

Waring School

CORE HANDBOOK

2018-19



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Core Handbook

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TO PARENTS

We welcome all of you to the Core program at Waring. In time we hope to get to know your names and faces and feel your presence among us. To help you understand our distinctive approach, we have prepared the following handbook. It is not exhaustive but we hope it will guide you in the process of joining our community. *Please be sure to also read the main Waring School Family Handbook for fuller coverage of some of these topics.*

The Core years are our way of introducing young students to the program and values of the Waring School. Our intention is to teach them the skills they will need to be successful in our demanding upper-school program and wherever they go from there. As they move up from Core, we want students to have acquired habits of active thinking and reading, skills in analytical thinking and reasoning, and a strong foundation in clear, expressive writing and speaking. We also want Core students to become strong community members who care about the people around them, who are willing to take positive risks and speak up for what is right, who listen well, value the ideas of others, and treat everyone with respect.

SOME NUTS AND BOLTS

Punctuality and Attendance

Classes begin promptly at 8:00 am, so we ask students to arrive by 7:55 at the very latest, in order to be where they are supposed to be and ready to begin on time. Students who arrive late should check in at the office before proceeding to class. We ask parents to make every effort to ensure that their children are on time: chronic lateness is disruptive both to your child's learning and to the smooth running of our classes.

Parents should call the school office if their child is sick and is going to be late or absent. *Please refer to the Waring Family Handbook for specifics on the Presence Policy*, as well as for guidelines on deciding when to keep a sick child at home. We ask new parents in particular to note that student attendance is required at certain events that occur outside regular school hours, such as Convocation, Baccalaureate and Graduation, the Winter and Spring Concerts, and Core Night. Please note the dates for these events and plan accordingly. Field trips, including overnight trips such as Camping Trip and the Core trip to Montreal, are likewise part of our program, and we expect all students to participate.

Mailboxes, Cubbies, Messages and Communication

Each student has a mailbox in the front hallway. Students should check their box daily for important notices from the office or for handouts or returned work from their teachers. They should not leave books or other materials in their mailbox.

We also provide students with a personal cubby for books, sports clothes, lunches, and other personal belongings in or around the Grande Salle. The cubbies are organized by tutorial so that your child's cubby is next to others of the tutorial. We ask students not to leave food in their cubbies overnight. They should also not leave valuables in their cubby.

If you need to reach your child during the school day, you should call the office, and Mrs. Cahill will leave a message for your child on the office bulletin board. *Please do not call or text your child's cell phone, as we require student phones to be turned off and out of sight during school hours.* Similarly, if

students need to call their parents, they should ask permission to use the office phone or to use their cell phones in the office.

The communications office provides information to parents through three major sources. The newsletter, *Le Mois Prochain*, appears at the beginning of every month and contains information for the upcoming month. A weekly email is also sent out with updates and urgent information. The third information source is our website. Updates are posted on our homepage at www.waringschool.org. We rely on families to check the page for emergency notices, school closings, and daily information.

Backpacks and Supplies

Students should always have the books and materials they need for each class. In their backpack, they should keep a pencil case with pens and pencils, eraser, pencil sharpener, and ruler. They should also always have their planner and their accordion folder, and depending on which math class they are in, they may need their calculator. At intervals, they will be asked to bring supplies like colored pencils, or a protractor or compass.

As they wind up their homework each evening, students should check their schedule to make sure that they have what they need for each class the next day: books, notebooks, homework, and supplies. They should make sure they have their instrument and music if they have a lesson the next day, and their sports gear if they have taken anything home to be washed. We ask parents to help Core students organize their backpacks so that they have what they need, but are not overloaded with things they do not need. *Non-current work and handouts should not be thrown out or recycled*, but should be stored in a 3-ring binder, sectioned by subject, that stays on their desk at home. At home, students should also have a stapler, hole-punch, glue-stick, scissors, markers, and other supplies for visuals.

Lunches and Snacks

The school day at Waring is a long one, and kids get hungry. We recommend that you pack a substantial lunch (with a refillable water bottle) as well as a healthy snack for the mid-morning break and another for a boost before sports in the afternoon. Please avoid sending coffee and other caffeinated drinks with your child. Students may use the microwaves in the Victor Hugo room to heat lunches, although on Tuesdays, which are tutorial lunch days, they should bring a non-microwave meal and go straight to their Tutorial location.

Focus/Flex

On three mornings a week, our schedule includes a 40-minute period of unscheduled time that we call Focus/Flex. This is a time that students use in many different ways. They can meet with a teacher for some extra help, catch up on unfinished homework, work on a group project, practice with a music ensemble or vocal group, play a game of chess, or simply read a book. Sometimes a teacher will also schedule a student for extra help at this time, or a student's Tutor will arrange for this. While we begin from an assumption that we can trust students to use this time well, we occasionally have to help them learn to do so, and students who do not make good use of Focus/Flex may find their time more closely managed.

Technology

Students need access to a computer with Internet connection and word-processing software, and to a printer. The computer must have speakers and voice-recording capability for use in nightly French homework. We recommend a headset with microphone, as the built-in computer recorder usually does not make recordings of sufficient clarity or volume. Some students prefer to use their phone for this. Students will need to email nightly voice recordings to their French teacher.

