A photograph of a waterfall cascading over mossy rocks in a lush green forest. The water flows from the top center, splitting into three distinct streams as it falls over a series of moss-covered rock ledges. The surrounding forest is dense with vibrant green foliage, and the overall scene is serene and natural.

**SEBASTOPOL CHARTER SCHOOL**

**THREE STREAMS  
OF STUDENT SUPPORT**

**PARENT-TEACHER HANDBOOK**

*The healthy social life is found  
When in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community finds its reflection,  
And when in the community  
The virtue of each one is living.*

-Rudolf Steiner

## **WHAT IS “THREE STREAMS OF STUDENT SUPPORT?”**

Most of the time our children are doing well at school. They are “in the flow.” Sometimes, though, they experience challenges. For one reason or another they feel out of kilter with their teacher and classmates. Their challenges may have to do with the social realm (“They’re being mean to me.”). Some students experience learning challenges (“Everyone knows how to read except me.”). Occasionally students act out, misbehave, or exhibit non-compliant behavior (“I don’t have to if I don’t want to; you can’t make me.”).

Social and emotional well-being is a prerequisite for academic success. Sebastopol Charter School is committed to providing support for those students who are experiencing challenges. This commitment is the foundation of the curriculum and the heart of our work at Sebastopol Charter. We have adopted our Three Streams of Student Support process in order to provide as much support as possible for students who are experiencing social, disciplinary, or learning challenges. It is based on the work of Kim John Payne, who is respected worldwide for helping children, parents, and teachers navigate challenge as well as conflict.

## **UNDERLYING PREMISES OF THE THREE STREAMS WORK:**

- **Accountability rather than blame.** When things are going wrong we must set them right. Each person involved can take some responsibility.
- **Empathy is key to success in life.** Our interventions seek to build empathy in the children so that they can learn to stand in one another's shoes.
- **A child who misbehaves is a disoriented child.** If we realize that a child who is pushing the behavioral boundaries is disoriented, we approach the child differently—less punitively—than we do when we see their behaviors as intentionally naughty or disruptive.
- **Conflict is a necessary part of being human.** If we expect that we can remove all conflict from our children's lives we set ourselves up for frustration. Conflict is a given, and most of us have learned our greatest lessons from the conflicts we've experienced. Our task is to let

children know that we are there, guiding them through their conflicts so that they may learn constructive lessons from them.

- **Our task is to remove hindrances to learning.**

Children who experience learning challenges present us with a riddle: What is the key that unlocks their capacities? As educators and parents our work is to seek these keys and support the child to find areas of success.

- **We begin with implicit approaches before moving to explicit approaches.**

You will often see the words “implicit” and “explicit” as you read through this handbook. Implicit means “not directly expressed.” In other words, it’s a process that is there, but the children are not necessarily aware of it. The Waldorf curriculum is rich in implicit approaches to social and emotional challenges. In fact, much of the Three Streams work is not apparent to the parent body or the students because it is implicit—embedded in the stories, pictures, artwork, speech, music, theatre, and rhythms of the lessons. When the teacher tells the class a story about a character who could never forgive, and describes the hardships this

caused him in his working life, this is an example of using a story to address the difficulties that one or more of her students is experiencing.

On the other hand, an explicit approach directly addresses a situation in the class or with an individual child. Explicit approaches range from "light touch" ("Children, is this a raising our hands and taking turns time, or is it a speaking out time?") to "heavy touch," which might be a behavior change plan for an individual child.

When we support a child we begin with the lightest touch possible. If that doesn't work, we move on to more explicit, heavier-touch approaches.

## **OUR SCHOOL'S CORE VALUES:**

The values that are embedded in our curriculum and our work with each other can be distilled into four statements—our Code of Conduct.

### **THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

*We are kind*

*We are safe*

*We are respectful*

*We are responsible*

The Code of Conduct is simple enough to be understood by a young child, yet it contains all the issues with which an eighth grader might wrestle. It informs our guidelines for working with the children and their interactions with each other. (“Suzie, it is not kind when we use those words,” or “Esteban, when we are responsible we turn our homework in on time.”) Teachers use the Code of Conduct throughout the grades to build the students’ awareness of appropriate conduct. In the upper grades the Eighth Grade Three Streams Team has discussions about examples of responsibility, respect, kindness, and safety. They present their ideas to younger grades and at a school assembly.

