



Mālamalama Waldorf School

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Aloha Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your interest in Mālamalama Waldorf School as part of your child's educational experience. Our school was founded in 1978 and is one of over 900 Waldorf schools worldwide - making Waldorf the largest independent school movement currently in the world.

Mālamalama Waldorf School serves children from Preschool through Grade Eight. Our students journey through a rich and engaging academic curriculum integrated with artistic experiences in the fine arts, performing arts, movement education and music. Our programs are designed to meet and nurture children through each phase of their development - body, mind, and spirit. Parents of our students experience a warm and welcoming participatory environment. We strive to build community in our classrooms, among families and within our neighborhood.

Mālamalama Waldorf School seeks children and their families that are a good fit with our school and its philosophy. We are looking for those who share our values and are interested in:

- A curriculum which is developmentally appropriate to the child, addresses the child's need to learn in a tactile as well as intellectual way, and in which formal academic instruction begins in the first grade;
- Creating within the child a genuine inner enthusiasm for learning that is essential for educational success throughout life;
- Helping to create a peace-filled, kind, tolerant, low media, community environment allowing each child to safely unfold at his/her own pace;
- Upholding a healthy and nurturing, rhythmical life at home that allows the young child to develop to their full potential.

Enclosed you will find information that will help familiarize your family with our school and Waldorf education in general. We encourage you to further your understanding of the uniqueness and relevance of Waldorf Education as a part of your child's educational life and home life as well. You will find the ideals in Waldorf education to be a source of inspiration, and an answer to many of today's educational concerns. Please visit www.whywaldorfworks.org for more information on Waldorf Education.

You are invited to visit our school so that you may experience our campus in person. If you find yourself with additional questions, would like to reserve a space at an open house, or to schedule a tour, please feel free to call our school and we will be happy to assist you further.

Warmest Regards,
Mālamalama Waldorf School Administration



Waldorf Frequently Asked Questions & Curriculum

Excerpts from http://www.whywaldorfworks.org/02_W_Education/faq_about.asp

What is Waldorf Education?

Developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, Waldorf Education is based on a developmental approach that addresses the needs of the growing child and maturing adolescent. Waldorf teachers strive to transform education in to an art that educates the whole child—the heart and the hands, as well as the head.

Is Waldorf similar to Montessori?

These two educational approaches began with a similar goal: to design a curriculum that was developmentally appropriate to the child and that addressed the child's need to learn in a tactile as well as an intellectual way. The philosophies are otherwise very different.

Are Waldorf schools religious?

Waldorf schools are non-sectarian and non-denominational. They educate all children, regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds. The pedagogical method is comprehensive, and, as part of its task, seeks to bring about recognition and understanding of all the world cultures and religions. Waldorf schools are not part of any church. They espouse no particular religious doctrine but are based on a belief that there is a spiritual dimension to the human being and to all of life. Waldorf families come from a broad spectrum of religious traditions and interest.

What is the curriculum like in a Waldorf school?

Waldorf Education approaches all aspects of schooling in a unique and comprehensive way. The curriculum is designed to meet the various stages of child development. Waldorf teachers are dedicated to creating a genuine inner enthusiasm for learning that is essential for educational success.

Preschool and Kindergarten children learn primarily through imitation and imagination. The goal of the kindergarten is to develop a sense of wonder in the young child and reverence for all living things. This creates an eagerness for the academics that follow in the grades. Preschool and Kindergarten activities include:

- storytelling, puppetry, creative play
- singing, eurythmy (movement)
- games and finger plays
- painting, drawing and beeswax modeling
- baking and cooking, nature walks
- foreign language and circle time for festival and seasonal celebrations

Elementary and middle-school children learn through the guidance of a class teacher who stays with the class ideally for eight years. The curriculum includes:

- English based on world literature, myths, and legends
- history that is chronological and inclusive of the world's great civilizations
- science that surveys geography, astronomy, meteorology, physical and life sciences
- mathematics that develops competence in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry
- foreign languages; physical education; gardening
- arts including music, painting, sculpture, drama, eurythmy, sketching
- handwork such as knitting, weaving, and woodworking

Does Waldorf Education prepare children for the "real" world; and, if so, how does it do it?

