementary, or later report, or other form of follow-up, if serious concerns remain about the school or demonstrable lack of attention to opportunities for self-improvement is apparent. The action by AWSNA on the report and required follow-up or remediation, if any, is reported promptly to the school.

The second follow-up report includes the following components:

- Cover letter, including any major changes since the first follow-up report.
- For each of the major and minor recommendations, indicate whether it is:
 - Complete.
 - In-progress.
 - Not implemented. (Include a brief explanation for non-implementation.)
- Responses to any additional requirements noted in the ARC decision letter.
- Updated plan for school improvement with priorities action plan.

Year 7 – Complete All Priorities

The school is expected to complete all priorities. Submission of the annual survey (DASL), including reporting of substantive changes, is required.

Maintaining Accreditation

1. Good standing

To maintain accreditation, a school must remain in good standing, which includes timely payment of AWSNA dues, completion of the AWSNA annual survey (DASL), and fulfilling membership requirements as outlined in the [Path to Membership](#).

2. Annual report

Each year an annual survey (DASL) is to be filed no later than that year's deadline. This report should include any significant changes in the school. If the report is not received, the accreditation designation on the website listing for the school may be changed to "non-compliant" status.

3. Renewal of Accreditation

Two years prior to the end of the term of accreditation, a school must file an application for renewal. This will begin a new cycle of self-study and team visit.

4. Postponements and Extensions

See [Accreditation Policy Handbook](#) for details.

5. Participation in the Accreditation work of AWSNA

Throughout the seven-year cycle it is critical that a school participates in the accreditation work of AWSNA by providing team members for accreditation visits to other schools. Ideally a school will support at least one faculty or staff member volunteering for a visiting team each year. Participation in a visiting team can strengthen an individual staff member's understanding of Waldorf education, AWSNA, and accreditation. They can also serve as a resource to their home school as the school goes through accreditation.

IV. Dual Accreditations - Working with Other Agencies

AWSNA partners with 14 other accrediting agencies, and many AWSNA member schools choose to pursue dual accreditation with one or more of our partners. The other accrediting agencies have processes that are generally similar to AWSNA's, including self-study, peer review, and follow-up, but there may be differences in timing or procedure. AWSNA has agreements in place with these other agencies, and a school can often complete a single self-study and report and host a single joint visiting team, thus conserving resources and minimizing duplication.

Early in the process, AWSNA, the cooperating agencies, and the school will decide what processes will be followed and which agency will be considered the lead agency. In general, the visiting team leader comes from a school accredited by the lead agency, and the school's report will follow the form required by the lead agency.

The details of the joint process will be worked out on a case-by-case basis with the AWSNA director of accreditation. An AWSNA member school may request an exception to the

agreement if it can demonstrate that a different form will adequately address the expectations of both agencies. The exception must be approved by both agencies.

It is worth noting that a school applying for dual accreditation is expected to *meet all the requirements and standards of both agencies*.

Specific notes on the timeline:

Year 1: Schools file separate applications with each agency. The AWSNA director of accreditation does an orientation training and initiates conversation with the cooperating agency.

Year 2: If the self-study format is not as described in this manual, the school is responsible for seeing that all the AWSNA requirements are met.

All schools must address all of the AWSNA criteria:

- The [*Principles*](#). Complete the self-study report using the AWSNA format or include an addendum that serves as a roadmap for the visiting team so that they know where the responses to the *Principles* are in the dual agencies self-study format.
- The [*Policies and Practices*](#). Use the AWSNA inventory form as a roadmap for the visiting team so that they know where the responses to the *Policies and Practices* are in the dual agencies self-study format.

All schools must complete the following:

- Description of how the AWSNA *Principles* are living in the school, where there are challenges, and how the principle is a source of innovation.
- [*Principles Assessment form*](#)
- [*Policies and Practices Inventory and Assessment spreadsheet*](#)

For all other sections described in Year 2 – School Self-Study, the school must create an alignment document showing where in the self-study report the AWSNA-required information can be found. For most Agencies, AWSNA has a suggested alignment document available. The director of accreditation is available to advise you on this process.