Most Core students have not had to type much of their work before coming to Waring, and they may find they are slow at this. Nevertheless, we do require some assignments to be typed, in particular anything that will need to be revised, such as weekly assignments for Writing class, Humanities essays, and longer projects in both Science and Humanities. Typing speed increases with practice. If students are unable to print their work at home, they must make sure to plan ahead so as to be able to use one of the school printers BEFORE class.

While we do need students to be able to receive email French recordings and to send and receive emails when checking on assignments or working on group projects, it is **not** necessary for Core students to have their own email address. If you prefer to have your child use your email address so as to better monitor his or her Internet activity (and also to cut down on distractions), this is fine.

New students and their parents will be asked to read and sign our Technology Acceptable Use Agreement before they can begin to use the school computers. A copy of this agreement is available as an appendix to the Waring School Family Handbook.

Attire

Everyday attire should be clean and in good repair. It should not be overly tight or revealing, and underwear should not be visible. In addition, hats may not be worn in class. *Please refer to the Family Handbook for more specific guidelines.* We ask parents to help Core students not only follow the guidelines for appropriate school wear, but also to make good clothing choices as regards comfort and practicality: a sweater and a warm coat in winter (our buildings are heated with energy conservation in mind, and students walk between buildings to change classes), rain gear when wet weather threatens, and practical shoes – our campus can be tricky to negotiate in high heels.

We sometimes ask students to wear *Dress Day* clothes, for example on field trips or for certain school occasions such as Convocation, Baccalaureate, and Commencement. Dress Day clothing consists of skirts or dress pants for girls and collared shirts tucked into pants for boys. No jeans, no sneakers, no sweatshirts.

For the Winter and Spring Concerts, we ask all students to wear *Concert Dress*. The Performing Arts faculty will outline these requirements as the Concert approaches. Typically, these consist of all black *from the waist to the floor* (dress pants, long skirts, shorter skirts with black tights or dressy leggings, black dress shoes), with a white long-sleeved shirt or blouse on top. Boys wear jackets and a colorful tie, and girls are encouraged to wear one colorful accessory (e.g. scarf, headband, belt).

Conduct

Students and parents should read the Family Handbook for detailed information regarding expectations and consequences in the area of serious disciplinary issues. For ordinary, day-to-day expectations we offer the following:

- Don't chew gum anywhere on the Waring campus, at any time. Leave the gum at home.
- Don't wear a hat in class.
- Eat and drink only in designated areas, at the appropriate times.
- Clean up after yourself wherever you do eat.
- Keep your cell phone turned off and put away in your backpack at all times.
- Leave iPods and other music systems at home.
- Take responsibility for your own work: no collaborating on homework unless instructed by a teacher.
- Bring what you need for each class and have it out on the table, ready to begin.
- Take responsibility for making each class a good one: be prepared, listen actively, contribute, ask questions.
- Take care of our environment: recycle, dispose of trash appropriately, don't damage school property or anyone's property.

Core class groups and the program

Core is a time of transition for both students and parents. Most students will find that our program is different from what they were used to at their former schools, and they will likely find some aspects challenging. We are committed to supporting the student and family as they adapt to different expectations, and we encourage parents to communicate with their child's tutor and teachers when bumps and hurdles arise.

Most Core classes include both 6th and 7th graders, as even in Math and French, which are sectioned by skill level, students come to us with varied skills. Depending on the subject, and on the number of students in Core in a particular year, different subject areas may be sectioned into two, three, or four groups. Teaching teams work together to plan the syllabus, with sections working in tandem or independently as needed. We try to mix and balance class sections so that students are not always with the same group, and so that they get to know all their classmates. The Core teachers meet together and communicate regularly regarding both the whole group and individual students.

Typically a student who comes to Waring having completed the 5th grade will spend two years in Core, and a student who has completed the 6th grade will spend one year in Core. However, all students are different, and sometimes an extra year in the Core program can be of great benefit to a student who may need more time to work on skills.

Advising

Each Waring student is part of a multi-age group called a **Tutorial**, led by one or two **Tutors**. Tutorials share cabins on Camping Trip and meet together twice a week throughout the year for lunch, discussions, and other activities. The tutor is your child's advisor and is the first person you or your child should turn to with questions or concerns. We also encourage you to communicate with the tutor regarding any educational diagnostic testing that your child may have had, as well as to generally stay in touch with him or her, so that we can fully support students and families. If the tutor cannot help you with a concern, he or she can direct you to the person who can.

Your child can often devise a solution to a problem with the tutor's help. As much as possible, we encourage students to go directly to tutors or teachers with problems. Solving problems themselves, without parental involvement, is empowering for students. However, we also recognize that Core students have not always reached this level of maturity and may need encouragement from their parents to approach their tutor for help.

Tutors regularly bring up issues regarding their tutees to the rest of the faculty. This is a good way to identify and address larger issues in the whole group or in the school. The tutor is also involved in any disciplinary action concerning your child, as is the Dean of Students.

Tutorials are each responsible for taking care of a particular area of our campus, usually during "Hands-to-Work" time on Fridays. Depending on the area, they may empty recycling bins, stack chairs, clean boards, water plants, put equipment away, or sort out Lost and Found bins. Each tutorial also has Lunch Duty for two weeks at a time once or twice each year, when they are responsible for cleaning up in the Victor Hugo room and other areas after lunch.