The Code of Conduct forms the foundation of our guidelines for adult communication as well. We have guidelines for faculty work, parent-teacher communication, and Board of Directors work.

Each set of guidelines includes specifics such as:

- Give each other the benefit of the doubt.
- Use respectful language.
- Don't interrupt.

We developed the guidelines by starting with the Code of Conduct.

### **THREE STREAMS ORGANIZATION**

The student support work is organized into three "streams," or committees, which address the three categories of challenges students experience. In addition there is an executive committee that provides oversight. A parent volunteer group and an eighth-grade student support group assist with all three streams.

### **THE THREE STREAMS TEAM (TST)**

**Student Support Coordinator: Laurie Tichel**

This group consists of the coordinator, the Executive Director, and the Chairs of the three groups described below. The TST oversees the Student Support work, coordinates student plans

and support circles, and keeps communication flowing among the three streams, the faculty, and the administration.

### **CARE/LEARNING GROUP (CLG)**

The Care Group observes, gains understanding of, and provides support for students experiencing challenges to learning and academic success. This group offers suggestions for therapeutic support for students. This can include special education considerations.

### **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE GROUP (DGG)**

A student is directed to the DGG when faculty members and administrators observe that he or she is pushing the school's behavioral boundaries. A student who misbehaves is a disoriented student. The DGG helps teachers and administrators provide clear and firm guidance so that students can reorient themselves and find their footing at school.

### **SOCIAL INCLUSION GROUP (SIG)**

Students are brought to the SIG when they are having difficulties in the social realm. These difficulties may be noticed by teachers or family members at recess or in the classroom and may

include (but are not limited to) non-inclusion, excluding/being excluded, and bullying/being bullied, teasing/being teased.

## **THE EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENT THREE STREAMS TEAM (8TST)**

Student participation is an important element of the Three Streams Approach. The eighth-grade students meet weekly to train as student mentors and helpers in the Three Streams of Student Support. They learn conflict resolution skills and reflect upon their own experiences to bring understanding and empathy to their work with the younger students. The eighth graders take an active role in supporting and guiding the younger students at recess under the guidance and supervision of the student support coordinator. They are asked to lead by example and to take an active role in contributing to the healthy social life of the school and community. In addition to weekly meetings they lead student trainings in the classroom, conduct assemblies, lead role-playing and skits in younger classes, mentor younger classes, and participate in Circles of Friendship or No Blame Meetings. (Please see the glossary for

explanations of these terms.) Each year they work with the school's Code of Conduct.

## **PARENT SUPPORT GROUP**

A group of trained parent volunteers provides ongoing support to the Three Streams process. Our **In-reach volunteers** serve as parent helpers in support circles. They are available to guide participating families through the support circle process or to take notes for the meetings. Our **Out-reach volunteers** help make the Three Streams approach more accessible to parents. They host "Parent Toolbox" discussion groups on parenting issues and convey information on the Three Streams process.

## **THE THREE STREAMS PROCESS**

The student support process aims to move the student's experience from challenge to resolution. It is a transparent process. Though we cannot resolve all difficulties to the satisfaction of all parties, we strive to address them promptly as they arise and to keep parents informed of our progress through the process.

Here's how it works:

### **1. A student comes to our attention.**

The Three Streams process begins when someone (teacher, parent, or student) notices that a child is "out of the flow" socially, behaviorally, or academically. Parents, teachers, and students each hold a valuable window into the child's experience. Parents or guardians know better than anyone how the child is at home. Teachers have the most direct experience of the child at school. Often, a student sees things that the adults do not. Here are examples of how the process moves from a parent, teacher, or child's observation:

- A teacher brings the child to the attention of the faculty, the Student Support Coordinator, or to the Three Streams Team after noticing

# COMMUNICATION FLOW CHART

COMMUNICATION POINT:  
A Parent, Teacher, or Student  
report a concern about a child

The Teacher  
observes the child  
more closely.

COMMUNICATION POINT:  
Teacher lets parents know  
what she's seeing.

