

# Waldorf School Media White Paper

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We are often asked why we don't use computers for instruction at the Waldorf School of Lexington, and why we recommend a screen-free life for our students at home, especially in the early childhood and elementary years.

Technology can be a wonderful tool for teaching, learning, and boosting productivity, which is why our middle school students learn to touch-type and use the Internet for research. However, technology has a long history of promising more than it delivers in education.

The hype of educational technology dates back to the 1800s, when educators were encouraged to use “magic lanterns” (early slide projectors illuminated with candles or oil lamps) to engage students—followed by the film projector, laser discs, CDs, and now laptops, tablets, and iPads. Sadly, while such devices have syphoned billions of dollars from education budgets, none has been a gateway to academic excellence.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, study after study warns of the harm technology and media use pose for children, particularly during the early years of critical brain development. While neural networks are being established, children need to experience and interact with real people and the real world—not screens.<sup>2,3</sup>

Ask experts what 21<sup>st</sup> century skills young adults need, and you won't find “computers” or “technology” at the top of the list. Instead you'll see things like collaboration and teamwork, creativity and imagination, critical thinking, problem solving, and flexibility and adaptability.<sup>4,5,6</sup> The Waldorf curriculum from preschool through grade 8 is beautifully designed to cultivate all of these essential capacities in our students.

At the Waldorf School of Lexington, our classrooms are screen-free, and our students thrive, both academically and socially. Waldorf teachers bring academics to life with vivid narratives, class discussions, hands-on experiments, artful chalkboard drawings, and other engaging techniques—all without the use of computers.

Technology and digital media use at home are strongly discouraged. Instead we recommend free play, outdoor exploration, reading, crafts, games, dinnertime conversation, and other healthy, developmentally appropriate activities.

Our “unplugged” approach is backed not only by current research, but by the hundreds of thoughtful, creative, successful students who have graduated from the Waldorf School of Lexington during its 47-year history — and the thousands who have graduated from more than 1,200 Waldorf schools worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> [Computers 'do not improve' pupil results, says OECD](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Screen Addiction Is Taking a Toll on Children](#)

<sup>3</sup> [What Screen Time and Screen Media Do To Your Child's Brain and Sensory Processing Ability](#)

<sup>4</sup> [13 Essential 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills for Today's Students](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Skilled for Success?: Raising a 21st Century Workforce](#)

<sup>6</sup> [The Critical 21st Century Skills Every Student Needs and Why](#)