Evaluations and Conferences

Core students receive rubric-style evaluations four times a year. These provide detailed information on students' progress, though they will typically be briefer at midterm and more detailed at semester-end. They point out areas of concern and areas where students are on more solid footing in class preparation, skills specific to each subject, class participation and behavior, and they also include comments pertaining to particular curriculum units. It is important for parents to keep in mind that we do not expect Core kids to excel across the board, and that it is more likely that there will be multiple areas where "Not yet demonstrated" or "Meets expectations" are indicated. These are *not* grades. Just as our narrative evaluations for older students talk as much about areas for improvement as about what students have

done well, Core rubric evaluations are far more about progress and growth than about rating our youngest students against some absolute scale, at an age when they are all at different stages of development. It is our hope that detailed feedback over the course of the year will allow parents, teachers, tutor and student to have meaningful conversations about the trends they are seeing, set priorities, and make shorter and longer term goals.

Conferences between the tutor, parents, and student take place in November and February. The conference is a chance to discuss your child's evaluations and look at his or her overall progress, address problem areas, and discern trends to encourage or discourage. Students as well as parents should read the evaluations so that the conference can be a discussion that involves everybody. You can also, of course, make contact with the tutor at any other time as well.

Academic and Learning Support

In cases of routine difficulty with classwork, homework, or assessments, the teacher works with the student directly. This may include individual meetings with the student during Focus/Flex. Persistent difficulties will be brought to the attention of the student's tutor who, with the teacher, will consult with the Academic Support Specialist. This team will work together and with the family to find the best possible solution to support the student. In some cases the school's Social Worker and/or Consulting Psychologist may be contacted about behavioral issues that are impacting student success.

If a student has documented learning disabilities, these should be brought to the attention of the Tutor at the beginning of the year and shared with the Learning Support team (Academic Support Specialist, Social Worker and Consulting Psychologist), who keeps all such in a confidential file, but shares relevant information with the students' teachers.

Electives

First Lego League is a nationwide robotics competition. This will be our second year competing, and we hope to build on what we learned last year. A team of Core, Group One, and eligible Group Two students will learn programming and robotics in our maker-space, and will work together to build and program robots. We will meet on two to three afternoons a week and take part in tournaments on some weekends. Space in this elective is limited. New team members will learn programming and other robotics basics during the first semester, before joining the main team the second semester. More details are available from Francis Schaeffer.

Math Team is open to students who want to play with and puzzle through a variety of math problems and ideas. The group will meet on Mondays during the 3:30-5:00 pm Elective period. Core and Group 1 students will also participate in the Middle School Math League, travelling to other schools once a month on Thursday afternoons to compete as a team in problem solving exercises. We will "play math," working together on fun and challenging problems, making mathematical discoveries and finding and sharing interesting strategies.

In addition to FLL and Math Team, some upper-school electives, as appropriate, and subject to space being available, may be open to Core students as well. These electives generally take place on Mondays between 3:30 and 5:00pm. More details regarding the current year's offerings will be available during the first week or two of classes.

Core Sports and Winter Electives

All Core students participate in sports, whether on our JV teams or on an instructional team. Sports in the fall (soccer) and spring (lacrosse) take place on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons, from 3:30 to 5:00. Core students who are not on JV teams may choose to go home at 3:20 on Wednesdays. However, students who qualify for and join the JV teams waive their right to go home early on Wednesdays and are expected to participate in all scheduled practices.

During the winter, Core sports (instructional basketball) are held during the day. Students need clean indoor, white-soled basketball shoes in order to protect our gym floor.

On winter afternoons, students have a choice between going home after academic classes on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (Monday and Thursday dismissal times do not change) and staying for electives. This winter the afternoon electives will be Art (one afternoon), and Theater (two afternoons, with additional rehearsals likely as the production date approaches). Seventh-graders may also try out for the JV Basketball teams in addition to playing instructional basketball during the day. More information about these programs will be available in late October. Once an activity has been chosen, we expect the student to continue participation until the end of the season.

At the beginning of each season, and once students know whether or not they will be on a JV team, we ask parents to fill out a form with their child's choices for the afternoon. These forms are available at the back of this handbook.

Core Night

Just before the Thanksgiving Break, Core will present an evening of performance drawn from several classes. The classes most suited to such a production are usually Chorus, Immersion Dance, Theater, French and Humanities. We also often have displays from Science, Art or Math classes. This gives parents a chance to see some of the work classes have done at the beginning of the year. ***Please make sure that your child does not have another commitment on this evening, as everyone's participation is essential.***

Field Trips

Core takes frequent field trips. Local trips to the Boston Symphony Orchestra and to the Peabody Essex Museum or the MFA are a regular part of our program. We send out an email announcement a week or so before the trip, in which appropriate clothing, departure and arrival times and lunch arrangements are spelled out. You can also find announcements of upcoming trips in *Le Mois Prochain*.

Core usually takes an overnight trip as well. We generally travel to Montreal for three days (usually Wednesday to Friday) in April. We stay in a youth hostel, visit museums and other sites, and eat in restaurants. Students are closely supervised during these trips.