COMMUNICATION  
POINT:  
Teacher lets parents  
know that TST is  
helping to support  
the child.

IF A CONCERN PERSISTS:  
The teacher brings the child to the  
attention of the Three Streams Team

CARE/  
LEARNING

DISCIPLINE/  
GUIDANCE

SOCIAL  
INCLUSION

RESPONSE  
PLAN

COMMUNICATION  
POINT:  
Teacher or TST  
member lets parents  
know what we're  
trying.

COMMUNICATION  
POINT:  
Teacher or TST member  
lets parent know how it's  
working.

After two-three  
weeks...  
RESOLUTION, or  
Back to the Three  
Streams Process

that the child is experiencing persistent challenges that are not addressed by the various implicit strategies.

- A parent notices his or her child is experiencing social, learning, or behavioral challenges. The parent describes what he or she is seeing to the teacher or the Student Support Coordinator. The teacher observes the child more closely with the parent's perspective in mind and, after working with a range of implicit strategies, brings the child to the Three Streams Team if the challenges persist.
- A child reports something that is happening for a fellow student to a teacher, a parent, or the Student Support Coordinator. The teacher observes more closely and brings the student to the appropriate Three Streams group if the problem persists.

In the case of a severe problem, the student moves immediately to the more explicit steps in the process.

## **2. Communication Point.**

The teacher reports to the parent (or back to the parent if the parent brought the matter to the teacher initially) to let him or her know what she

is seeing at school and how she is addressing the student's needs. When the teacher calls upon the support of the Three Streams process she notifies the parent.

**3. The child's teacher(s) meet with the members of either the Care/Learning, Discipline/Guidance, or Social Inclusion Group.**

When a student's challenges are not alleviated by implicit approaches the teacher meets with the appropriate stream to develop a response plan. (Response plans are described in detail on page 15.) A support circle may be held for the child at this point. (Support circles are described on page 19.) The plan is implemented for two to three weeks.

**4. Communication Point.**

The teacher or a member of the Three Streams Team notifies the parents of the plan: "Here's what we're trying."

**5. After two to three weeks, the teacher reports back to the Care/Learning, Discipline/Guidance, or Social Inclusion Group.**

If the situation has been resolved the process is complete. If it has not, the teacher meets again

with the CLG, DGG, or SIG either to extend the plan or to create a new one. Parents are informed of the new plan by either the teacher or a member of the Three Streams Team.

