

ESCUELA CARACOL

Holistic Education for an Intercultural Community

San Marcos La Laguna • www.EscuelaCaracol.org



2011 Manual

Lic. Joshua Wilson, *Executive Director* • Andrea Arrivillaga Hurtado, *Technical Director & 3-4 Grades Teacher*
Angélica Martínez Oropeza, *1-2 Grades Teacher* • Courtney Wilson, *KinderCaracol Teacher*

Education for the Head, Heart, and Hands

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. – W.B. Yeats

Escuela Caracol provides education for children in the Lake Atitlán region that is:



- **Holistic**
- **Multilingual**
- **Arts-integrated**
- **Intercultural**

Our goal is to nurture and develop the *whole* child – not only the head but the heart and the hands as well – while also encouraging an awareness of humanity’s place within nature and the cosmos. Through this distinct approach, *Escuela Caracol* strives to foster integration within our *whole* community.



A Waldorf-Inspired Alternative

Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, let them go forth in freedom. – Rudolf Steiner

Escuela Caracol seeks to offer a solution to the dilemma of education for both indigenous and international families. In contrast to the overcrowded classes and authoritarian curricula of public schools, our intimate and holistic mode of learning promotes the development of well-rounded and freethinking individuals who possess **creative capacities useful in all realms of life**.

In Waldorf education, the artistic impulse imbues every lesson, including traditional academic subjects. The curriculum introduces academics in a gradual and age-appropriate manner that **promotes a lifelong love of learning and helps to prevent premature burnout**. The distinct focus on creative expression, practical work, and the natural environment also affords an exceptional basis for a unique cultural interchange.

KinderCaracol

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.

– Albert Einstein

KinderCaracol is a non-academic kindergarten for 3-6 year-old children that meets five days a week from 8:30am -12:00pm. Encouraging a sense of wonder and reverence for life is our pedagogical foundation. Upon this basis we plant the seeds of versatile creative capacities by **nurturing the imagination** and **strengthening the will**. An accent is placed on guiding children as they connect with their bodies, their imaginations, and the earth through creative play and practical work.





Fairy tales and folktales are highlighted that are rich in visual detail, have a bit of magic, and also embody rhythm and repetition. They are told on alternating days in different languages (Spanish, English, and Kaqchikel). Along with the stories, *KinderCaracol* also promotes an **appreciation of nature** and the seasons/festivals of the year. For this reason we have small planting projects and

continually monitor changes happening in the garden.

All of this is carried out with an accent on play, socialization, respect for one another and reverence for all living things. At this early age, children are encouraged but never required to participate in organized activity.

Primary Grades

Escuela Caracol currently offers a first grade class and blended second and third grade class. The curriculum of the primary grades can be seen as an ascending spiral, with extended classes each day and blocks of study that focus on a subject for 3-6 weeks. Each day begins with the “**main lesson**,” and during this time children study the traditional academic subjects. After a block of several weeks, we move to another subject. Great care is taken to teach each subject **through the arts and movement**. Whereas kindergarten children are taught largely by imitation, children in the grades begin to vastly **expand the horizons of the imagination**. The main lessons are primarily taught in either English or Spanish, depending on the proficiency of the teacher, and the other language classes are taught in the late morning (English, Spanish, Kaqchikel). After lunch, classes are held in the **specialty subjects**, like music, handwork, drawing, painting, yoga, dance, and physical education.



Students generally enter the first grade around 6 or 7, when the teeth begin to change. If there is doubt about whether entering the first grade is appropriate for a child given his/her stage of development, the grades teacher will conduct an evaluation of the child in consultation with the parents.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The days listed for vacation mark the first and last days without class. Classes begin the follow day. For example, when vacations end August 16th, the first day of class will be August 17th.

January 24th – December 9th, 2010

January 24:	Start of Classes
Feb 28 – Mar 7:	Vacation 1
April 18-26:	Vacation 2: Semana Santa

May 30 – June 7: **Vacation 3**
 July 18 – Aug 16: **Vacation 4**
 Sept 28 – 30: **Vacation 5**
 Oct 31 – Nov 4: **Vacation 6**
 Dec 9: Last day of classes

- We reserve the right to cancel classes two additional days during the year. We will make up for any missed classes that exceed this. In the case of unexpected cancellation, phone calls will be made to all parents and a sign will be placed on the school door.

