

WAITE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK
2025 - 2026

WAITE LEADERSHIP MISSION STATEMENT

The Waite Leadership Program helps students explore their own personal limits, embrace diversity, and create opportunities through awareness of their community, their school, their homes and beyond. We strive for excellence in everything we do!

MOTTO:

Strive for Excellence

CORE VALUES:

Well-rounded

Leadership

Purposeful

“Failure is NOT an option - leaders lead the way!”

JR. CADET LEADERSHIP INTERACT MODEL:

Communicate the Situation:

(State the Standard not the Behavior)

Wait For A Response:

(If none, ask why?)

Diagnose:

(Role Clarity, Ability, Willingness, Emergent Problem)

**When needed, seek additional support from your chain of command.*

Open Door Policy:

At any time you may go to the WLP Coordinator, Heather Crocker, CSM Damon Oliver, Cadet Sergeant Kuntigi Adams, Cadet Major Penaloza, or PE staff.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you about Junior Cadet responsibilities, expectations and etiquette. These duties include: classroom procedures, policies, standards, entering and departing classroom expectations (virtual included), classroom instructions, maintaining Junior Cadet notebook, promotions, rank structure, leadership responsibilities, uniform requirement, “reward” system and grading policy. In addition to the above policies and procedures, Junior Cadets will carry out the Waite Leadership Program (WLP) and school campus *code of conduct*.

As a Junior [Cadet](#), you are responsible for keeping yourself informed and complying with all policies, procedures and standards outlined in this Junior Cadet handbook. When you encounter situations not specifically covered in this handbook, you should use **good judgment and common sense**. When doubting any orders, regulations or instructions, you should request clarification from your Waite Leadership Coordinator (WLC), Heather Crocker, or Waite Leadership Instructors (WLI): CSM Oliver, Cadet SGT Kuntigi Adams, or Cadet Major Jose Penaloza.

WAITE LEADERSHIP CORE VALUES:

Many people know what the words well-rounded, leadership, and purposeful means, but how often do you see someone actually live up to them? All Jr. Cadets need to learn the value of what **WLP** really means. Yes, **WLP** stands for Waite Leadership Program, but you need to know **WLP** also incorporates our core values. In short, the Waite Leadership Program Core Values listed below is what being a Jr. Cadet is all about.

- **Well-rounded** - fully or broadly developed: such as having a broad educational background; i.e schools that turn out well-rounded graduates
- **Leadership** - The capacity to lead - Set The Example!!!!
- **Purposeful** - Full of determination and being intentional.

WAITE LEADERSHIP JR. CADET OATH:

I, _____ voluntarily declare to be a Leader at Waite Middle School, I Promise to uphold the standards, policies and traditions set by this ____ annual Leadership Class. As a Leader I declare the following:

I promise to constantly work hard to improve my education, failure is not an option.

I promise to conduct myself appropriately on and off campus.

I promise to honor and respect my family, school and community.

I will faithfully obey appropriate orders and directions given by my leaders.

I will have the courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions.

If I am a leader of subordinates, I promise to lead with firmness, fairness and dignity.

I take this oath freely without any reservations.

This oath is a statement of promise under the obligation to be successful and committed to your education. Jr. Cadets who attend the Waite Leadership Program have one thing in common, we commit to being successful at Waite Middle School.

SCHOOL INFORMATION:

14320 S. Norwalk Blvd.

Norwalk, CA 90650

Phone: (562) 210-4370

Fax: (562) 921-8114

Introduction

The Waite Leadership Program's curriculum aligns with the vision and mission of the Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District and state requirements for college and career readiness. This career-focused curriculum enriches the basic course requirements by introducing students to career pathways in Public Services, including Law Enforcement, Military, Homeland Security,

and Fire Science. Through education, leadership, volunteering, and mentoring, the program prepares students for future careers and college.