Field trips are valuable and exciting additions to our academic program, but we also think of them as steps in the process of learning how to travel well and responsibly as a group. Core groups who are cooperative and well-behaved in Boston and Salem show that they are ready to go to Montreal. Groups who cannot be trusted in local situations cannot be expected to take the next step. Individual students may also be excluded from the trip if we do not feel confident of their behavior. Therefore parents should know that we will plan a Montreal trip for Core only if we feel confident that students are ready to take this step. An additional fee is charged to cover the cost of the trip.

HOMEWORK AND PARENTAL SUPPORT

Homework at Waring

Waring students are expected to do all their homework. This may seem obvious, but sometimes students in other schools are allowed to get by with only doing some of the work and passing the tests. At Waring, not doing homework hampers progress and limits what students can gain from a class. It is not busy-work, but is an essential part of processing the ideas and concepts we present in our classes, and is indispensable in the skill development we are working at. Therefore, we take it seriously and keep after students to make up work if it is not handed in on time.

Many of our students have never experienced difficulty with homework before coming to Waring. They have always been at the top of their class, often with minimal effort. At Waring we seek to challenge everyone, and we believe that everyone has a lot to learn. We try to awaken a love of learning which will keep your children motivated all of their lives. At the Core level, we are working to give your children the skills they need to mature intellectually.

Students who have difficulty with many skill areas will have a harder time with our program. However, we are committed to helping your child build these skills. It is important to remember that this is a gradual process. For this reason the homework load seems to get easier as the year progresses. Difficulty with homework should be brought to the attention of the tutor, and modifications can be worked out for individual students to help them as they develop the skills they need. Because skills are more developed after a year in Core, homework usually feels more manageable in the second year. We believe that when we set high goals while at the same time providing encouragement and support, students grow and begin to reach their potential. It is this growth that motivates and rewards the student, and also drives our school.

Everyone's homework evening is different...

Because students come to Waring with different skills, a reading assignment that takes one student 15 minutes will take another 30 minutes. One student's math level might make a science assignment go faster than another's. A passion for art may drive one student to spend more time working on a visual than another student.

The best place to work is also different for everybody. Some students do well in the quiet and solitude of their bedroom. Others are better off at the kitchen table, with parents close by to keep them on task. Families together figure out how much supervision each child needs. Some students are able to sit down to it, work efficiently and thoroughly, and get everything done with barely an occasional check-in by a parent. Others need close supervision so that assignments are not skimmed or forgotten. Most fall somewhere in the middle. As students mature, we want them to learn to take greater responsibility for their work so that the parent's role gradually diminishes.

...but there are some guidelines common to all.

Students need to spend time every evening doing homework. Parents can guide their children by helping them to set aside a regular study time. Ideally this should be at least an hour or two each evening. The first step is to keep this time free of television, phone-texting, social media, and video games. Despite some students' claims that they work better while listening to music, studies have shown that this is not the case. Similarly, flipping back and forth between the homework task and a social media site will inevitably impede concentration, lengthen the time required to complete the task, and diminish the quality of the work. Many families ban television, social media, and video games altogether during the school week, and find that once they do this their children are able to work much more efficiently as well as get to bed at a reasonable hour.

When students develop regular habits they can be more efficient about getting the work done. You might help your child schedule a short break in the middle of the evening. Homework time should also include 20-30 minutes of music practice three or four times per week if your child is taking music lessons.

At the beginning of the year we provide Core students with a planner that we have chosen because it provides plenty of room to write down assignments. If your child has trouble getting assignments copied down accurately, speak to your child's tutor. If there are questions about the assignment, your child can call or email the teacher for clarification (please do not call after 9:00 pm). We will talk with students about how to compose a polite email with a greeting, clear text, and a signature.

In general, we want students to be responsible for their assignments. If a pattern of missed work develops we try to call or email parents. But we also encourage you to contact us if you have concerns. If your child claims to have no homework assigned several days in a row, there is a problem that you should investigate. If students are getting to bed regularly at an unreasonable time, we need to know about it. In general, if your child has put in the homework-time allotted for the evening and it is bedtime, but the work is not finished, send him/her to bed and send a note to school the next day. If the problem persists, talk to the child's tutor.

When students are absent it is their responsibility to make up the work missed as soon as possible. If the absence is brief, they should call a classmate for the assignment. (We urge parents to encourage their children to take on this responsibility themselves rather than rely on a parent to email teachers for homework.) They should get any handouts from the teacher. They should ask a friend for notes. If the absence is of long duration the parent can call the tutor to coordinate getting assignments from the teachers. The tutor can also help work out a reasonable schedule for making up large quantities of work. *Please consult the Waring Family Handbook for the procedure to follow in the case of a necessary planned absence.*

At Waring we give some assignments to be completed during vacation periods. We understand that families travel and have commitments, and we try to tailor the assignments accordingly. For example, the Beginner French recording over the Thanksgiving weekend might ask for a description of the people who were at dinner. We usually ask students to do some reading over the December and March breaks. We don't expect students to do as much work during vacation, but we do require some work. We also expect that students will continue to practice their musical instrument during this time.

Ways parents can help with homework

Parental support of their children's academic work and ethical development is fundamental to students' growth and long-term success. The question for many parents, as they too navigate their way through Waring, is how much help to give with homework, and also what kind of help.

