

Spring Valley School

frequently asked questions

Enrollment and tuition:

Students ages 4 through 19 many enroll at any time during the school year, which follows the traditional August through May schedule. Tuition is \$4,800 per year for the first child in a family, \$3,000 for the second child, and \$1,500 for each additional child in the family. Spring Valley now offers a Tuition Assistance Program for families who qualify. (For more information, call 727-781-1234)

How can my child learn if there's no curriculum?

Young people don't need predesigned classes in order to learn. Children are natural learners who actively learn all of the time. This is why it is so important that they be in environments that can respond to their interests and goals. Like other Sudbury schools, we at Spring Valley believe that imposing a meaningful curriculum is impossible, for every child is unique.

This school might work for children who are self-motivated, but my child isn't that inspired.

Our assumptions of what children should be doing influence our view of whether or not they are learning. When we set aside these expectations, children may find it easier to explore what interests them.

All children are self-motivated. This natural quality drives them to learn to walk, talk and explore the world around them. We allow this inner drive to strengthen and develop, carrying them into independent adulthood.

Sometimes young people, particularly those in conventional schools, lose touch with the knowledge that the world and all its possibilities are open to them. Spring Valley's atmosphere of freedom and respect provides an ideal environment for these students to recover their innate inspiration and self-motivation.

But if I let them, my kids would just play all day and not learn anything.

At Spring Valley, we have great respect for play. We don't try to modify it, interfere with it, or quantify it. Play in all its varied forms, is the "work" of young people. Play is not the opposite of learning. We see it as children's main

educational mode. It is through play that students can learn to concentrate, imagine, and communicate; through play that they can learn what their aptitudes and affinities are; And through play that they acquire skills they need to be successful.

Is Spring Valley a "free" school?

Unlike the "free" or "open" schools of the sixties, Spring Valley is firmly grounded in the democratic traditions upon which our country was founded. All school members, students and staff alike, have an equal vote in all matters, from adopting and enforcing the school rules to the annual election of the adult staff.

What is the role of staff?

Staff are much more than teachers, they are available to help students throughout the day. Whether tending a scraped knee or considering a difficult issue at the weekly School Meeting, staff members strive to meet the needs of both older and younger students. Staff build relationships with the students and take their interests and opinions seriously. As a result, students feel free to use staff not only as resources but also as partners in collaboration.

What about college?

Colleges and Universities across the country recognize the growing importance of schools such as Spring Valley. Transcripts and grades are no longer prerequisites for admission to most institutions. Harvard has a specific admissions officer assigned to candidates from homeschooling or unschooling backgrounds. Of course, the most important requirement for success in college, as in any of life's pursuits, is self-motivation. This is why graduates from Spring Valley and other Sudbury schools, who want to go to college, do- usually to the college of their first choice.

Spring Valley would like to thank the members of Cascade Valley School, who allowed us to adopt this information from their literature.