## **6. Communication.**

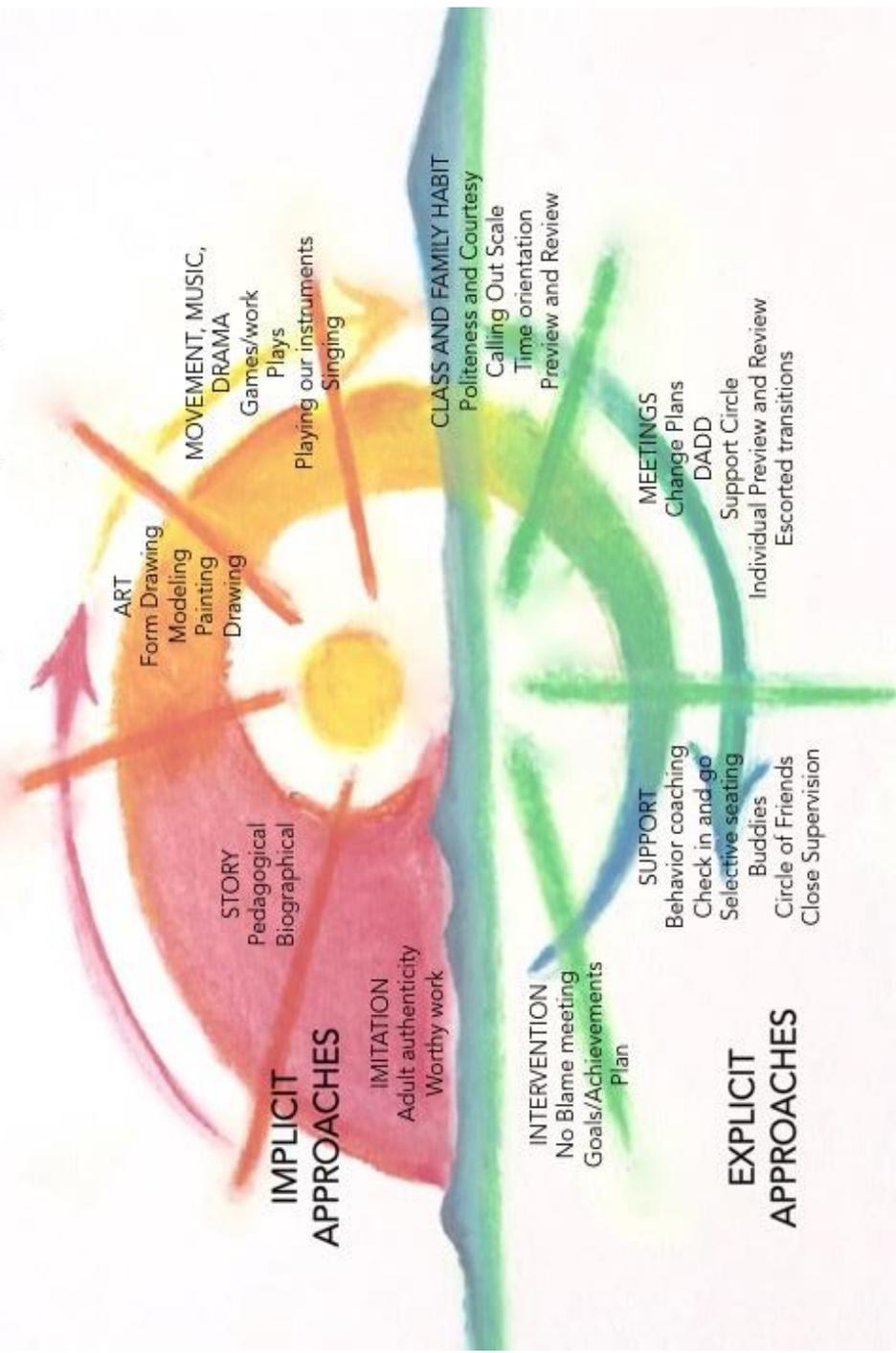
The teacher, or a member of the Three Streams Team, notifies the parent as to whether the child's issue is resolved or not. If not, and there is a new response plan, the parents hear what new responses will be tried by the teacher.

These steps are repeated until resolution has been reached. If resolution is slow in coming, the original supporting group may call upon help from the other two "streams."

## **THE RESPONSE PLAN—AN IMPLICIT TO EXPLICIT APPROACH**

The Response Plan is key to moving a student toward resolution. Each stream of the Student Support work has a compendium of tools to draw upon throughout the Student Support process.

# THE RESPONSE PLAN—Implicit to Explicit Approach



**IMPLICIT** (“not directly expressed,” pro-active)  
**APPROACHES:**

There are many pro-active supports built into the curriculum. They are implicit—the student is not consciously aware of them. These are our “lightest touch” approaches. They are embedded in our stories, music, art, speech, drama, therapeutic movement, developmental aspects of the curriculum, and daily rhythms.

Our curriculum begins by meeting children at their developmental stage. Classrooms are designed to keep social and sensory complexity low, with a high level of form and predictability. The various arts provide opportunities for learning through modalities other than the head. Each of the arts encourages a quality of listening to the other. Pedagogical stories tell of characters that experience struggles, and picture what works for them and what does not. Each day is rich in beneficial movement and a rhythm that moves in and out of focused work. The implicit strategies serve to diminish the need for explicit interventions.