TUITION & FEES

REGISTRATION FEE

Q1600.00
 Q25.00 with full sponsorship

TUITION

KinderCaracol

PERIOD	MONTHLY	ANNUAL
Full year (180 days)	Q600.00 (12 payment)	Q7200.00
Half year (>90 days)	Q675.00 (15 days)	--
Temporary (“Seasonal”)	Q750.00 (15 days)	--
With Sponsorship	Q20.00 (12 payments)	Q240.00

Primary Grades

PERIOD	MONTHLY	ANNUAL
Full year (180 days)	Q1295.00 (12 payments)	Q15,540.00
Half year (>90 days)	Q1425.00 (15 days)	--
Temporary (“Seasonal”)	Q1575.00 (15 days)	--
With Sponsorship	Q25.00 (12 payments)	Q300.00

Contracts less than a year: The minimum period to register is 15 days, and all charges after the first 15 days are in units of 15 days.

INTERNAL POLICIES

*Article 1°: **Escuela Caracol.*** Escuela Caracol is a private educational center that is co-educational, secular, multilingual, intercultural and arts-integrated. It is located in the town of San Marcos La Laguna in the department of Sololá, Guatemala. Classes are offered at the kindergarten and primary level following the pedagogy of Waldorf education.

*Article 2°: **Legal Regimen.*** Escuela Caracol follows the laws, regulations and dispositions of the Ministry of Education, including the obligations and rights of the students, the educators, the parents and the directors, as well as its internal procedures.

*Article 3°: **Pedagogical Principles.***

1. *Age-appropriate learning.* According to the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy, humans have a threefold nature, composed of body, soul and spirit, whose capacities unfold in three stages of seven years each. Waldorf education proceeds from this philosophy by educating children in accordance with their current stage of development, allowing for a healthy unfolding of childhood. This also includes an age-appropriate use of media and technology.
2. *A life-long love of learning directed towards the whole person (head, heart and hands).*
3. *Arts-integrated learning, creative expression and imagination.*
4. *Nature and its cycles.* This includes work and play with natural materials.
5. *Practical work.* This includes handwork, gardening, construction and cooking.
6. *Respect for all forms of life, and a special place for family and community life.*
7. *Honesty, integrity, and self-knowledge*
8. *A spirit of service toward others.*

*Article 4°: **Obligations of the Parents.***

1. *Absences.* Parents should advise the school of their children's absences as soon as possible. Students with five (5) or more unexcused absences risk losing their place in the class. Extended absences will be reviewed on an individual basis.
2. *Meetings.* Parents should attend all meetings with teachers and staff.
3. *Activities.* Parents should attend all school activities and offer their help in whatever manner possible.

*Article 5°. **Rights of the Students.***

1. Students at Escuela Caracol enjoy daily snacks, the cost of which is included in tuition. Lunches are provided for the primary class.
2. Students at Escuela Caracol have the right to physical, psychological and cultural respect.
3. Classes at Escuela Caracol are based on Waldorf education and take into account the programs established by the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Guatemala.

*Article 6°. **Obligations of the Students.***

1. Attend classes daily and on time.
2. Show respect to classmates, teachers and all school personnel.
3. Complete any homework in a timely manner.
4. Actively participate in the daily classes.

*Article 7°: **Economic Regimen.*** We offer three payment plans: annual (one time), semester (two times), and monthly (10 times). At the start of the school year, all payments must be made within the first week of classes. Monthly payments after that should be received in the school office within the first five days of the month. A 5% fee may be assessed for late payments. If you experience financial trouble, please contact the director immediately to discuss potential options.

*Article 8°: **Absences.*** Parents should advise the school of their children's absences as soon as possible. Students with 5 or more inexcused absences risk losing their place in the class. Extended absences will be reviewed on an individual basis.