Core students will not always be successful. They may do poorly on a test or not turn in their work on time. These are learning experiences. We want you to encourage your children, to place high but realistic expectations on them, to help them organize their time, to help them find ways to work successfully. We don't want you to *do* their work, however. Here we offer some suggestions for how to balance this effectively:

- Ask questions that help students think through a Humanities reading themselves. Don't give them your interpretation: this is likely to be far too sophisticated, and they will just be parroting you rather than learning to interpret and analyze for themselves.
- Ask them to explain what they think a Math or Science exercise is about. Have them re-read the directions. Help them to identify the source of their confusion and ask a specific question (rather than "I don't get it"). Push them to use their resources (notes, handouts, textbook) to find strategies.
- Show them how to organize their notes if they look like a mess to you, but don't do it for them.
- Remind them to follow directions – and help them find any directions that they may have buried at the bottom of their backpack instead of filing in their accordion folder.

- Remind them to do their French recording *early* in the evening so that it's easier to recall and reproduce class material. Please don't prompt them or translate for them, even if you speak some French.
- Provide the necessary art supplies for visuals, posters, and the like, but let the student plan and execute the assignment.
- Help them proofread their written work, but have them figure out how to correct the errors once you've pointed them out.
- Listen to them practice their oral presentations, and give them feedback.
- Help them check their planner and their schedule to be sure that they have done what they need to do for the next day and that they have all their materials.
- Encourage them to build self-advocacy skills by emailing teachers with questions, approaching teachers for help during Focus/Flex, meeting with a peer-tutor, or emailing a classmate.
- Remember that self-esteem and a feeling of success only ever come from meeting challenges and overcoming obstacles oneself. If Mom or Dad does the work, the student instead feels inadequate, and thinks that he or she must be incapable of doing it.

If an assignment has been too difficult, the teacher wants to be able to see this when the work comes in. If some parents mask this effect by providing extensive help, the teacher doesn't get accurate feedback. As always, if you have concerns, call or email so that we can talk about it: the sooner a problem is identified, the sooner steps can be taken to alleviate it.

SOME SKILLS WE WORK ON IN CORE

Organization

Some students find that staying organized is an easy task. Many more find it something of a challenge. However, everyone can improve once they set good habits in place. Organization starts with being able to find what you need. We encourage students to have a pouch for their pens, pencils, eraser, ruler, colored pencils, highlighters, etc. We furnish Core students with an accordion folder in which to keep loose papers and homework for all classes, as well as with notebooks for each class.

We also provide a planner that we have chosen because it provides plenty of space in which to write down assignments for each class. Students need their planner every day, both at home and at school. We believe that giving Core students the responsibility of writing down assignments themselves, rather than posting them on a website, encourages kids to take more active ownership of their work. Teachers and parents together help kids learn to use the planner and keep it current.

Reading and marginalia

We give a lot of reading assignments at Waring. We ask students to read actively, pen or pencil in hand, marking important passages and noting questions, connections, and recurrent themes. These marginalia help students participate effectively in the next day's discussion as well as find material to develop for notecards and essays.

Especially at this age, students read at different speeds. If your child is a slow reader, we encourage you to talk to the teacher. It may be a good idea for the teacher to temporarily modify the length of your child's assignments or to find other solutions to help manage the work. If your child has difficulty with

longer novels, a good trick is for you to read the first 50 pages or so aloud (they should be looking at the text as you read, marking their book). This gets them used to the language and sentence structure the author uses and often makes the rest of the book much more manageable. For some students, listening to an audiobook may also be helpful, though here again, they should follow along in their book while listening, pen or pencil in hand, so as to be able to mark their book.

Discussion

Almost all Waring classes depend on discussion. Students are encouraged to learn to take part without raising their hand. They gradually learn to find a good entry point into the conversation to make their contribution, and to support their ideas with evidence from the text. For many students one of the hardest skills is to listen to what others have to say and respond to their classmates, rather than just offering their ideas to the teacher. Some students find it difficult to speak up at all. The teacher functions as a discussion leader and tries to encourage the timid and restrain the overexcited.

Note-Taking

We work with students to learn to take notes. Very few Core students come to Waring with much expertise in this area. Students start by learning to write down the date and a few points from each class. Notes from lectures and from readings are especially important in preparing for tests. Often poor test scores reflect weaknesses in note-taking. As students learn to take better notes, to distinguish the important from the trivial, to identify names and events referred to in class, and to relate details to the "big picture," their test scores improve steadily.

Test-Taking

Being successful on tests requires that students master a whole range of skills. In Core we view tests as an opportunity to teach students how to review a body of material, pick out the important elements, and put these details in a context that allows the whole to make sense. Most tests at Waring will not be of the multiple-choice type, but will require students to show their reasoning and to learn, gradually, to put together a clear essay-type response. Depending on the subject, some tests may be open-notes or allow a notes-sheet as a way to help students learn how to use their notes effectively. We work with students on developing a detailed but concise study sheet. We often conduct review sessions in class with the teacher and with small peer groups. We expect students to study for tests. However, test scores do not always reflect the time a student has spent studying. Especially with younger students, factors such as nerves, organizational skills and time management all play into a student's performance on tests. We ask parents not to judge their child's scores in an absolute way, but rather to look for progress.