Year 3: Team visit. The team will have a leader or co-leader from an AWSNA member school. Approximately 50% of the team members will come from AWSNA schools, and the team will collaborate on a single joint report. The AWSNA co-leader may or may not participate in the logistical visit prior to the full team visit.

Length of term: If another agency grants a term of accreditation that is different from that granted by AWSNA’s Accreditation and Review Committee, the school may request that the terms be aligned to expire at the same time. This request should be made in writing to the AWSNA director of accreditation.

Mid-cycle visits: A mid-cycle visit may be required by one or both agencies. AWSNA will participate in all mid-cycle visits.

Follow-up reporting: Unless otherwise noted, a school with dual accreditation is expected to file the AWSNA first follow-up report and the AWSNA second follow-up report. If the other agency has a different reporting timetable than AWSNA, the school may request that the AWSNA report due dates be aligned with those of the other agency, however, AWSNA reports will still be required.

More details around the requirements for Dual Accreditations can be found in the [AWSNA Supplementary Guide for Dual Accreditation](#).

V. Working with WECAN

Schools seeking accreditation for a school that includes an early childhood program – childcare, preschool, or kindergarten – must complete the WECAN Full Membership process before the visiting team visit.

- Schools align their WECAN Full Member renewal with AWSNA accreditation and when they complete their application for accreditation or reaccreditation they should also contact the WECAN Membership Coordinator at membership@waldorfearlychildhood.org.

Other supporting WECAN documents can be found on the Organizational Membership page of the WECAN [website](#).

Our current Memorandum of Understanding with WECAN can be found [here](#).

VI. Supplementary Materials

1. Definitions

Definitions used in the *AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools* and the *AWSNA Policies and Practices*:

- 1) **Anthroposophy** – a path of knowledge aiming to guide the spiritual element in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.³
- 2) **Board** – the individuals who serve as trustees for the school.
- 3) **Colleagues/employees** – all paid faculty and staff members of the school.
- 4) **Community** – the broader group of individuals with a connection to the school—employees, board members, parents, students, alumni, alumni parents, and neighbors.
- 5) **Education/pedagogical practices/pedagogical study/pedagogical program** – the curricular, methodological, and assessment components of the school activities.

³ *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, opening remarks

- a. **Curriculum** – what is taught (scope) and when it is taught (sequence). The content of what is taught in a school or program.
 - b. **Pedagogy** – how/the way the curriculum is taught. The strategies or activities for teaching or supporting learning.
 - c. **Assessment** – activities that support understanding the student’s actual and potential physical, emotional, and intellectual growth/attainment.
 - d. **Evaluation** – conclusions based on assessment.
- 6) **Faculty** – the staff of the school with teaching and pedagogical responsibilities as their primary responsibilities.
 - 7) **Pedagogy** – how/the way the curriculum is taught. The strategies or activities for teaching or supporting learning.
 - 8) **School community** – those individuals with an immediate connection to the school—employees, board members, parents, and students.
 - 9) **Self-administered** – decisions about the school are made by employees/colleagues and board members.
 - 10) **Staff** – the administrative staff of the school.
 - 11) **Waldorf school** – all aspects of the school.

2. Suggested Principle and Policy Mapping for Self-Study

Schools may use either version or identify their own mapping. This mapping also includes the position statements.

Note: Policy Areas 1 & 2 are responded to separately.

