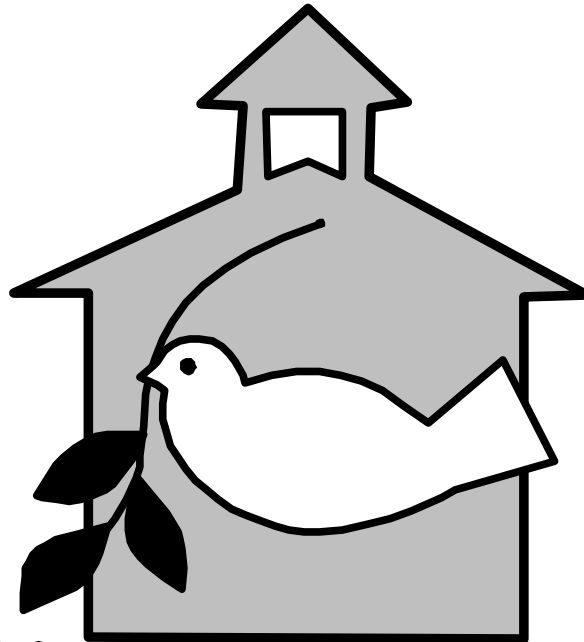


RENAISSANCE SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



The  
Renaissance  
Schools

2008-2009

**PHONE/FAX NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES .....**

**Main Office for All Schools**

Telephone ..... 985-2153  
Fax..... 985-5643  
4066 Shelburne Road Building D, Shelburne

**Heartworks Burlington**

Telephone ..... 651-9343  
Fax..... 651-9344  
102 Lake Street, Burlington

**Heartworks Shelburne**

Telephone ..... 985-8133  
Fax (please call first) ..... 985-5829  
6701 Shelburne Road, Shelburne

**Heartworks Williston**

Telephone ..... 872-7878  
Fax (please call first) ..... 872-1546  
644 Blair Park Road, Williston

**Renaissance Shelburne**

Telephone ..... 985-8209  
Fax (please call first) ..... 985-4181  
Harbor Road, Shelburne

**Mailing Address for All Schools**

PO Box 339 Shelburne, Vermont 05482

**Heartworks and Renaissance Schools Web Site**

[www.heartworksvt.com](http://www.heartworksvt.com)  
[www.renaissancevt.com](http://www.renaissancevt.com)

**HISTORY .....**

The Heartworks School was founded in 1987 by Louise H. Piché as a private, nondenominational, home-based preschool in Shelburne, Vermont. It has since expanded to a new location in Shelburne, in addition to opening two other schools in Williston (in 2002) and Burlington (in 2004). As the Heartworks community in Shelburne grew larger, the need for an elementary school became clear. In 1994, The Renaissance School took its first steps away from its parent, The Heartworks Preschool, and established itself as an approved independent school. The Renaissance School combines a warm supportive environment with a very strong academic program. The school, located at Shelburne Farms, enrolls up to 70 children in classes from kindergarten through sixth grade. In 2007, The Renaissance School was proud to add the Shelburne Commons location where children explore Art, Music, Drama, Physical Education and a variety of learning experiences.

## **SUMMER CAMP .....**

In addition to the four school-year programs, The Heartworks and Renaissance Schools also offer summer programs. Heartworks Summer Pre-school is a camp that is available for children ages 2 to 5½. The Renaissance School Summer Enrichment Academy for 5½ to 10 year-olds is an academic-based camp offering courses in Art, Bringing History to Life, Science, Dramatics, and more.

## **WHAT'S IN A NAME? .....**

The name of Heartworks was chosen to reflect the heartfulness of working with young children. With an open heart, we approach the young child with the tenderness reserved for the petal of a flower. We hope to enrich the child with trust and faith in the goodness of humanity, reinforcing the experience of home, family, teachers, and peers.

Often the bravery needed to extend oneself in learning comes from the security of knowing one's place in the community of friends and associates. Knowing that one is loved and cared for encourages the young child to try and try again, to experiment, to question, to move forward—with hesitation perhaps—but finally putting one foot in front of the other, the child finds the way to success and achievement. All the while, friends and peers are there to bring support and an open heart.