A key component of the Waite Leadership Program is its involvement in the SkillsUSA program, which provides students with opportunities to develop essential skills such as professionalism, teamwork, and communication. Participation in SkillsUSA competitions and events, such as the SkillsUSA Regional and State Championships, allows students to apply what they've learned in real-world scenarios and gain recognition for their achievements.

Recognizing the diverse financial, emotional, and family backgrounds of Jr. Cadets, the program places special emphasis on working one-on-one with individual students. By assessing their educational needs and building their self-esteem, the program aims to help Jr. Cadets reach their full potential. This personalized approach ensures that each student is well-prepared for both college and their chosen career path.

Curriculum and Program Development

The Waite Leadership Program cultivates a career learning environment specifically designed to enhance and support regular classroom learning. Our Public Services Career Technical Education (CTE) experience aligns with the mission of Waite Middle School and the Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District. By participating in the SkillsUSA program, WLP provides students with opportunities to develop critical career readiness skills, such as leadership, teamwork, and communication.

WLP receives additional support from Southeast Academy, Cal State Fullerton's ROTC program, and the CA National Guard to meet the diverse needs of our Jr. Cadets, teachers, staff, and families. These partnerships enrich our curriculum and offer students exposure to career pathways in Public Services, including Law Enforcement, Military, Homeland Security, and Fire Science. Through this comprehensive approach, the Waite Leadership Program ensures that students are well-prepared for college and their future careers.

Eligibility

1. Applicants are students entering the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.
2. Eligibility for admission is based on a review of the following guidelines:
 - a. Oral interview
 - b. Academic credit report
 - c. Review of current individualized education program (IEP or 504 plan) if needed
 - d. Discipline report
 - e. Attendance report

Completion of guidelines does not guarantee acceptance into WLP. Final determination of enrollment into WLP will be made from the pool of eligible students after review of the above criteria.

WLP Attendance Policy

Attendance is crucial for success in the Waite Leadership Program. It is the responsibility of each Junior Cadet and their parents to clear absences before returning to school. Families have **ten days** to complete this process.

Zero Period Attendance:

- Zero period is an elective, but attendance is **mandatory**.
- Students must arrive by 7:20 AM; gates will lock promptly at 7:30 AM and reopen at 8:00 AM.

Clearing Absences:

- A note or phone call from a parent/guardian is required to clear an absence.
- Absences must be verified within 10 school days, or they will be recorded as truancies (TRU), per B.P. 5113 (II.b.2); CA Administrative Code, Title V, Section 306.

Impact of Absences:

- Every absence affects a student's learning experience and may impact their participation grade or activity eligibility for the next quarter/semester.
- Absences will not be retroactively cleared to enhance eligibility for any current or previous semester.
- No makeup work will be allowed unless an absence is cleared.
- Excessive absences may result in sanctions imposed by the school's attendance policy and could be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Extended Absences:

- Parents should notify the attendance office of extended absences due to illness, family emergencies, etc.
- Homework requests for extended absences should be made in writing to the Coordinator. Processing these requests takes a minimum of five school days.

Tardiness:

- A parent may only excuse tardiness **due to doctor appointments or illness.**
- Excessive tardiness may result in sanctions imposed by the school's attendance policy and could be grounds for dismissal from the program.
- Tardies of more than 20 minutes will be recorded as an absence and must be verified as stated above.
- Students who become chronic offenders will be subject to additional disciplinary action, which may include a parent conference, a behavior contract, or suggestion for removal from the program.

Consequences of Truancies/Absences:

- Jr. Cadets with excessive truancies/absences will face sanctions imposed by the school's attendance policy or be referred to the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB).

The California Code of Regulations states that “Every pupil shall attend school punctually and regularly.” The Waite Leadership Program supports these legal requirements by teaching young people the value of good attendance. Tardiness and truancy disrupt the learning process and infringe on the rights of those who are punctual. Strive to be in class on time every day to ensure a successful learning experience.