Research

Core students undertake research projects in different subject areas each year. They learn how to make use of library and Internet resources as well as about the difference between primary and secondary research. We teach them how to cite their sources correctly and we also begin the discussion about plagiarism and academic honesty.

Oral Presentations

We frequently ask students to prepare oral reports in different subject areas. These are usually brief (3-5 minutes). We expect students to prepare and to rehearse their presentation, and to use index cards for prompts on key points, names and dates. We often ask them to present their report to their parents so they can get some feedback before they bring it to class.

SOME INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT AREAS

HUMANITIES AND WRITING

Humanities

Humanities class combines the study of Literature and History, with forays into Current Events, Art History, Music, and World Religions as needed. The blending of these disciplines allows us to situate novels, short stories and poetry in a time and place, and also to use literature to gain additional perspective on historical events. In alternate years, the Core Humanities curriculum is centered on Asia (primarily India and China) and on Africa (with units on West Africa, Colonialism, South Africa, and Ancient Egypt).

Spelling and Grammar

We don't give spelling tests in Core. In Humanities class, we mark misspelled words on homework papers, and students keep a spelling log on which they enter words that have been marked on their homework papers. The idea is to become aware of words they consistently misspell, and to learn these. Some of these words are common to other students, but more usually they vary greatly between students. In Humanities class we begin the year by handwriting most assignments. Students who type their work after these first few weeks should use spell-check to keep track of the words that they miss most frequently.

We talk about grammar both in Writing class and in Humanities. As with spelling, topics such as capitalization, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure are addressed as issues come up in students' writing, with a combination of whole-class exercises and individualized help. Some individualized help may take place outside class.

Writing

Core Writing classes follow a workshop format, taught by responsible, trained Junior and Senior Teaching Assistants under faculty supervision. Students spend much class time reading their writing pieces aloud and listening to their classmates' feedback. They learn how to give thoughtful, helpful responses and also how to use the responses they receive in revising their own pieces. All assignments are typed, so that they may be more easily revised. Students produce a portfolio of polished pieces by the end of the year. Parents are asked to contact the supervising faculty with any concerns, rather than addressing these directly with the Teaching Assistants.

Students also do extensive writing as part of Humanities class. This writing is usually of two types: *notecards* and *essays*.

Notecards

A notecard is a brief reaction to a reading assignment. Notecards are often assigned with nightly reading. The purpose of a notecard is to encourage students to reflect on the reading so that they will be prepared for discussion the next day. Often these preliminary thoughts are the basis for class discussion.

In Core, a notecard is generally about a paragraph long. Students should write their name, the date, and the pages of the reading assignment at the top of the sheet. They can pose an interpretive question about the reading and write an answer to it, using textual support to back up their assertions. They can make

observations and connections between the reading and earlier readings or their own life. A notecard is not a plot summary.

Because the purpose of the notecard is preparation for the next day's discussion, it is of much less use when it is done late. If time is an issue the student should read just part of the assignment and write a brief notecard. If students are having trouble with the notecard assignment they should speak to their teacher or their tutor about ways to make progress. The teacher reads these notecards and gives students regular feedback on their ideas. This is a valuable part of training in analytical and literary thinking.

Essays

In Core, students write between two and four Humanities essays each year. We work on helping students choose and analyze a topic by creating a thesis statement and an outline before they begin to write. This is a closely supervised process and a good deal of class time is given to preparing the first outline. The essay is written sometimes at home, sometimes in school. If the preparation is done properly, the writing should not take more than two or three class periods. Essays should always be typed, in order to facilitate the revision process. If your child is not skilled on the keyboard, helping them with the typing is often a good idea. Your child will be expected to do a partial or whole revision. These revisions focus on both style and structure. We expect the student to respond to the comments on the paper and to turn in the original draft along with the revision so that the teacher can see how the comments were interpreted. Students are given at least two days for this revision process. We expect it to be a serious undertaking. This time also gives students a chance to ask questions if they haven't understood the teacher's comments.

Primary and Secondary Research

Each spring in Core Humanities we do a project that is based on research. One year, this is based on immigration, and the other, it is about the history of the towns in which our students live.

The projects usually take about six to eight weeks. We give the students an overall outline at the beginning of the project, and ask them to share this with their parents. Parental support may be needed at various stages, from taking the student to the public library, to helping them set up interviews, to providing art supplies for a poster. We ask students to do both library and internet research and to conduct one or more interviews. The project is divided into steps so that the student has a specific task each weekend. It culminates in a final comprehensive presentation that includes a written report, a poster, and an oral presentation, to which parents are invited. The purpose of these projects is to help students understand that research is akin to detective work, that history is the story of real people's lives, and that large projects are accomplished by step-by-step progress.

Memorization

Memorization is, sadly, a dying art in our world. We believe that it is a valuable skill that improves with practice. To this end we have a program of memorizing poetry each week. Students are given one week to memorize a short poem, or part of a longer one, that they recite the following week. We choose a wide variety of poems. Sometimes they are poems linked by subject matter or authorship to the area we are studying. We also try to introduce students to some of the great writers of the world by selecting poetry these authors have written. This feature of our program introduces students to rich vocabulary and figures of speech. The intention is that students work a little bit each day on their poem. This could be a task for the car or the breakfast table. It can also be a good activity to do with parents. Some students make a recording and play it over during the week to help them learn the piece.