We, as teachers at The Heartworks and Renaissance Schools, work together with parents to establish the foundation of love and security for the young child. Thus the name Heartworks, "Works of the Heart", was selected to reflect our work in helping to build a secure foundation beneath the feet of the emerging confident being.

The name of The Renaissance School was chosen to signify the second birth of a child, from early childhood into the age of academic interest. Additionally, the name calls to mind the Renaissance era, a period of great enlightenment and discovery marked by a new creative energy in the arts and sciences. Just as Renaissance era scholars sought to be well-rounded, The Renaissance School student will study the "traditional" academics such as mathematics, science, history, and language arts, while also experiencing community service, life skills, literature, foreign language, physical education, art, drama, health, music, and computers as an integral part of the world in which we live. Children also participate in peace meetings where they share ideas in an open forum and build conflict resolution skills as an integral part of the program.

## **RENAISSANCE SCHOOL PROGRAM SUMMARY .....**

There are four guiding principles at The Renaissance School. First is a commitment to providing a strong foundation in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Second, children are given a body of knowledge through the use of yearlong themes in science and social studies. Third, there is a focus on helping children develop a sense of themselves as world citizens. The foreign language program which teaches both Spanish and French, beginning in Kindergarten, as well as the community service and earth stewardship programs help to support this goal. Fourth, and perhaps most important, is maintaining a heartfelt approach between children, teachers, parents, and members of the school community.

The Renaissance School integrates art, drama, music, and dance into its overall curriculum. It also provides a physical education program with an emphasis on life-

long sports and outdoor education. Classes are small and intimate in their daily rhythms, and teachers strive to create learning opportunities that accommodate many different learning styles. The school firmly believes in the value of differentiated and individualized curriculum which allows us to meet the particular academic and social needs of each and every child.

**SCHOOL FACULTY.....**

The teaching faculty at The Renaissance School holds certification in elementary education and/or has comparable educational training and experience. Throughout the year, teachers and staff take part in professional development programs, both on and off site, aimed at expanding and improving their teaching skills. We are dedicated to providing a program based on quality and consistency. We ask teachers to embrace a heartfelt approach in dealing with children and to uphold the philosophies of the school.

In addition to the classroom teachers, The Renaissance School faculty includes "specials" teachers (music, foreign language, drama, art, etc.). These teachers provide individual expertise based on their education and experience and help enrich the daily program.

**COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL.....**

It is important that there is always an open line of communication between the home and school. We will do our best to keep you updated on your child's progress. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please speak with your child's teacher or leave a note in the communication book located in the classroom asking the teacher to please give you a telephone call. The teacher will be happy to set up a time to meet with you to discuss your child's progress. You will have an individual mailbox at Renaissance, and general notices are posted in the entryway and included in our school newsletters.

Formal parent-teacher conferences are offered three times a year at The Renaissance School in November, February, and June. These meetings and the written student assessment, provided in November and June, allow us to present to you our complete assessment of the development of your child. Of course, you may request additional meetings at any time during the year with your child's teacher.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIME.....**

We request children arrive on time for school, which begins at 8:30. It is also important that your child not arrive more than 10 minutes before class, as teachers need the time before 8:20 to complete their preparations for your child's day. If you need to drop your child off earlier than 8:20 please see the Early Care section below.

We request children be picked up promptly at the close of the school day (3:00). Please call the school if a change in plans is necessary. A written note is requested if there are changes in a child's after school plans (i.e. a visit to friends, a doctor's appointment, etc.). Forms are provided in each classroom for this purpose. If you are unable to pick your child up by 3:15, please see the Late Care section below.

Whether you bring your own child or carpool with others, an adult needs to

accompany the child/children to and from their classroom. There may be messages to go home or changes in plan that are important for you. Also, please sign your child in and out each day. We use these attendance sheets to ensure that everyone is accounted for in the event of an emergency or fire drill and as a daily record of your child's attendance, an item required for licensing by the State of Vermont.

Remember, anytime you are in the building or on the property with your child, you assume responsibility for your child's safety and behavior. The teacher cannot be responsible while parents visit with one another or with a teacher. This is due to the fact that once a child's parent has arrived, they often feel that the rules of school no longer apply.

