

nawa academy

2009–2010

parent survival guide

What to expect, what to do & who to ask

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

www.nawaacademy.org • (800) 358-NAWA • info@nawa-academy.com

Nawa Academy

Welcome

Welcome to Nawa Academy. We're thrilled to have your student join us, and we hope that the transition into our school is a smooth one. For most of our students, coming to boarding school is an exciting adventure, and they jump in and begin to excel quickly. We recommend that you review this "survival guide" and keep it handy for future reference.

Frequently Asked Questions

Note: Office Hours are: Monday - Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

1. When is registration for the school year?

Monday, September 7, 2009, between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

2. What should I expect during the day of registration?

During the registration process you will move through various stations. These stations are set up to allow the process to move more smoothly. However, you can still count on periods of waiting in line.

PLEASE NOTE: Nawa Academy does not accept credit cards. Make checks payable to Nawa Academy.

3. What do I need to remember to bring on the day of registration?

If you have not already done so, bring a copy of your child's vaccination records and current medical insurance card.

4. What should I do if I have medication/s for my child?

All medication (including non-prescription) must be given to a Nawa Academy Administrator (in the office) during the day of registration. Students maintain possession of their own vitamins or vitamin supplements. Medications are administered by our staff.

Please refer to a current Parent's Manual for additional policy information on medication.

5. If my child flies into or out of the Redding Airport, how do the airport pickups and drop-offs work?

The Redding Airport is a small, one terminal municipal airport with few flights going in and out. A Nawa Academy staff will be present with identification to pick up your child. Be sure to fax or email the flight itinerary to the Nawa Academy office at least one week prior to the scheduled day of arrival or departure. If you plan to have your child depart from Nawa Academy via an airline, be sure that we receive the airline ticket or e-ticket information. Photo identification is mandatory with airport security regulations. We will keep it on file. Do not give tickets to your son or daughter to keep.

6. How do I contact my child if there is a family emergency?

800- 358-6292 (NAWA)

Toll free in the U.S. - office number

530- 359-2215

Office number

530- 359-2229

Office fax

nawamain@hotmail.com

Email checked by Sandy Gilliam at the front desk

info@nawa-academy.com

Email checked by the Department of Admissions

If you encounter a family emergency and need to reach your child, please contact the Nawa Academy office at (800) 358-6292. If you call during office hours, Sandy Gilliam will direct your call. If you

call after office hours, leave a detailed message including the situation/crisis, who to call and a number to contact.

Messages are reviewed periodically after business hours and will be responded to as quickly as possible. If your child is on campus, the process will be quick. If your child is engaged in an off-campus activity or is enrolled in the International Academy program and is out of the country, the process can take much longer.

7. How can my child contact me?

We encourage, but don't require our students to communicate with family while here at Nawa Academy. There are phones available to students at certain times during the evenings and weekends. These phones require a pre-paid calling card. Students can also write letters, but must have postage stamps. It is a good idea to send pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelopes in care packages. This may encourage them to write.

If your son or daughter has the "no news is good news" attitude and you would like to make contact with him or her, contact our office and leave a message with a telephone number and a few times to call. Please consider that students only have access to phones during certain times. Our staff will be sure to deliver the message to the student and provide an opportunity to call.

8. What if there is a period when my child doesn't contact me?

There may be several reasons why your child doesn't contact you. First, your child is embarking on a new journey and entering a new stage of life. This means that no news may indeed be good news as your child develops new friendships, experiences new and exciting things, and makes discoveries about oneself away from the "parental nest."

There are, however, certain situations where more frequent family contact is essential to the progress of a child during their stay at Nawa Academy. In these situations, a phone call may be scheduled with the assistance of the assigned Dean.

9. Will I get any negative phone calls from my child and how should I respond if it happens?

Be patient and listen, yet stay consistent. Your child will be dealing with different emotions while at school. One week you may receive a call where everything is great and the next week you may receive a call asking to come home. Some common reasons may include family dynamics, a fear of trying something new, or an argument with a friend. Often they don't want advice or for you to fix the problem, but rather just to listen. If your child is upset and becomes verbally abusive on the phone, tell him or her you are going to hang up due to this unacceptable behavior.

Be consistent. Let them know you love them. Since you don't want your child to leave the school year early, we recommend that you do not discuss this as an option.

Contact the office and speak with the assigned Dean. This is where it is important to act as a team so we can be more effective in working with your child.

10. If I receive a call from someone at Nawa Academy, should I worry that something is wrong?

No. Often we may contact parents and family members with good news of how their child is doing. If there is something wrong, we will tell you up front. Also, if you don't hear from us, it is safe to assume that "no news is good news."