Disciplinary Action for Attendance Infractions

Unexcused Absences:

- Unexcused absences exceeding 20% of the total days in any class may result in a grade of “F” for that class [B.P. 5113 (II.c.4)].
- Unexcused absences exceeding 30% of the total WLP classes may result in dismissal from the program.

Truancies:

- Truancies are defined as absences without parent permission for either all or a portion of a day.
- Students with ten or more truancies in the previous grading quarter may not be eligible to participate in any co-curricular or extracurricular activities (e.g., field trips, promotions, ribbons, or other activities).

Consequences:

- Students who are truant may be referred to the Student Attendance Review Team (SART), the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB), and/or the District Attorney (D.A.).
- Truancies may also result in the **revocation of inter/intra district permits.**

Readmit Procedure

- When returning from an absence, all students must bring a note from their parent/guardian. If the absence was due to a medical or dental appointment, notification from the doctor or dentist is required.
- Students must clear their absences in the attendance office immediately after zero period upon their return to school.

Classwork Missed Because of Absences

- Junior Cadets who are absent for legitimate reasons will have the opportunity to complete missed assignments or tests. Makeup work must be completed in a timely manner, following the teacher's policy.
- Makeup assignments and tests will be reasonably equivalent to those missed. It is the Junior Cadet's responsibility to speak with the teacher to schedule the makeup work or tests.
- Junior Cadets who are truant are not allowed to make up any missed work or tests.
- Assignments and tests missed during a suspension may be made up only at the teacher's discretion.

Medical Excuses

- A written excuse from a physician will exempt the Junior Cadet from physical education for the prescribed amount of time. The Junior Cadet receives credit only if they participate in all class activities.
- A written note from a parent excuses the Junior Cadet from class activities for one day unless otherwise specified.
- To receive full participation/credit, it is the Junior Cadet's responsibility to ask for makeup work.
- **WITHOUT A NOTE, THE JUNIOR CADET MUST PARTICIPATE IN ALL PE ACTIVITIES OR RECEIVE A ZERO FOR THE DAY(S).**

Waite Leadership Program Jr. Cadet Activity Code of Conduct

The Waite Leadership Program Jr. Cadets are expected to uphold high standards of behavior, bringing credit and honor to themselves, their families, and their school. The community closely observes their conduct. Therefore, Jr. Cadets must adhere to the following activity code:

1. Conduct yourself appropriately at all School Organization meetings and activities.
2. Attend a minimum of four class periods on the day of an organized event. Absences must be cleared by the attendance office or coordinator; otherwise, participation in activities is not permitted on the day of the absence.
3. Pass all classes each semester with satisfactory progress. If not, you will be put on academic probation until the next quarter. Failure to meet expectations by then will result in dismissal from the program.
4. Hold no more than two elected offices, club, or class positions concurrently.
5. Do not use profane language.
6. No public displays of physical affection on campus (e.g., holding hands, kissing).
7. No smoking, vaping, or possession of any tobacco-related items.
8. Do not use or possess drugs, alcohol, or any controlled substances on or off campus.

Violations of rules 7 and 8 will result in:

- One-year suspension from the WLP.
 - Punishment by the administration based on the severity of the violation.
9. A suspendable offense may be grounds for dismissal from the program, determined at the discretion of the Coordinator and School Administration.

Failure to meet these expectations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Harassment/Bullying

Our policy ensures all students are treated with respect and feel comfortable attending school. Harassment that interferes with school performance or creates a hostile learning environment

will not be tolerated. This includes harassment based on sexual, religious, racial, or other statuses.

Prohibited behaviors include:

- Verbal or physical bullying
- Name-calling and insults
- Unacceptable physical contact
- Comments of a sexual nature
- Cyberbullying through technology (phone, text, social media)

Any participation in harassment or bullying will result in referral to an administrator and disciplinary action.