*Article 9° **Arrival.*** Students should arrive **no earlier than 8:15 and no later than 8:35 each day.** Prior to the start of classes each day, teachers are usually very busy with preparations for the upcoming day. At the same time, when students arrive late, they either miss an important part of the day or set the class day behind. Please keep this in mind and plan to arrive. If you are going to be later than this, please call to let us know.

*Article 10°: **Departure.*** Classes end at 12:00 for *KinderCaracol* and at 2:30 for the grades. It is important to be on time to pick up your child, as teachers often have meetings and other responsibilities following the end of class. If lateness to pick up your child becomes a problem, a charge of Q. 10.00 per day may be assessed. If someone other than yourself will pick up your child, the teacher must be informed in advance with either a note or a phone call.

*Article 11°: **Requirements for Inscription.***

I. KINDERCARACOL

1. *Fe de edad*, copy of birth certificate or passport.
2. Inscription forms.
3. Contract Agreement.
4. Inscription fee.

II. PRIMARY CLASS

1. *Fe de edad*, copy of birth certificate or passport.
2. Certification of previous years of study.
3. Inscription forms.
4. Contract Agreement.
5. Inscription fee.

*Article 12°: **Discipline.*** In case of discipline problems with students, the following course of action is taken:

1. Verbal correction by the teacher.
2. Meeting with the parents.
3. Written warning to the parents.
4. Temporary suspension for up to 5 days.
5. Expulsion from the school.

*Article 13°: **Parent Meetings.*** Teachers meet with all the parents at least three times a year to discuss school matters. Additionally teachers meet with the parents of each child twice a year.

*Article 14°: **Scholarships.*** Escuela Caracol offers a limited number of scholarships to local families who cannot afford to pay tuition. These scholarships cover nearly all of the costs associated with tuition and fees. In order to qualify for a scholarship, parents must submit all inscription materials and request an interview with the director and the teacher in order to discuss the financial status of the family.

*Article 15°: **Calendar.*** The academic calendar of Escuela Caracol is a compromise between the official Guatemalan school calendar and the American school calendar. School begins in January and ends in December with various vacation periods throughout the year.

*Article 16°: **In Case of Accidents.*** In case of accidents, the school has standard first aid materials. In the case of more serious accidents, parents and/or emergency contacts (listed on the inscription form) will be advised by telephone.

*Article 17°: **Initial Probation Period.*** The first two weeks that a new student enters the school is a period of probation. Given the unique nature of Waldorf pedagogy, it is very

important that the family and the school are compatible. During these first weeks, if the director or the teacher decide that the school and the family are not compatible, the school reserves the right to terminate the Contract Agreement with the family.

*Article 18°: **The Values of the School.*** The values of the school include family and community life, nature, creativity, a healthy unfolding of childhood, age-appropriate learning and use of media/technology, and a focus on the integration of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual capacities of humans. As a reflection of these values, the school asks that families agree to **limit to a minimal level the time that children watch television**, especially during the school week. Additionally, the school asks that families agree to encourage children in games that promote cooperation, imagination, and respect for nature and all forms of life.

*Article 19°: **Child Protection Policy.***

INTERNAL POLICIES

1. An adult always supervises students at all times during the school day.
2. Provided there is not an official after-school activity for students at the school, the supervision of the students applies to the official schedule of classes – starting at 8:30am and ending at 12:00pm for the kindergarten and 2:30pm for the primary grades.
3. Students are not to be alone and out of sight with a single adult. In such cases, there should be at least two adults present.
4. Students enter the bathroom alone. There should not be two or more people in the bathroom at the same time. In case of emergency, the teacher should call for another adult to be close by while assisting the student. Exceptions can be made in the case of written and signed authorization from a parent.
5. Anyone wishing to participate at the school whether for work or as a volunteer should read the Student Protection Manual and sign agreeing to respect its policies and guidelines.
6. Before receiving a volunteer or contracting a specialty teacher, the school will review the references and history of the person. This person should meet with faculty members for an initial interview. For principal teachers, the school will follow the same procedure as well as requesting a criminal record.