It is easy to fall into the error of believing that education must make our children fit into society. Although we are certainly influenced by what the world brings us, the fact is that the world is shaped by people, not people by the world. However, that shaping of the world is possible in a healthy way only if the shapers are themselves in possession of their full nature as human beings.

Education in our materialistic, Western society focuses on the intellectual aspect of the human being and has chosen largely to ignore the several other parts that are essential to our well-being. These include our life of feeling (emotions, aesthetics, and social sensitivity), our willpower (the ability to get things done), and our moral nature (being clear about right and wrong). Without having these developed, we are incomplete—a fact that may become obvious in our later years, when a feeling of emptiness begins to set in. That is why in a Waldorf school, the practical and artistic subjects play as important a role as the full spectrum of traditional academic subjects that the school offers. The practical and artistic are essential in achieving a preparation for life in the "real" world.

Waldorf Education recognizes and honors the full range of human potentialities. It addresses the whole child by striving to awaken and ennoble all the latent capacities. The children learn to read, write, and do math; they study history, geography, and the sciences. In addition, all children learn to sing, play a musical instrument, draw, paint, model clay, carve and work with wood, speak clearly and act in a play, think independently, and work harmoniously and respectfully with others. The development of these various capacities is interrelated. For example, both boys and girls learn to knit in grade one. Acquiring this basic and enjoyable human skill helps them develop a manual dexterity, which after puberty will be transformed into an ability to think clearly and to "knit" their thoughts into a coherent whole.

Preparation for life includes the development of the well-rounded person. Waldorf Education has as its ideal a person who is knowledgeable about the world and human history and culture, who has many varied practical and artistic abilities, who feels a deep reverence for and communion with the natural world, and who can act with initiative and in freedom in the face of economic and political pressures.

There are many Waldorf graduates of all ages who embody this ideal and who are perhaps the best proof of the efficacy of the education.

—From *"Five Frequently Asked Questions"* by Colin Price; originally printed in *Renewal Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2003

Why do Waldorf schools teach reading so late?

There is evidence that normal, healthy children who learn to read relatively late are not disadvantaged by this, but rather are able quickly to catch up with, and may overtake, children who have learned to read early. Additionally, they are much less likely to develop the "tiredness toward reading" that many children taught to read at a very early age experience later on. Instead there is lively interest in reading and learning that continues into adulthood. Some children will, out of themselves, want to learn to read at an early age. This interest can and should be met, as long as it comes in fact from the child. Early imposed formal instruction in reading can be a handicap in later years, when enthusiasm toward reading and learning may begin to falter.

If reading is not pushed, a healthy child will pick it up quite quickly and easily. Some Waldorf parents become anxious if their child is slow to learn to read. Eventually these same parents are overjoyed at seeing their child pick up a book and not put it down and become from that moment a voracious reader. Each child has his or her own optimal time for "taking off." Feelings of anxiety and inferiority may develop in a child who is not reading as well as her peers. Often this anxiety is picked up from parents concerned about the child's progress. It is important that parents should deal with their own and their child's apprehensions.

Human growth and development do not occur in a linear fashion, nor can they be measured. What lives, grows, and has its being in human life can only be grasped with that same human faculty that can grasp the invisible metamorphic laws of living nature.

—From *"Five Frequently Asked Questions"* by Colin Price; originally printed in *Renewal Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2003

Would a child be at a disadvantage if he were transferred from a public school into a Waldorf school, or out of a Waldorf school into a public school?
Children who transfer to a Waldorf school in the first four grades usually are up to grade in reading, math, and basic academic skills. However, they usually have much to learn in bodily coordination skills, posture, artistic and social activities, cursive handwriting, and listening skills. Listening well is particularly important since most of the curricular content is presented orally in the classroom by the teacher.

The human relationship between the child and the teacher is the basis for healthy learning, for the acquiring of understanding and knowledge rather than just information. Children who are used to learning from computers and other electronic media will have to adjust.

Those children who enter a Waldorf school in the middle grades often bring much information about the world. This contribution should be recognized and received with interest by the class. However, these children often have to unlearn some social habits, such as the tendency to experience learning as a competitive activity. They have to learn to approach the arts in a more objective way, not simply as a means for personal expression. In contrast, in their study of nature, history, and the world, they need to relate what they learn to their own life and being. The popular ideal of "objectivity" in learning is misguided when applied to elementary school children. At their stage of development, the subjective element is essential for healthy learning. Involvement in what is learned about the world makes the world truly meaningful to them.