Principle Mapping (address 1-3 Policy Areas per principle; each Policy Area 3-10 must be addressed at least once)

Principle 1: The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.	Policy Area 3. Support for Students and Families Policy Area 4. Support for Faculty and Staff
Principle 2. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society. Position Statement: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Policy Area 5. Engaged Community Policy Area 8. Sufficient Resources
Principle 3. Anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program. Position Statement: Eurythmy	Policy Area 3. Support for Students and Families Policy Area 6: Articulated Educational Program Position Statement: Eurythmy Position Statement: Teacher Preparation

Position Statement: Teacher Preparation	
Principle 4. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school’s shared agreements.	Policy Area 4. Support for Faculty and Staff Policy Area 6: Articulated Educational Program
Principle 5. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.	Policy Area 5. Engaged Community Policy Area 9. Prioritized Health and Safety Considerations
Principle 6. Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board.	Policy Area 4. Support for Faculty and Staff Policy Area 7. Articulated Decision Making Decision Making Matrix
Principle 7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.	Policy Area 7. Articulated Decision Making Policy Area 8. Sufficient Resources Policy Area 10. Prioritized Legal Compliance

Policy Mapping (address 1-3 principles per Policy Area; each principle must be addressed at least once)

Policy Area 3. Support for Students and Families	Principle 1: The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school. Principle 3. Anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program.
Policy Area 4. Support for Faculty and Staff	Principle 1: The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school. Principle 4. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school’s shared agreements. Principle 6. Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board.
Policy Area 5. Engaged Community	Principle 2. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society. Principle 5. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health. Position Statement: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Policy Area 6: Articulated Educational Program	Principle 3. Anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program. Principle 4. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school’s shared agreements.

	Position Statement: Eurythmy Position Statement: Teacher Preparation
Policy Area 7. Articulated Decision Making	Principle 6. Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board. Principle 7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.
Policy Area 8. Sufficient Resources Decision-making Matrix	Principle 2. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society. Principle 7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.
Policy Area 9. Prioritized Health and Safety Considerations	Principle 5. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.
Policy Area 10. Prioritized Legal Compliance	Principle 7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.

3. Principles references

Principle 1.

The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.

Theosophy, Chapter 1 (Body, Soul, Spirit)

Principle 2.

Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society.

Education as a Force for Social Change

Foundations of Human Experience

Principle 3.

Anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program.

Foundations of Human Experience, Lecture 9

Balance in Teaching, Lecture 3, 1st paragraph

Modern Art of Education

Spiritual Ground of Education

Child's Changing Consciousness, Lecture 3
Balance in Teaching

Principle 4.

Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school's shared agreements.

The Renewal of the Social Organism

Principle 5.

The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.

The Universal Human, Lecture 4

Principle 6.

Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board.

How to Know Higher Worlds
Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education
Modern Art of Education, Lecture 12

Principle 7.

Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.

Education as a Force for Social Change
The Renewal of the Social Organism

Principle 8.

Waldorf schools honor and embrace human diversity and dignity.

A Modern Art of Education - especially the introduction and first chapter.

For all principles:

The Seven Core Principles of Waldorf Education, Pedagogical Section Council of North America, 2017, available from Waldorf Publications.

4. Policies and Practices Indicators

The *AWSNA Policies and Practices for Waldorf Schools* document is a list of policy areas, and policies within each area, in which accredited schools are expected to have documented, practiced, and effective policies.

One of the responsibilities of the visiting team is to confirm the appropriate policies exist and that they are being practiced. To confirm, the team will need evidence that the policies exist and that they are being practiced. Many of the expectations can be confirmed through document review, although some may need interviews or observation to affirm a policy is being practiced.

These documents should be available in the visiting team workroom or electronically during the visit. The visiting team should be able to review any hard copy documents that they request during the visit.

Confidentiality: AWSNA and its representatives will abide by legal confidentiality requirements in relation to any documentation needed for the accreditation process.

5. Site Visit Document Checklist

Checklist of items to be available during the visit:

1. One hardcopy of the self-study report and specific supporting documents, including:
 - a. By-laws
 - b. Decision-Making Matrix (see AWSNA Community Hub for template)
 - c. Financial Documents as indicated in Policy area #8: Sufficient Resources
 - d. AWSNA DASL Reports
 - e. Employee Handbook
 - f. Parent Handbook
 - g. Student Handbook, if applicable
 - h. Leadership/Governance Handbook, if applicable
2. Access through the Google Drive of prior self-study, visiting team report, and follow-up reports
3. Access through the Google Drive to all policies supporting the Policy and Practices spreadsheet (in the Supplemental Materials folders)
4. Minutes: board, college, faculty, administration – at least the last three months, these can be digitally available
5. Responses to constituent surveys, if any
6. Rosters of faculty, staff, and board (with photos, if possible)
7. Hardcopy and digital school map
8. Hardcopy and digital daily teaching schedule (who teaches and what, when, and where) for the three days of the visit
9. Hardcopy or digital current school year calendar
10. Hardcopy and digital visit schedule covering days of visit.