If you feel uncomfortable due to others' behavior, **report it immediately to a teacher or administrator**. School personnel must respond to and intervene in incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Retaliation against those who file a complaint or provide information during an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Junior Cadet Expectations

Junior Cadets in the Waite Leadership Program are expected to maintain a high standard of conduct and commitment. The following guidelines outline our expectations:

1. **Respect:** Cadets must show respect to teachers, school personnel, guest speakers, and peers.
2. **Preparation:** Cadets are required to bring all necessary materials to class, including a charged iPad, pens, paper, and books.
3. **Safety:** Any behavior or activity that is destructive or poses a danger to others will not be tolerated.
4. **Compliance with Rules:** Cadets must adhere to the specific rules and standards set by each teacher or instructor.

5. **Self-Respect and Pride:** Cadets should respect themselves and take pride in their accomplishments within the program.
6. **Attendance:** Cadets are expected to have exemplary attendance and punctuality.
7. **Participation:** Cadets are expected to actively participate in all program activities.
8. **Security of Belongings:** Cadets must secure all valuables in their lockers and should not share their locker combinations.

Failure to adhere to these expectations may lead to disciplinary actions, including potential dismissal from the program.

Incentive Training I.T.

Incentive Training is a physical fitness tool used to instill discipline, motivation, and structure within the Waite Leadership Program. Borrowed from the public service career pathways and Southeast Academy, Incentive Training involves physical exercises such as push-ups, sit-ups, leg lifts, and running.

We employ this method not only to promote positive behavior among our Junior Cadets but also to address immediate infractions during morning inspections. These infractions may include incomplete homework, tardiness, uniform issues, or disruptive behavior.

Incentive Training sessions are concise, interspersed with appropriate rest periods to ensure cadet safety. Should a Junior Cadet have physical restrictions, a doctor's note will allow for a modified Incentive Training routine tailored to their capabilities.

Dress standards for NLMUSD and the Waite Leadership Program

Philosophy: The Waite Leadership Program, parents, and Junior Cadets share the responsibility for dress and grooming standards. The philosophy stresses the importance of self-respect and appropriate presentation in an educational environment.

Responsibilities of the Parent: Parents are primarily responsible for guiding their children in selecting an appropriate wardrobe. Key guidelines include maintaining proper hair standards:

- **Male Junior Cadets:** Must keep a zero to medium fade, with hair no longer than 3 inches on top, without any designs. Haircuts should be clean and maintained at least every two weeks.
- **Female Junior Cadets:** Are required to wear ponytails during physical training and buns during ACU dress days (Fridays). Hair color must remain a natural shade; bleaching and unnatural coloring are not allowed.

Responsibilities of the Junior Cadet: Junior Cadets are expected to dress and groom in a manner that reflects self-respect. Neatness and cleanliness are crucial. They must adhere to all dress code guidelines outlined by the program, ensuring their appearance is conducive to a learning environment.

Responsibilities of the Program: The Waite Leadership Program is responsible for maintaining an atmosphere conducive to effective learning. This involves enforcing dress standards that support a safe, wholesome educational environment.

Cadet Appearance and School Environment: The NLMUSD Board of Education advocates for a learning environment free from substantial disruptions. It prohibits clothing, attire, and accessories that signal gang membership, or display obscene, sexually explicit, racist content, or promote the use of drugs, alcohol, violence, or weapons. This also includes facial piercings other than ears.

Implementation: These rules are in line with the dress and grooming policies listed in the uniform policy section of the Waite Middle School agenda. The program will enforce these standards to ensure alignment with the educational goals and responsibilities of NLMUSD.

Waite Leadership Program Uniforms

Purpose and Significance: Uniforms in the Waite Leadership Program are more than just attire; they symbolize order and pride within our unique educational environment. Wearing uniforms

binds Junior Cadets together, fostering a sense of security and belonging. It reminds them that they are valued members of our career pathways, enhancing their ability to form a disciplined and prideful group. Proudly wearing the WLP uniforms is a crucial aspect of our Career Pathways and College Programs.