If you need help from a teacher in easing your child's transitions to and from school, please be sure to ask. Teachers are often reluctant to involve themselves in parent/child interactions without being asked. As with all other matters, let us keep the lines of communication open.

**EARLY CARE .....**

If you need to drop your child off earlier than 8:20 am, you may bring him or her to the Early Care Teacher as early as 7:30 am. You will be charged a flat fee for this service (please check for the current rates).

Although you may find your child's teacher in their classroom prior to 8:20, please do not leave your child in their care. Teachers arrive early in order to make final preparations for your child's day. It is valuable time and important to the quality of the program.

**LATE CARE .....**

If you are unable to pick your child up by 3:15, he or she may attend our Late Care program until 5:00 pm. You will be charged a fee for this service (please check current rates).

**EXTRA CARE AND TUITION ASSISTANCE .....**

If your family receives Tuition Assistance, you will still be expected to pay for any extra time used (Early an/or Late Care).

**LATE PICK UP .....**

If you pick up your child after 5:00 PM, you will be charged a late pick up fee of **\$1 per minute**. This payment is made directly to the teacher.

**EARLY CARE FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AT HEARTWORKS SHELBURNE AND RENAISSANCE .....**

If you have children at both Heartworks in Shelburne and at The Renaissance School, Early Care is available to you at no charge at The Renaissance School beginning at 8am. If your children are dropped off prior to 8am or are dropped off at Heartworks before 8:20am, you will be charged for Early Care.

**BILLING INFORMATION .....**

Please note that all deposits are non-refundable and that after July 1st we require a 90-day notice if you choose to withdraw your child. Please give us as much notification as possible, if you are planning any changes, to avoid extra fees.

Tuition invoices are sent in the spring and they itemize the annual tuition due. We ask that you look over your invoice thoroughly to make sure that you agree with the schedule and the amount due. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Main Office as soon as possible.

**TUITION PAYMENT POLICY.....**

The Renaissance School remains committed to quality, values-centered education. Like any other school, it has expenses and financial responsibilities that must be met on time. Therefore, the following tuition payment guidelines must be met:

1. Tuition may be made in one, two, or ten installments as follows:
  - a) Annual Payment: One full payment due by July 1
  - b) Semi-Annual Payments: Two equal payments due by July 1 and December 1
  - c) Monthly Payments: Ten equal payments due by the first day of each month beginning by July 1 and ending by April 1
  
2. All payments should be sent directly to the Main Office at:
 

PO Box 339  
Shelburne, Vermont 05482.
  
3. If a payment is received after the tenth day of the month due, a \$25 late charge will be added.
  
4. After July 1st, we require a 90 notice to withdraw your child. If you choose to withdraw your child, you are responsible for the full tuition due during this 90 day notice period.
  
5. Until there is compliance with the tuition policy, no assessment reports will be issued to the parents and student records will not be transferred to another school.
  
6. Failure to come to an agreement in writing regarding any overdue tuition or fees will preclude registration for another year at The Renaissance School.

**SCHOOL CLOSURES & DELAYS – EMERGENCY PROCEDURES .....**

In the event of snow or another form of inclement weather, The Renaissance School may close for the day, delay opening until later in the day or need to close early. Please listen and watch for school closure and delay information on any of the following radio and television stations: WEZF (92.9 FM), WOKO (98.9 FM, 105.1 FM, 1230 AM), WPTZ (TV Channel 5), WVMT (620 AM), WCAX (TV Channel 3).

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES .....**

You may bring a special treat to your child's class on his or her birthday. Please be sure to discuss this option in advance with your child's teacher. We respectfully ask you to honor the following recommendations for birthday parties that occur after school hours.

- Please do not allow your child to distribute birthday invitations at school unless all the children in your child's class are invited.
- Please keep in mind that it can be very painful for a child to discover that she or he is not invited to a birthday party, even if the two children do not seem to be close friends.

## **CLOTHING .....**

Children appreciate being dressed in clothing that is clean, comfortable and easy to launder. We discourage children from wearing their best clothes at school as some art projects or outdoor games can be messy. We cannot guarantee clothing will stay clean. Please provide your child with an extra set of clothes that can be left at school, or have them available in their backpacks. If you plan to leave extra clothes at school, please either place the clothes in a zip-lock bag or small container that will fit in your child's cubby.