FRENCH AND IMMERSION

Our French program begins in Core and leads to Montreal, Angers, Paris and Provence. Core students begin the study of French through speaking and listening in our oral-based program, and have additional exposure to French through Immersion classes in some subject areas.

French

Until January, the beginning French classes are entirely oral. Like all French classes at Waring, they are conducted solely in French. There is regular homework in the form of audio recordings. Students record themselves speaking for one to two minutes a night, following each French class. These assignments are emailed nightly to the teacher. This regular exercise is the key to the rapid progress and authentic accents our students are known for. There are no shortcuts. Students make progress as a function of the regularity of this effort. You can help your child by helping to set up the computer for voice recording. Instructions are available on the Waring website under French Resources. Your encouragement is also essential. If problems develop, call your child's tutor or French teacher and discuss the situation.

Immersion

In addition to our French classes we teach some content areas in French through our Immersion Program. There are three Immersion classes each week in Core, devoted to Humanities topics and to Music. We cover topics that are best learned in a hands-on situation. We find that presenting topics this way is very age-appropriate, and that doing it in French is stimulating. Students have homework in these classes, although this usually involves less writing than other classes.

The first few weeks at the beginning of the Immersion Humanities curriculum are devoted to learning French numbers. We also begin geography, first working with basic concepts and moving on to topics that complement our regular Humanities curriculum. Since most geographical terms and names are easily transferred between French and English we have found that Immersion class is an excellent place to work on this important subject.

In Immersion Music, students learn dance, rhythm, the instruments and composition of the orchestra, as well as some music theory.

MATH

In the Core Math program, students acquire the skills and conceptual understanding for success in secondary school mathematics. We begin by reinforcing computational skills using fractions and decimals, and then develop algebraic thinking, building on the skills learned before coming to Waring. The Core Math sequence provides a bridge from arithmetic to algebra, with increasing levels of abstraction, and allows students to hone their problem-solving and numeracy skills, introducing them to geometry, data analysis, and probability. Upon completion, students will usually be ready for a full-year Algebra course.

Organizational and study skills are an explicit focus, as in all of Core. We want students to become adept at communicating what they know about the math in writing, using proper mathematical notation and quantitative reasoning. During class, we expect students to engage in discussion, maintain a notebook, and work collaboratively. We ask them to make an honest effort on homework. As needed, online resources are offered to bolster skills, including Khan Academy content. Students may be asked to re-submit work to demonstrate mastery. Calculators are used appropriately, but we emphasize mental math skills also.

If students are having difficulty or wish for additional challenge, teachers are available during Focus/Flex periods, and peer tutoring is also available. We offer Math Team as an elective for students interested in pursuing more math problem-solving opportunities and competing against other area schools.

SCIENCE

The Core Science program is a two-year cycle that alternates between a Biology-based program and a Physics-based program. As with other Core courses, we stress skills and concepts while presenting a significant amount of science content from a theme-based approach. We help our students learn what the scientific approach is like; what a scientific question is, and how to answer it; what and how to observe; how to measure and how to report results. Students learn how to represent data graphically and what the difference is between counting and measuring numbers. We teach students how to use the microscope, balance and other laboratory tools. Students have both laboratory and lecture classes.

We also work with students to develop note-taking skills and to develop confidence in taking tests. We want students to see how good notes can help them in their course work and provide a solid foundation for strong study habits and successful performance on tests.

Students are frequently asked to write about Science readings or activities. These writing pieces often go through a revision process based on peer and teacher critique. This process helps students develop strong writing skills that enhance their work in all areas of the curriculum.

Finally, students are asked to make presentations to the class several times each year. The preparation for these and the post-presentation critiques help the students develop strong public-speaking skills.

ART

Core students have a double period of Art each week during the Fall and the Spring. In the Winter, Art becomes an afternoon elective.

Drawing is the primary focus of the Art Program at Waring. It is taught as a skill that everyone can learn with practice. We use drawing as a means to look at the world actively, and with greater depth and clarity. For this reason, students are usually asked to draw from direct observation, not from imagination or photographs. Students are assigned weekly sketchbook homework. The sketchbook assignments are an important opportunity to practice drawing, and the sketchbook becomes a record of the student's progress.

HEALTH

Core Health focuses on six basic areas: relationships (with friends, with family, with peers); intimacy, gender and sexuality (including adolescent growth and development), substances (from alcohol and drugs to social media); mental health (with a focus on de-stigmatizing the subject); self-care (including nutrition, sleep, exercise, and relaxation); and "staying alive," (which includes first aid and self-defense). The program works to create a safe environment where students can gain age-appropriate information, explore their questions, and make bonds with their peers.

PERFORMING ARTS

Music

Each student has the opportunity to take private music lessons during the school day. Students who come to Waring already playing an orchestral instrument or the piano, and who wish to take lessons here at school, are scheduled with teachers in that area, subject to availability. Drum, guitar, and voice lessons are available, but may have a wait list.

Music lessons take place during class time. We make an effort to schedule lessons so that students rotate between which classes they miss. We try not to take beginning students out of French class during the

first half of the year when the course is oral, and we try to make sure that students don't frequently miss a class that is difficult for them.