Children who transfer out of a Waldorf school into a public school during the earlier grades probably have to upgrade their reading ability and to approach the science lessons differently. Science in a Waldorf school emphasizes the observation of natural phenomena rather than the formulation of abstract concepts and laws. On the other hand, the Waldorf transferees are usually well prepared for social studies, practical and artistic activities, and mathematics. Children moving during the middle grades should experience no problems. In fact, in most cases, transferring students of this age group find themselves ahead of their classmates. The departing Waldorf student is likely to take along into the new school a distinguishing individual strength, personal confidence, and love of learning.

—From *"Five Frequently Asked Questions"* by Colin Price; originally printed in *Renewal Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2003

Why do Waldorf schools recommend the limiting of television, videos, and radio for young children?

A central aim of Waldorf Education is to stimulate the healthy development of the child's own imagination. Waldorf teachers are concerned that electronic media hampers the development of the child's imagination. They are concerned about the physical effects of the medium on the developing child as well as the content of much of the programming.

There is more and more research to substantiate these concerns. See:

- *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think* by Jane Healy
- *Failure To Connect: How Computers Affect Our Children's Minds For Better and Worse* by Jane Healy
- *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* by Jerry Mander
- *The Plug-In Drug* by Marie Winn
- *Evolution's End: Claiming The Potential of Our Intelligence* by Joseph Chilton Pearce

What about computers and Waldorf Education?

Waldorf teachers feel the appropriate age for computer use in the classroom and by students is in high school. We feel it is more important for students to have the opportunity to interact with one another and with teachers in exploring the world of ideas, participating in the creative process, and developing their knowledge, skills, abilities, and inner qualities. Waldorf students have a love of learning, an ongoing curiosity, and interest in life. As older students, they quickly master computer technology, and graduates have successful careers in the computer industry.

For additional reading, please see *Fools Gold*, a special report from the Alliance For Childhood (www.allianceforchildhood.org).

How do Waldorf graduates do after graduation?

Waldorf students have been accepted in and graduated from a broad spectrum of colleges and universities including Stanford, UC Berkeley, Harvard, Yale, and Brown. Waldorf graduates reflect a wide diversity of professions and occupations including medicine, law, science, engineering, computer technology, the arts, social science, government, and teaching at all levels.

According to a recent study of Waldorf graduates:

- 94% attended college or university
- 47% chose humanities or arts as a major
- 42% chose sciences or math as a major
- 89% are highly satisfied in choice of occupation
- 91% are active in lifelong education
- 92% placed a high value on critical thinking
- 90% highly values tolerance of other viewpoints

A Waldorf class teacher ideally stays with a group of children through the eight elementary school years.

What if my child does not get along with the teacher? This question often arises because of a parent's experience of public school education. In most public schools, a teacher works with a class for one, maybe two years. It is difficult for teacher and child to develop the deep human relationship that is the basis for healthy learning if change is frequent.

If a teacher has a class for several years, the teacher and the children come to know and understand each other in a deep way. The children, feeling secure in a long-term relationship, are better able to learn. The interaction of teacher and parents also can become more deep and meaningful over time, and they can cooperate in helping the child.

Problems between teachers and children, and between teachers and parents, can and do arise. When this happens, the college of teachers studies the situation, involves the teacher and parents—and, if appropriate, the child—and tries to resolve the conflict. If the differences are irreconcilable, the parents might be asked to withdraw the child, or the teacher might be replaced.

In reality, these measures very rarely need to be taken. A Waldorf class is something like a family. If a mother in a family does not get along with her son during a certain

time, she does not consider resigning or replacing him with another child. Rather, she looks at the situation and sees what can be done to improve the relationship. In other words, the adult assumes responsibility and tries to change. This same approach is expected of the Waldorf teacher in a difficult situation. In almost every case she must ask herself: "How can I change so that the relationship becomes more positive?" One cannot expect this of the child. With the goodwill and active support of the parents, the teacher concerned can make the necessary changes and restore the relationship to a healthy and productive state.

—From *"Five Frequently Asked Questions"* by Colin Price; originally printed in *Renewal Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2003

How can a Waldorf class teacher teach all the subjects through the eight years of elementary schooling?