In keeping with our belief in classical education and to minimize distractions, we kindly ask that you refrain from sending your child to school in clothing that includes pictures or images associated with current television or cinematic themes. In particular we are wary of the influence of superhero-type characters. We also ask that children wear clothing that covers their bodies. Please refrain from sending your children to school in spaghetti straps, short skirts or shorts and shirts that are low cut or show the stomach. We also ask that perfumes and body sprays are not used before or during school as it can affect children with asthma.

Please provide your child with a pair of inside shoes that stay at school to be worn in the classroom each day. These can be slippers with a thick, leather or rubber sole or a pair of easy to slip on sneakers or shoes. This practice promotes a home-like atmosphere and helps to keep the classrooms clean. Please refrain from selecting slippers with large toes or "heads" on the toes as it creates a safety hazard when walking, especially on stairs. All classes take part in monthly fire drills. Stockings, as opposed to slippers or shoes, are not adequate when children need to leave the building in the event of a drill or an emergency.

Except for extreme weather conditions, we go outside every day for at least ½ hour. Please be sure that your child has appropriate clothing, especially boots, gloves or mittens, a hat, a warm jacket (or a raincoat for warm, rainy weather) and snow pants or a snowsuit.

Please label all clothing items with a permanent marker. It is especially important to label outdoor clothing (hats, mittens, snow pants, boots, etc) since many of these items look alike. The faculty is careful to ensure that all items are kept in their proper place. However, some items can become mis-placed and a labeled item finds its way home much faster. The Renaissance School cannot be responsible for lost or misplaced items.

**DISCIPLINE .....**

We feel blessed at The Renaissance School to have little occasion for discipline. Some of the reasons for this are small class groups, a rhythm to the day, professional teaching staff, and a peaceful approach to children that provides many choices. If a child is having difficulty, we listen to the child to help redirect the inappropriate behavior and, if necessary, ask another staff member to be with the child away from the classroom. At all times we help children to save face with their peers, welcome them back into the activity and acknowledge that the problem is with the behavior, not with the child as a person. Please see the attached Code of Conduct for further details.

**FIRE DRILLS .....**

Monthly fire drills are conducted at The Renaissance School. All children are expected to participate in these drills.

**ILLNESS.....**

State regulations prohibit us from having a child in our care that exhibits any of the following conditions:

- Diarrhea: 3 loose stools beyond what the child normally has in 24 hours or loose stools persisting for more than 48 hours
- Vomiting: 1 or more episodes in the previous 24 hours
- Fever: greater than 100 degrees F. rectally or 99 degrees F. orally or axillary within last 24 hours (children must be Tylenol free for 24 hours so fever is not masked)
- Severe coughing: child gets red/blue in the face or produces whooping or croup noise after cough
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Jaundice: yellowing of skin or white part of eye
- Rash with fever or behavioral change
- Other symptoms of possible severe illness, such as unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty with breathing, or persistent abdominal pain
- Head lice or nits in hair
- Sore throat, earache or toothache

If your child has any of these conditions, please care for them at home. We will miss them while they are ill, and this will hopefully enable us all to remain healthier and in school. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be called to come and take him or her home. If we are unable to contact you, we will call the emergency contact on your child's application.

If prescription or non-prescription medication needs to be given to your child at school, we are happy to do so. You will need to complete a Medication Permission form that specifies the reason for the medication, the proper dosage, content and schedule. Please see your School Director for a copy of the Medication Permission form. All medication needs to be in its original container and handed from the parent to the child's teacher.

Please notify us if your child has been diagnosed with or exposed to a contagious illness so that we may alert other parents. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness, such as conjunctivitis or strep throat, he or she will need to be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

**IMMUNIZATIONS.....**

The Renaissance School is required by State law to have current immunization records for every student. Regulations state each child enrolled must be immunized unless immunizations are medically contraindicated or against moral or religious beliefs. If your child is not fully immunized for any of the above reasons, an exemption form must be completed and signed. These are available at the school office. All immunization forms are due before the first day of classes and children will not be permitted to attend school unless these records are on file.