11. Can my son or daughter bring a vehicle?

No. Students enrolled in our boarding school are not allowed to bring vehicles.

12. Is it okay for friends of my son or daughter to visit while at Nawa Academy?

Only on rare occasions that are mutually approved by the parent/legal guardian and the assigned Nawa Academy Dean at least one week in advance are okay.

13. Will the nutritional needs of my child be met?

Yes. We strive to provide a well balanced, healthy diet for every student. The food is often made from scratch and tastes great! We also have alternatives available for students who are vegetarians.

14. Does Nawa Academy allow smoking?

No. As we are a school, the use of tobacco is prohibited. This is especially important here in Northern California where wildland fires are a concern.

15. What are some reasons for expulsions?

Nawa Academy strives to work with each student to impact change without compromising the safety of the group. Here are some reasons for expulsions:

- safety risk to self or others
- drug use or alcohol abuse
- flagrant disregard and disrespect towards staff and students

16. When can we expect to receive report cards/grade reports?

You will receive report cards via mail within two weeks after the end of each academic block. Transcripts will be sent to schools upon request. Questions regarding academic performance or report cards can be directed to the assigned Dean or the Principal.

When the Going Gets Tough...

Over the years we've learned that for some students the transition into boarding school can be a little difficult. Our small community and caring staff quickly identify these students, and we've found that with parent and staff support, even the most tentative students find their niche and thrive at Nawa Academy. Often these students initially try to get home, and they seem to know just which heart strings to pull. With these students in mind, we've developed this portion of the Parent Survival Guide to help parents of reluctant students navigate the sometimes turbulent waters of transition. Please use this as a guide, but we also encourage you to contact your student's Dean if you have any questions or concerns.

The following, or a variation or combination, are typical
"Come get me and take me home" strategies:

1. **School** - *"The academics here are easy."*

This is, surprisingly, one of our favorite things to hear from students. Depending on the class, the time of year, or the teacher, it can mean a few different things.

New students are given time to adjust into our community. We've found that the social anxiety of a new situation is often alleviated if the student isn't immediately overwhelmed with academic work. They are busy learning all kinds of new things, like how a school day "works", or when to get lunch, or what activities are available on the weekend. Additional academics can hurt both the student-teacher relationship and the ability of a student to socialize within the community.

Nawa Academy

New students are often evaluated in unconventional ways, which may not feel to them like “school.” These evaluations may, at first, seem easy when a teacher is trying to place a student’s skill or understanding. In addition, students are often being exposed, for the first time, to experiential and non-traditional learning. Since Nawa Academy isn’t always “desks in rows,” some students have a hard time recognizing they are in a “real school” or learning environment.

Finally, this is often a case of Nawa Academy “working.” We’ve found that many students equate school with failure, and if they are experiencing success, the only logical solution is that they are in an easy school. This couldn’t be further from the truth. Nawa Academy instructors are trained to provide a high level of education while integrating both flexible and experiential approaches to learning. We are proud of our WASC accreditation, and we know that a Nawa Academy education will provide your child with the tools to apply towards academic success.

2. **Social** – *“All the kids here are druggies.”*

Nawa Academy does not condone, tolerate, or excuse drug use. Nawa Academy has an aggressive drug testing policy and strict policies regarding drug use. There are a few reasons your student may be saying this:

Many of our students lack the social nuance that dictates the adult world. Adults get to know each other by discussing books, vacation destinations, sports, or other commonalities. Our students, lacking that sophistication, tend to lean toward the least common denominator, their “war stories.” Most of these are either fully fabricated or grossly exaggerated for the purpose of impressing others or posturing. The stories usually contain some common elements of drugs, thwarting and duping authorities, or escapades with members of the opposite sex. Please help your student realize that most of what they are hearing are, indeed, stories.

In addition, it should be noted that Nawa Academy is not a lock-down facility. In order to treat our students with the maturity and dignity they deserve, we must acknowledge that from time to time there is the opportunity for students to be exposed to substances. Although we search students, bags, and mail, it is an unfortunate fact of life that some substances do get onto campus. It is our belief that ANY school or program which does not admit that this happens from time to time is lying either to parents, themselves, or both. While substances, usually pot, may occasionally make their way onto Nawa Academy’s campus, we feel strongly that we have created a community where this activity is significantly reduced, heavily monitored, and consequences are strictly enforced.