## **LIGHTEST TOUCH EXPLICIT** (“directly expressed”) **APPROACHES:**

These approaches work with the whole class. Students are aware of them, but barely. They blend into the fabric of the day. Examples are (see the glossary for explanations of these terms):

- Buddy systems
- Politeness and courtesy
- Work with the Code of Conduct
- Connected Classroom
- A calling out scale
- A timing orientation
- Preview and Review (whole class)

## **EXPLICIT APPROACHES, FROM LIGHT TO HEAVY TOUCH:**

If classroom strategies are not orienting a student to productive learning and relationships, the teacher begins to work directly with the individual student. When we work with the individual, we are truly in the explicit realm. These approaches still include a range from light to heavy touch. Examples are:

- Selective seating
- Support circle

- DADD (Disapprove, Affirm, Discover, Do-over)
- A visit to the quiet room for a “re-set”
- A visit to another classroom for a “re-set”
- Behavior Change Plan
- No blame meeting
- Circle of Friendship
- Support from the Eighth-Grade Three Streams Team
- Escorted Transitions
- Goals and Achievements plan

## **THE SUPPORT CIRCLE—A MODERATE TOUCH INTERVENTION**

A support circle is often included in a student’s response plan. It is a meeting of the adults in the child’s life. It is facilitated and is one hour and fifteen minutes long. It is attended by the child’s parents or guardian, the child’s teacher or teachers, a member of the supporting “stream,” and trained parent helpers. The aim of the meeting is to find ways to build upon the child’s successes. A support circle may be requested by a teacher or a parent, and it is coordinated by the student support coordinator. There is follow-up after the meeting to see what progress has been made.

## **GLOSSARY OF APPROACHES:**

**Buddy System.** The use of eighth grade students to be friends to a class or a student.

**Calling Out Scale.** Assigning a number (1, 2, or 3) to a call-out and using a hand signal to alert a child to his or her call-out. One is "the right thing at the right time," two is "the right thing at the wrong time," and three is "the wrong thing at the wrong time."

**Change plan.** A meeting with a child, an adult, and an eighth grade student to explore what isn't working and how we might make it better.

**Check-in and go.** A student who is having difficulty during a transition to another class, the bathroom, or recess is asked to check in with the teacher before proceeding to the destination. During this brief check-in the student reviews the agreed-upon goals for the transition.

**Circle of Friendship.** A small group of people who are on the lookout for a child in need. It may include an empathetic classmate, teachers, and eighth grade students.

**Connected Classroom.** An approach to the lesson by the teacher that begins with warm connection, moves to direction, and ends with review and closing.

**DADD.** An approach to behavior that is out of line. It begins with disapproval (D) of the behavior and affirmation (A) of the person, followed by discovery (D—"What's going on today?") and do-over (D—"Let's try that again.")

**Eighth-Grade intervention.** Eighth-graders support children at recess by developing warm relationships with the younger students and by being present with small groups that are experiencing social difficulty. They are also assigned as buddies and as members of Circles of Friendship.

**Escorted Transitions.** A teacher escorts a student during transitions that are problematic for him or her.

**Explicit strategies.** Strategies that are directly expressed and apparent to students.

**Goals and Achievements Plan.** An agreement between a student and teacher to work on a particular behavior. It assigns a numeric value to how well a student has done. Both teacher and student set a goal and both track progress.

**Implicit strategies:** Strategies that are not directly expressed or apparent to the student.

**No Blame meeting:** A facilitated meeting among all parties involved in a social conflict or discipline issue. Each student has an assigned eighth grade helper.

**Politeness and courtesy:** A school-wide approach to creating form and predictability in the school community.

**Preview and Review:** A description of what is coming (preview) or a look at what just happened (review). A preview reduces anxiety, and a review helps a child to understand the effects of his or her actions. Previews and reviews can consider long or short periods of time (the coming school day, what just happened) depending upon the age of the child.

**Quiet room:** A place to send a disoriented child for a “re-set.”

**Response Plan:** A teacher’s plan for meeting a child’s needs.

**Selective seating:** This can refer to the child’s position in the room in relation to the teacher, to the teacher’s choice of desk partners for the child, or to a seating location with fewer possibilities for distraction.

**Support Circle:** A facilitated meeting of adults to focus on the needs of a child.

**Timing Orientation:** A visual scale in the classroom that demonstrates for students what type of classroom activity is occurring, how long it will be, and what the appropriate noise level is.

**Work with the Code of Conduct:** Explicit instruction in the meaning of the Code of Conduct. May be done by the teacher or the eighth grade students.

*The Zulu Greeting*

*"Sawubona" means "I see you" and the response*

*"Ngikhona" means "I am here."*