**ITEMS FROM HOME .....**

Children may be asked to bring items from home that are related to a current theme. We encourage the sharing of books, nature or craft items, and items your child has made. Please do not send your child with toys, electronic devices or other non-essential items to school. Because of their tremendous appeal, these items are a distraction to the children and detract from the educational experience we work so hard to provide. They also occasionally become lost or broken, and can become the source of disagreements.

While we appreciate the convenience of communicating with cellular phones, we ask that they are turned off during school hours. If you need to contact your child, please call the school directly.

**REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT .....**

In accordance with Vermont State Law, the staff at the Renaissance School is required to report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. Parents will always be notified of our concerns unless we feel it may jeopardize the safety of the child.

**SCHOOL NEWSLETTER .....**

The Renaissance School publishes a newsletter with general school news and special events. If you have an item of interest that you would like included please call the school or place a note in the "Newsletter" box located below the parent and staff mailboxes.

**SNACKS & LUNCHES.....**

Meals are shared in a family style where children sit together with their teachers to visit with one another and eat. Children will need to bring their own lunches unless they sign up for the Hot Lunch Program. More information about the program will be provided to families throughout the school year. Each family will be asked to provide the morning classroom snack for a few weeks during the course of the year. We ask that the snacks you bring are simple and healthy—crackers, cheese, fruit, vegetables and pretzels are ideal choices. Children may bring a special treat on their birthdays, but

we ask you to please avoid an abundance of sugar and candy. Please also let your child's teacher know in advance if you are planning to bring a special treat.

**FOOD ALLERGIES.....**

Many children experience life-threatening allergies to food. Most notable are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs and wheat. Due to the increased prevalence of peanut and nut allergies, have a no peanut or tree nut policy. Please check food labels carefully, as even inhaling the air around these products can cause a reaction. A survey will be taken during the early weeks of the school year, and if nut allergies do not exist in our community, we will amend our policy for that year. Please check with your child's classroom teacher or School Director if you have questions.

**STUDENT PHOTO DAY.....**

Each school year, usually in early fall, we arrange to have a professional photographer come to The Renaissance School. Students are photographed as a class with their teacher and individually if their parents so desire. Order forms will be distributed to parents well in advance of the Picture Day.

**VOLUNTEER & PARENT VISITS .....**

We welcome volunteers in all areas of the schools. Whatever your talents or time, we encourage you to be a part of the program. Please speak to any teacher for advice about planning time with the children.

Our classrooms are always open to parents, grandparents, friends, etc. We do try to limit the number of visitors on any given day to ensure the children are not overwhelmed with adults and to retain a child-centered environment. Please speak to the teacher if you plan to visit for a morning or an afternoon.

**OTHER POLICIES.....**

General classroom guidelines and expectations for behavior are outlined in the attached Code of Conduct. In addition, The Renaissance School, in accordance with the State of Vermont, maintains official school policies pertaining to harassment, hazing, student conduct, and weapons being brought to our school. These files are maintained in our office and are available for review upon request.

# The Renaissance School

## Code of Conduct

### **Goal .....**

To nurture love and respect among all members of our school community. To address aggressive or disruptive behaviors in a consistent and effective manner and to maintain an optimal learning environment at school.

### **General Classroom Guidelines .....**

Children will be given verbal and/or written reminders. Children will be asked to leave the classroom and go to the office depending upon the severity and frequency of the problem. Children may be asked to develop a plan of action to correct their behavior by the school administrator.

### **Parent Notification (by teacher or school administrator) .....**

- Verbal or physical abuse
- Inappropriate language
- Disrespectful, defiant behavior with teacher or peers
- Repeated disruption in class
- Destruction of personal or school property

### **Children Will Be Dismissed From School .....**

- Hitting or biting (1<sup>st</sup> incident)
- Excessive disrespectful, defiant behavior
- Continued disruption of class
- Destruction of personal/school property (2<sup>nd</sup> incident)

### **Children Will Be Asked To Withdraw From School .....**

- Repeated verbal or physical aggression/disrespect
- Repeated defiant, disruptive behavior
- Repeated destruction of personal/school property
- Possession of weapon(s) at school