Forms

All forms are available as Word documents on the [accreditation](#) page of the AWSNA Community Hub.

1. Principles Assessment

Each principle is to be rated vibrant, established, aspiring, or weak. Any principle assessed as aspiring or weak should be reflected as a major priority (by the school) and a major priority (by the visiting team). If any principle is assessed as aspiring or weak, there may be cause for accreditation with conditions, or a denial of accreditation.

[Assessment form can be downloaded from the hub.](#)

2. Policy and Practices Inventory and Assessment form

[This spreadsheet can be downloaded from the hub.](#)

3. Application for Initial Accreditation

This form is to be used by schools applying for AWSNA accreditation for the first time. The form should be submitted to the AWSNA Director of Accreditation at accreditation@awsna.org by either May 1 or November 1. You will receive an invoice for the \$200 application fee.

[The current form is available from the hub.](#)

4. Application for Continuing Accreditation

This form is to be used by schools applying for renewal of AWSNA accreditation. The form should be submitted to the AWSNA director of accreditation at accreditation@awsna.org 24 to 30 months in advance of the end of the accreditation term. In general, applications for renewal should be received by May 1 for spring team visits, and by November 1 for fall team visits. You will receive an invoice for the \$200 application fee.

[The current form is available from the hub.](#)

VII. Changes to Guide

- December 2024
 - Full review of Accreditation Guide with various updates for clarity and ease of understanding
 - Redrafting of details on First Response Report and Second Response Report.
- August 2024
 - Added new principle on human dignity
 - Added reference material for the new principle
- August 2023
 - Added new policy and practice indicators to include DEI
 - Removed DEI enhanced option for Principle 2
 - Clarified dates of audit prior to completion of self-study
 - Specified that position statements should appear within the narrative description of Principle 3
- August 2022
 - Added DEI enhanced option to Principle 2 and Policy and Practice areas 3-10.
 - Added link to Accreditation Documents on AWSNA Community Hub
 - Instructions on uploading report and documents to an AWSNA Google Drive when there is a dual accreditation, and the cooperating agency provides a portal
 - Added member Commitment/Position Statements and references
 - Added Decision-Making Matrix link
- June 2021
 - Updated AWSNA Principles to include DEI
 - Updated AWSNA Policy & Practices to include DEI
- January 2020
 - Updated instructions for part C of self-study
 - Updated list of required documents
 - Updated configuration of an AWSNA only visiting team
- August 2019
 - Updated to reflect current process.
 - Updated due date of fall maintenance reporting.
 - Board Principles of Good Practices Indicators added.
 - The descriptions for Policy Areas 9 & 10 updated for clarity.
- September 2018
 - Wording updated i.e., recommendation becomes priority
 - Updated to include remote orientation
 - Updated URLs for new website
- June 2018
 - Added note that for AWSNA-only visits, it is the responsibility of the school to identify a local non-Waldorf member of the visiting team.

- o Changed to reflect that the prior Policy and Practices Inventory form and the Policies and Practices Assessment form have been combined into a single Policy and Practices Inventory and Assessment spreadsheet.
- o Added paragraph describing two approaches to the self-study. Deleted paragraph A2d. Also added suggesting mappings to Supplementary Materials.
- o Under “6 – Action by Delegates” – changed “will be affirmed” to “will be announced”.
- o Changed the word “proof” to “evidence”.
- August 2017
 - o Detailed Guidelines for Self-Study Report, Part A2d was changed to reflect the AWSNA Position Statements approved by the delegates at the June 2017 meeting.