The class teacher is not the only teacher the children experience. Each day, specialty subject teachers teach the children eurythmy, handcrafts, a foreign language, instrumental music, and so on.

The class teacher is, however, responsible for the two-hour "main lesson" every morning and usually also for one or two lessons later in the day. In the main lesson, she brings all the main academic subjects to the children, including language arts, the sciences, history, and mathematics, as well as painting, music, clay modeling, and so on. The teacher does in fact deal with a wide range of subjects, and thus the question is a valid one.

A common misconception in our time is that education is merely the transfer of information. From the Waldorf point of view, true education also involves the awakening of capacities—the ability to think clearly and critically, to empathetically experience and understand phenomena in the world, to distinguish what is beautiful, good, and true. The class teacher walks a path of discovery with the children and guides them into an understanding of the world of meaning, rather than the world of cause and effect.

Waldorf class teachers work very hard to master the content of the various subjects that they teach. But the teacher's ultimate success lies in his ability to work with those inner faculties that are still "in the bud," so that they can grow, develop, and open up in a beautiful, balanced, and wholesome way. Through this approach to teaching, the children will be truly prepared for the real world. They are provided then with the tools to productively shape that world out of a free human spirit.

—From *"Five Frequently Asked Questions"* by Colin Price; originally printed in *Renewal Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2003

Please see the *Outline of Waldorf Curriculum, Grades 1-8* for more information →

Outline of Waldorf Curriculum, Grades 1 thru 8

| | Mathematics | Language Arts | Natural Sciences | Social Science & Literature | Geography |
|----------|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | geometric forms • count to 100 • rhythmic patterns • qualities of number • beginnings of 4 processes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) • mental arithmetic • word problems • number sequences and relationships • Roman numerals • odds and evens | letter forms and sounds • letter blends • oral recitation • writing words and simple sentences • beginning reading with one's own writing as text • word families • poetry | the kingdoms of nature through storytelling | fairytale from around the world | wonders through observations of nature |
| 2 | form drawings • number sequences and relationships • continue with 4 processes • borrowing and carryings • system of place value • multiplication tables through movement and recitation | more letter blends and word families • writing • reading • punctuation • grammar • poetry • speech | the kingdoms of nature through storytelling Animal stories through fables | fables from around the world • saint legends | environment through observation |
| 3 | form drawings • multiplication tables • larger numbers with the 4 processes • beginning long division • time • money • weights • measures • use of ruler • scale models for house building | curative writing • reading • writing • composition • spelling • grammar • poetry • drama • speech | human activity in nature: farming, gardening, house building, grains, clothing around the world • cooking | Old Testament stories • comparative cultures in studies of houses, food, and clothing • Native American legends | practical studies |
| 4 | weights and measure • long division • fractions • number sequences and relationships • factoring • prime numbers • continued drill work | reading • writing • grammar • spelling • letters: business/friendly • poetry • speech • drama • creative writing | human beings and animal studies | Norse mythology • local natural resources, native peoples, early settlers | geography of own surroundings and Washington State • mapmaking |
| 5 | fractions • decimals • geometric forms • averages • metric system • continued drill work | composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama | botany | ancient mythologies and histories: India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece • North American culture | North America • mapmaking |
| 6 | ratio • proportion • profit / loss • discount • interest • percentage • graphs • estimation • geometry • continued drill work | composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama | geology • physics: heat, light, acoustics, magnetism, electricity | Roman history • medieval history | lands & oceans physical geography of the world economic interdependence cultural geography (religions, traditional lifestyles, etc.) |
| 7 | algebra • geometry • graphs continued | composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama | human physiology and nutrition • physics (continued) • mechanics • astronomy • chemistry inorganic | Renaissance • age of exploration | |
| 8 | algebra • geometry • practical applications • continued drill work | composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama | physics (continued), plus hydraulics, aerodynamics • meteorology • human anatomy • chemistry organic | modern history • 18 th -20 th centuries: revolutions in politics and industry | |

The Arts: drama, drawing, painting, modeling, poetry, song, eurythmy, and musical instruments are woven throughout the main lesson subjects in all of the grades. As the students reach the higher grades, more advanced artistic skills are introduced in separate lessons of woodwork, perspective drawing, stringed instruments, choir, music and handwork. In addition to the main lesson subjects, our school offers special subject lessons in foreign languages (German and Spanish), and games/physical education.