Responsibilities: Junior Cadets are responsible for maintaining their uniforms in good condition. Uniforms must be worn according to program standards, both on and off campus, as directed by the Coordinator and Instructor.

Uniform Components:

Physical Training Uniform:

- **PT Shorts:** Available for purchase in the office (\$15).
- **PT Shirts:** Available for purchase in the office (\$15).
- **PT Sweatshirts:** First set provided free; additional sets can be purchased for \$25.
- **PT Sweatpants:** First set provided free; additional sets can be purchased for \$25.
- **Athletic Shoes:** Cadets must provide their own.

Program Uniform: (To be worn on Fridays only)

- **ACU Military Uniform:** This uniform is checked out only after the Junior Cadet has memorized the 14 leadership traits.
- **Combat Boots:** Essential part of the uniform. Suggested to purchase your own either from Amazon or Galls in Long Beach. The color is “Desert Tan.”

Guidelines for Wearing: Uniforms must be worn according to the specified guidelines provided by the program. It is essential that all Junior Cadets present themselves in a neat, clean, and orderly manner, ensuring their appearance reflects the high standards of the Waite Leadership Program.

Waite Leadership Program Uniform Standards

Purpose and Philosophy: Uniforms in the Waite Leadership Program symbolize order and unity, fostering a sense of pride and belonging among Junior Cadets. The adherence to uniform standards is crucial as it reflects the career pathways represented in our school and enhances the professional image of our program.

General Uniform Standards:

- Uniforms are to be worn as instructed by the Coordinator and Instructor.
- Items not authorized as part of the regulation uniform must not be worn unless approved by the Coordinator.
- Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, pens, **earrings**, watch chains, purses, handkerchief, combs, barrettes, hair ribbons/ornaments, flowers, **hoodies**, acrylic nails or similar items.
- Electronic devices such as cell phones or **earbuds** are not permitted while in uniform.

Authorized Accessories:

- Inconspicuous wristwatches and religious rings are permitted.
- Sunglasses may be worn but not in formation. Eyeglasses/sunglasses must not be eccentric in style. Chains, bands, or ribbons attached to eyeglasses are only allowed if they are conservative in style and for safety purposes. Chains **MUST** be tucked under the shirt.

Religious Apparel:

- Articles of religious apparel that are not visible when worn with the uniform are allowed.
- Visible religious items can be worn during Divine services or within houses of worship.
- Religious apparel must not interfere with uniform requirements or replace required uniform articles.

Grooming Regulations:

- **Hair (All Cadets):** Must not display eccentricities; dyes and tints must be natural colors that complement the individual's complexion. Professional image is paramount.
- **Fingernails:** Must be clean, neatly trimmed, and not interfere with performance or present a safety hazard. Nail polish, if used, must be clear or neutral. The length of the fingernail will not exceed 1/4 inch from the fingertip. No fake or acrylic nails are permitted.

Specific Male Grooming Standards:

- Hair must be neatly trimmed, not exceeding 3 inches in length at the top and tapered at the sides and back.
- Sideburns must not extend below the top of the ear and must be neatly trimmed without tapering.
- Hair must be maintained bi-weekly. (**Discounted rates are available at So-Cal Barbershop in Norwalk for WLP Junior Cadets. Contact: 562-333-6021**).

Specific Female Grooming Standards:

- Hair may touch but not fall below the collar's lower edge; it must be fastened or pinned up neatly.
- Only conservative braiding is allowed; hair extensions used in braiding must match the natural hair appearance.
- Barrettes and combs used must be concealed by the hair. Wigs, if worn, must look natural and conform to grooming standards.
- Makeup must be conservative, enhancing natural features without exaggerated styles.

Discipline and Compliance: Failure to comply with these uniform and grooming standards may result in disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the

program. It is the responsibility of all Junior Cadets to uphold these standards, demonstrating professionalism and respect for the values of the Waite Leadership Program.

