

MISTWOOD EDUCATIONAL CENTER

An educational nonprofit corporation
Federal Number 46-2738727
CA State Number 3551924
PO Box 821 (Mailing)
1928 Old Arcata Road, Bayside, CA 95524
(707)826-1150
www.mistwood.us
mistwoodeducationalcenter@gmail.com

MISTWOOD VISION/MISSION/GOAL

Mistwood Founders' Vision:

Our passion is to see children being happy, loving to come to school; having enthusiasm to learn; celebrating who they are each hour, each day; celebrating those around them; and being able to start again after a problem has been resolved. They serve as a powerful, ever-present reminder for us to stay in the moment; engross ourselves in a subject; and delight in the variety of human nature and development that surrounds us.

Mistwood Founders and Directors (1980-2013): Julie Dorman and Marsha Aden-Wansbury

Mistwood Mission:

To provide a rich, stimulating, highly academic and fine arts environment in which students and adults have great respect for each other, for themselves, and for their immediate and global environment (we have a behavior code and ethics classes discussing non-exclusion and non-judgment of others).

Mistwood Goal:

To develop an environment...

- in which younger students are allowed to develop at their own pace
- in which older students are free to focus on academic excellence without the distracting pressures of popular culture (which divide young people in cliques, "cool" and "uncool" people, boyfriends and girlfriends, e.g. we have a behavior and dress code)

- in which students can learn in a cheerful, enthusiastic setting, where their individual strengths, weaknesses and needs are acknowledged, valued and supported by adults, their peers, and other students
- for students for whom their families are the center of the social life, as opposed to their peers (we ask that parents not have coed parties for the children in groups 3 ½ and 4)

MISTWOOD SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Mistwood, a home-schooling/grammar school combination founded in 1980, has a unique structure and curriculum. The school consistently has an enrollment of about forty students, kindergarten through eighth grades. It is divided into a lower school (kindergarten through fourth or fifth grades) and an upper school (fifth or sixth grade through eighth grades), which are each divided further in two multi-age groups.

Although students of all four groups interact daily during free recess periods as well as during some combined-group classes, the lower school (Groups 1 and 2) has a separate curriculum which is dramatically different from the upper school (Groups 3 and 4). Classes in all groups are taught by many different teachers (usually ten or twelve); all parents of children in our school currently or previously, each having a special expertise and love of the subject.

MISTWOOD CURRICULUM

Mistwood Lower School:

Curriculum: Content, Not Skills

In the lower school the “three R’s” skills are not taught as subjects. There are no tests, grades, homework, or student textbooks. Evaluations of students’ skills are purposefully not recorded nor compared to public or traditional school standards, in an effort to value each child’s natural development. Each child is acknowledged for what he/she is developing, as well as given confidence that it is only a matter of time and/or effort before other areas become developed.

The subjects taught at school are content-oriented rather than academic skills-oriented. Social studies and science are taught through lectures/discussions and stories, using drama and hands-on materials. Exposure to English and math concepts are through games, literature, storytelling, hands-on-projects, and problem-solving activities. Children are taught French through French songs. All students are involved in our dramatic productions, which offer them opportunities to develop and/or practice many skills, such as reading, memorizing, public speaking, and creative interpretation, in addition to teamwork and perseverance toward a common goal.

Ethics, Arts, and Physical Activities

Ethics in the world and on the playground is taught through literature from various cultures and subcultures, through historical fiction, and through interaction in class using games and role-playing. Fine motor skills are taught, such as drawing, painting, weaving, knitting, sewing, and many other crafts. Besides our weekly scheduled one-hour swimming at the local community pool for Groups 1 and 2, sometimes 3, yoga and movement classes, gross motor exercise is encouraged at school through playground games of tag, basketball, kick ball, foursquare, jump rope, and ultimate Frisbee.

Mistwood Upper School:

Curriculum: Content and Skills

We begin formal instruction in math, English, writing, literature, history, geography, science, art history, and written and oral French for students in the fifth or sixth grade age, the age we observe that children begin to be goal-oriented and capable of abstract thinking. Students are given many in-class, group, and homework assignments in all classes. During the seventh and eighth grade age level we see the varying degrees of skill development among students start to even out.

Ethics, Arts, and Physical Activities

To ensure that we teach to the whole child, we consider it extremely important to continue studies in ethics, art, crafts, and drama in the upper school. Exercise is continuously encouraged through playground games of tag, basketball, kick ball, foursquare, jump rope and ultimate frisbee.

Citizenship Responsibilities

Group 4 students are assigned responsibilities for various school and community projects, such as journalism/newspaper, food drives, UNICEF drives, organizing special school events at holiday times, and hosting guest speakers. Also, Group 4 students are assigned buddies from the lower school with which they play games, read, or work on projects weekly or biweekly. These relationships foster responsibility in the older students to develop communication skills and compassion for our younger students.

Parent Responsibilities

As a home-schooling center, we continue to rely on parents to give support to their children as they enter Groups 3 and 4 (fifth or sixth grade through eighth grades). Parents are responsible for providing time and space for their children to do their assignments and for giving them one-on-one help when needed to understand or complete their homework. Also, free tutoring after school is always offered by our teachers, especially to Group 4 (particularly students in 8th grade).

Eighth Grade and Beyond

By the end of the eighth grade age level, we find that students are ready to take on more challenges. Our eighth-graders are accustomed to communicating with teachers and adults in asking for assistance. They are confident in knowing that if they put in hard work, they will become high school honor students.

Almost without exception our graduating students have been on the honor roll, been excellent school citizens and pursue the higher education tract after high school. As high school students, they are well prepared for the integrated math and often go into higher level French classes (French II or III as freshmen). Some switch into another language and do very well. This description even includes those few students who have not developed as quickly in areas such as writing or math, provided their parents have been involved with us in helping the student establish good study habits and they continue their one-on-one help through high school.

Over the three decades our school has been in existence we have seen the vast majority of our students go on to higher education, attending many of the nation's finest colleges and universities.

DIRECTORS AND HEAD TEACHERS: (adapted 2017)

Rebecca Nordquist, B.S. in Early Childhood Education, CA Multiple Subject Teaching Credential and CA Specialist Credential in Special Education

Alice Finen, B.A. in Elementary Education, CA Multiple Subject Teaching Credential