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**Top 20 Questions Asked by New Families**

1. **What** **makes The Windward School unique?**

The Windward School is a school for children with language-based learning disabilities who possess average to superior intelligence and are not meeting their academic potential in a regular school setting. The Windward program provides a specialized, language-intensive curriculum, small class settings, and highly trained teachers who work to build and strengthen academic skills, confidence, and self-reliance in a warm and supportive classroom environment.

1. **What is a typical stay at The Windward School?**

Typically, our students stay 3 – 5 years before returning back to a mainstream setting. Windward gives families about one year’s notice prior to the student’s last year. The Outplacement department works closely with parents/guardians in determining the best possible next steps. Support and assistance with possible school options and school requirements is offered.

1. **What is the curriculum at The Windward School?**

Reading, writing, and the content subjects are taught with a strong emphasis on language competence, skill development, and cognitive strategy. Students are grouped within their grade level according to their levels of development in language arts and mathematics. Students are grouped heterogeneously in other content areas and special-area subjects.

All students have three 45-minute periods of language arts daily. These periods include oral language, reading, spelling, and writing. The Windward School uses the PAF program for reading and spelling, a multisensory Orton-Gillingham-based program. The writing program enables students to develop the skills they need to write clear, linguistically complex sentences, paragraphs, and compositions. In addition to language arts, each student has a daily period of math. The math program is designed to develop a strong understanding of the language and vocabulary of math. Concepts are broken down and emphasis is placed on understanding the language of word problems. Additionally, students have regularly scheduled periods of social studies, science, art, music, library, technology, and physical education. All areas of the curriculum are language based, sequential, and highly structured. Our program gives students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to return to and be successful in a mainstream school.

1. **What does direct instruction mean?**

A direct instruction teaching model is used throughout the School to deliver the curriculum. Teachers follow this direct instruction model—a structured, systematic, and effective research-based methodology—in order to maximize students’ academic growth. The direct instruction model is an explicit approach to teaching that includes both a specific instructional design and delivery procedures. Students are provided with a purpose and rationale for learning a new strategy or skill, clear explanations, demonstrations, and time to practice with teacher feedback until mastery is achieved.

1. **Will my child get homework at Windward?**

Windward’s program is a rigorous one, and our students need practice and reinforcement of skills. Therefore, homework is assigned every single night. The amount and time it takes depends on the grade level of your child and their specific needs. No matter what, you can expect students to be reading every night, completing a writing assignment, and continuing to practice what is being taught in their math class. Students in grades 5 and up will also have assignments in other content areas as well. Aside from reading aloud (for younger students), the expectation is that students are completing homework on their own without the help of a parent/guardian. Windward believes that the ability to complete homework is the first step in becoming an independent learner.

1. **What is the typical class size?**

There are usually two teachers and approximately twelve students in each academic classroom; this provides maximum time for direct instruction by highly trained teachers and helps students achieve success.

1. **Who are Windward’s teachers?**

The Windward School’s faculty is composed of teachers who have received intensive training in the School’s specialized multisensory instructional strategies through the Windward Teacher Training Program. Windward’s teachers are accomplished at building and strengthening academic skills in an atmosphere that is warm and supportive and fosters a student’s self-reliance and confidence. Regardless of education or previous employment experience, new Windward faculty members typically spend two years as an assistant teacher before assuming head teacher responsibilities.

1. **Does Windward offer a social/emotional curriculum?**

The Windward School understands that achieving academic competence alone is not enough for our students. To help prepare them to return to mainstream education, we also provide them with opportunities for social and emotional growth. Windward offers special programs for lower and middle school students that are specifically designed to help them. They include programs that help students understand and manage their emotions; develop friendships and manage social situations; develop empathy for others; understand how they learn; learn how to advocate for themselves; boost their self-confidence and build self-esteem; and succeed socially and academically in a mainstream environment.

1. **What extracurricular activities do you offer?**

The Windward School is committed to providing its students with a variety of offerings designed to support their non-academic interests. Extracurricular activities such as athletics, the arts, and clubs are structured to meet the needs of both lower and middle school students and serve as opportunities for students to build and maintain friendships.

1. **What time does the school day start and end?**

The doors open on all campuses at 8:00 a.m. with an arrival time until approximately 8:25 a.m. Dismissal is at 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 1:30 p.m. on Fridays. For those students who participate in after-school activities, 4:30 p.m. is typically the pick-up time.

1. **What school supplies need to be purchased for the upcoming school year?**

None! Windward will provide all the school supplies your child will need.

1. **Do you offer a lunch plan at school?**

All campuses have fully functioning kitchens in the dining halls. Windward’s food provider is Flik, and students can choose to be on the lunch plan for all days or just for “pizza Fridays.” Each day, there are many options offered, from a hot food entree that includes a vegetable, to sandwiches, salads, and a variety of fruits and desserts. Parents/guardians are responsible with providing their child with a ***nut-free*** snack daily, as all students are provided with a break/snack time in the morning hours.

1. **Does Windward have a dress code?**

While Windward does not have a uniform, a dress code is required, which can be found here on the website. Clothing may be purchased from any vendor, provided that the clothing meets the School’s dress code standards. The Windward School has a student dress code policy for two main reasons: 1) In recognition that patterns, designs, slogans, logos, and sometimes colors can be attention-grabbing, we want to ensure that student dress is conducive to and not distracting for students in our learning environments. 2) We also want to offer students reasonable options for individual expression while minimizing the social pressures and competition that often arise when dress code is unregulated.

1. **Does Windward offer tuition assistance?**

The Windward School makes every effort to ensure that every student who wishes to enroll has the financial ability to do so. Therefore, Windward offers tuition assistance to qualified applicants based on the individual needs of the families and availability of funding. Please contact the Tuition Assistance Coordinator, Dr. Erik Bennett, for further information (ebennett@thewindwardschool.org)

1. **Will my child get an opportunity to visit the school?**

All applicants being screened will have the opportunity to visit in a Windward classroom. They will join a language arts class as a student in the grade they are currently in. All incoming students will then have an opportunity to tour the campus over the summer. Additionally, new students will be invited to a new student orientation prior to the first day of school where they will get to meet their teachers, receive their school supplies, and socialize with other new students.

1. **What Covid-19 safety protocols is Windward utilizing?**

All faculty, staff, and students ages 12+ are mandated to be vaccinated for the 2022-2023 school year. Proof of a first vaccination shot was required by August 1, 2022. Safety protocols will be adjusted according the the local health department.

1. **Will my child still need outside tutoring once they start Windward’s program?**

No! In fact, all families are requested to cease all outside tutoring. Windward’s program is systematic and intensive, and we want our students hearing one message. If your student is admitted to the program, there is an understanding that we will offer the necessary remediation. However, some students require speech therapy for articulation only, so this may be the single outside service needed to be continued.

1. **Does Windward require new students to complete summer work?**

Although returning students have required summer work, there is no expectation for new students. Summer work for returning students is assigned by language arts and math teachers and geared towards the specific needs of students. Therefore, since your child has not started the program yet, we do not require any specific work. We would recommend reading to your child as much as possible or have them read books that are enjoyable and manageable for them.

1. **How can parents/guardians get involved with the Windward community?**

The Windward Parents Association (WPA) connects families to the school community and provides a way for parents/guardians to be involved in their child’s school life. The WPA sponsors numerous events throughout the academic year for both parents/guardians and students.

1. **How can I learn more about your school?**

Virtual Information Sessions are scheduled throughout the school year. Attendance at a session is not required in order for an application to be filed. Families interested in attending a session should reach out to the Admissions Office.