Importance of Uniform Regulations in the Waite Leadership Program

Uniforms play a vital role in the Waite Leadership Program for several reasons:

1. **Discipline and Professionalism:** Uniforms instill a sense of discipline and professionalism among our Junior Cadets. A standardized appearance promotes unity and belonging, reinforcing the program's values.
2. **Identification and Recognition:** Uniforms are crucial for identifying cadets as part of specific units or ranks within our diverse organization, helping to maintain order and structure.
3. **Symbol of Authority:** Uniforms denote authority and hierarchy. Different ranks and roles are distinguished by specific insignias or badges, clarifying leadership roles and responsibilities.
4. **Equality and Esprit de Corps:** By wearing the same uniform, Junior Cadets experience a sense of equality, regardless of their backgrounds. This uniformity fosters a strong spirit of camaraderie and team spirit.
5. **Operational Effectiveness:** Uniforms are designed for practicality in various environments, providing camouflage or protection as needed. This is essential for the safety and effectiveness of our cadets during operations.
6. **Tradition and Heritage:** Our uniforms carry historical significance, embodying the traditions and ethos of the military. Maintaining uniform regulations preserves this heritage and promotes pride among the cadets.
7. **Professional Appearance:** A well-maintained uniform enhances the professional image of the program, fostering respect and confidence both within the school and in the community.

8. **Security:** Uniforms help secure our environment by making it easier to identify authorized personnel and distinguish them from unauthorized individuals.

In summary, uniform regulations in the Waite Leadership Program are more than just dress codes—they are a fundamental aspect of our culture and operations, enhancing discipline, unity, professionalism, and security.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Grade and Citizenship Requirements: Junior Cadets must maintain a minimum of a 2.0-grade point average (GPA) and a satisfactory citizenship record (no "N's" or "U's") to participate in any extracurricular activities, including field trips and other events.

Ineligibility Due to Grades: If a Junior Cadet does not achieve a 2.0 GPA at the end of the current grading period, they will become ineligible for extracurricular activities. They will remain ineligible until their GPA improves to at least 2.0.

Ineligibility Due to Citizenship: Junior Cadets who appear on the ineligibility list due to unsatisfactory citizenship will also be barred from extracurricular activities until they improve their citizenship records.

Support Measures: Ineligible Junior Cadets will be placed on a mandatory tutoring and/or behavior contract to support their academic and behavioral improvement.

Earning Ranks: In the Waite Leadership Program, ranks are earned based on a "cutting score" system and are not simply given. This merit-based system ensures that promotions are earned through demonstrated performance and leadership.

Bridging to High School: Our program is designed to facilitate a seamless transition from Waite Middle School to Southeast Academy High School (SEA). The skills acquired in the WLP align with those utilized at SEA, preparing students for a successful transition to high school. While

attendance at SEA is not mandatory, students who choose to attend will possess the necessary skills for entry.

We greatly value your partnership in the Waite Leadership Program!

Waite Leadership Program Acknowledgment and Agreement

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment:

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Extra-Curricular Activities Eligibility requirements and the Rank Advancement policies of the Waite Leadership Program as outlined in the provided documentation. I am aware of the expectations set forth for my child and the importance of maintaining academic and behavioral standards within the program. I commit to supporting my child in adhering to these standards and will encourage their full participation and effort.

I also understand the benefits of the transition pathway from Waite Middle School to Southeast Academy High School (SEA) and recognize the opportunities it presents for my child, whether or not we choose to pursue enrollment at SEA.

Agreement:

By signing below, I agree to support the Waite Leadership Program's policies and to collaborate with the program coordinators and other school personnel to foster my child's academic, personal, and leadership development.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Acknowledgment:

I, _____, have discussed the contents of this document with my parent/guardian and understand the expectations and opportunities within the Waite Leadership Program. I commit to striving towards maintaining the eligibility criteria for extracurricular activities and to actively pursue personal and leadership growth within the program's framework.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please return this signed form to the Waite Leadership Program office.