New students who wish to start lessons at Waring should talk with their parents, their tutor and the Music teachers about the best options. We will make every effort to pair new students with their instrument of choice. However, there may be times when, either for the good of the student or for the good of the school (in achieving the right balance of instruments needed for our ensembles or orchestra), we encourage a student to choose between a particular set of instruments. There may also be times when a certain instrument (or teacher) reaches a numbers limit. In this case, we will need to defer to seniority and to those who show the strongest commitment to their lessons. We expect students who take lessons to show commitment by practicing regularly and coming to lessons fully prepared to take advantage of the program offered. Students who are not serious about their lesson preparation or attendance will eventually be advised to withdraw from the lessons program.

Core Chorus is another important part of the music program. All Core students sing together in Core Chorus. They work on a variety of skills such as listening, voice control, ear training, singing in harmony, singing with expression, and working together as an ensemble. Core Chorus provides young students, who in most cases have little previous experience, an opportunity to learn the basics of choral singing. As a small chorus, it also provides the more experienced singers in the group with leadership opportunities and sometimes opportunities for solo work.

In addition, for first-year Core students, there is one music period a week that is part of the French Immersion program (see French and Immersion section above). Second-year students have a period of Music Theory.

Core students take at least one trip to the BSO to attend an open rehearsal. These trips are on Thursdays. Students wear Dress Day clothes. We often go out to eat at the Prudential Center or at a restaurant after the performance. We generally try to seek out a second field trip opportunity as well, either in music or theater.

Theater

There is a double period of theater each week in Core. In the fall, this class culminates in a brief production which is part of Core night in November. There is also a winter production planned, usually for late February or early March. Students interested in this production should plan to choose the Theater afternoon elective option (both days) in the winter. Principal actors may have a third afternoon of rehearsals and the full cast will have extra rehearsals as the production draws near. The Winter production is often a Musical, whether exclusively a Core effort or as part of an all-school production.

IN CONCLUSION

We hope this handbook has you heading in the right direction. We hope to get to know you as we see you around our campus: at soccer games, conferences, musical soirées, theater performances, concerts, and other occasions, and we look forward to many conversations as you and your children become integral members of the Waring School Community.

AFTERNOON OPTIONS FOR CORE

FALL 2018

(to be turned in at the office *after* team assignments are announced)

On WEDNESDAY afternoons in the fall sports season, Core students who are not on the JV Soccer teams have the option to go home after classes at 3:20 pm rather than staying for sports. Students on JV teams waive their right to go home early and are expected to attend all scheduled practices. Parents should also note that if a Core student cannot be picked up at 3:20 pm due to carpool constraints, he or she must be in sports practice, as Core students may not be on campus unsupervised.

Please fill in the following with your child's choice for Wednesdays.

Student's name: _____

(check one)

____ will go home at 3:20 pm

____ will remain for soccer practice with the Charge team

____ will remain for soccer practice with the JV team

Parent's signature: _____

**AFTERNOON OPTIONS FOR CORE
WINTER 2018-2019
(to be turned in at the office by Tuesday, 6 November)**

On TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY afternoons in the winter, Core students have the choice between staying on campus for electives and going home at 3:20 pm, as their sports periods shift to earlier in the day. This winter the choices will be Theater and Art. In addition, 7th graders may try out for the JV Basketball teams. More detailed information will be presented to the students and emailed to parents in October.

***Theater** will take place on Tuesdays and Fridays. Students who sign up for this option will need to commit to both days. As the production date approaches, additional rehearsals will be scheduled, particularly in the final week.*

***Art** will take place on Wednesdays.*

***JV Basketball** will take place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with the possibility of occasional late games. If a student tries out and does not make the team, he or she may still sign up for other electives.*

*Once the choice has been made, we expect students to continue to participate for the whole season. As in the fall, parents should note that if a Core student cannot be picked up at 3:20 pm due to carpool constraints, he or she **must** be in an elective, as Core students may not be on campus unsupervised.*

Please fill in the following with your child's choice for each of these afternoons.

Student's name: _____
(check appropriate selections)

1. ___ will remain for **Theater** on Tuesdays and Fridays
2. ___ will remain for **Art** on Wednesdays
3. ___ will remain for **JV Basketball** on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (7th grade only)

AND / OR

4. will go home at 3:20 pm on
 ___ Tuesdays
 ___ Wednesdays
 ___ Fridays

Parent's signature: _____

**AFTERNOON OPTIONS FOR CORE
SPRING 2019
(to be turned in at the office after team assignments are announced)**

On WEDNESDAY afternoons in the spring sports season, Core students who are not on the JV Lacrosse teams have the option to go home after classes at 3:20 pm rather than staying for sports. Students on JV teams waive their right to go home early and are expected to attend all scheduled practices. Parents should also note that if a Core student cannot be picked up at 3:20 pm due to carpool constraints, he or she must be in sports practice, as Core students may not be on campus unsupervised.

Please fill in the following with your child's choice for Wednesdays.

Student's name: _____

(check one)

____ will go home at 3:20 pm

____ will remain for lacrosse practice with the Charge team

____ will remain for lacrosse practice with the JV team

Parent's signature: _____