3. **Social** – *“There’s nothing to do here.”*

Nawa Academy has a full range of activities which occur both during the school week and on the weekends. In addition to the EdVenture programs on the weekends, snowboarding, town trips, and cultural events, Nawa Academy also offers a number of other social opportunities. Pool, ping-pong, board games, field sports, skateboarding, and volunteer opportunities abound. If you feel like your student isn’t getting involved, please speak to your assigned Dean, and they can help encourage your student to get more involved in our active campus.

4. **Social** – *“All the other kids hate me.”*

We are very proud of our student population, and find that they are very caring and compassionate students. Because Nawa Academy is such a small and tight-knit community, it can take a few days for a student to feel as though they’ve become “part of the group.” That is why we provide so many opportunities for shared positive experiences and work hard to help new students integrate into our school. If your student is having problems with this, please share this with their Dean.

5. **Learning Differences** – *“All the other kids here are dumb, and I don’t belong here.”*

Students come to Nawa Academy for various reasons and from a variety of environments. As the premier small boarding school for Learning Differences on the West Coast, it is true, your student will be exposed to kids with Learning Differences, including forms of dyslexia, ADHD, dysgraphia, and other learning challenges. We have found that our unique approach to education is incredibly successful for these students, and we have also seen amazing growth in students who may have been academically successful in more traditional settings. Our approach encourages critical thinking, hands-on experiences, and advanced reading and writing.

6. **Theft** – *“My (fill in shiny, expensive, probably electronic item of choice) just got stolen.”*

Students often call home to announce that something has been stolen. Please open a dialog with your student to find out the manner in which this item was “stolen.” It’s amazing how many things have been “stolen” by van seats, laundry bags, the closet, the club, a classroom, or a picnic table visited on a weekend outing. Our students are often disorganized, scattered, and forgetful, and it is often easier to claim to parents that the I-Pod or Digital Camera was stolen, rather than lost.

We also have many students who are impulsive and act without thinking. That is why it is possible that if your student left their wallet on their bureau with \$75 dollars inside, it may have disappeared. This happens rarely, but it does happen. That is why we ask that students not be given extra money at school. They actually need it for very few things, and extra cash degrades our Tier and allowance system. It also presents a temptation for the impulsive student.

One final point about stealing is that students have a tendency to use the valuable items you provide as collateral or payment for any number of loans, purchases, transactions, and barter. This is, of course, against school policy, and staff work very hard to keep this from occurring. Unfortunately, we have had instances where a video-game system is “loaned” for \$10 cash on a weekend town trip. When the student can’t come up with \$10 later, the console isn’t returned. It’s now been “stolen”. Our staff work hard to monitor and stop this behavior in our students, but it can still happen. Please, encourage your student to be neither a borrower nor a lender, engrave or label items, keep valuable and important things at home, and allow your student to experience the skills of budgeting based on their allowance

Questions?

There are bound to be other issues, questions, problems, and concerns as you and your student transition into life in a boarding school. Here are a few suggestions to help you through any rough patches you may experience.

What can you do?

1. Listen, don't argue. Many students are just checking to see if their parents "care."
2. If you feel it is needed, offer your student insight, suggestions, and support.
3. Check with our Parents Club on how to develop a network of parent support.
4. Communicate with your assigned Dean. They can often provide valuable insight regarding your child's academic and social experiences.
5. Have faith in your student, as well as Nawa Academy's many years of experience.

Mail and Care Packages

Students love to get mail. Please use the following format when sending mail:

Student's Name
c/o Nawa Academy
17351 Trinity Mtn. Rd.
French Gulch, CA 96033

If you wish to send a letter or a package that needs to arrive in less than six days, do not use the US Postal Service. A normal letter sent via US mail may take over seven days to arrive at the school and a package may take even longer. Even the US mail "overnight" may take a minimum of two extra days since it takes an extra day to reach French Gulch and then a day for us to go and pick up the item at the French Gulch Post Office. Please use Federal Express or UPS to insure that your important letters or packages arrive on time at the school office. Both services deliver directly to our door, Monday through Friday. **NOTE: Do not send packages via Airborne Express as it will take longer to arrive to Nawa Academy.**

Students sign a form acknowledging they have received a package. Staff are required to be present when a student opens a package or a thick or lumpy envelope to discourage the receiving of narcotics or alcohol from friends. Nawa Academy will inform federal authorities of illegal substances sent through the mail.

All medications or travel tickets should be sent via Federal Express or UPS to ensure the most rapid and secure delivery. Using any form of the US mail may add a minimum of two extra days to deliver.

Please identify all mail and packages being sent to the student by addressing the item with the student's name and the program in which they are enrolled.

Ideas for what to put into care packages:

Books, comics, magazines, journal, paper, pens, stamps, envelopes, newspaper clippings, notes from friends, playing cards, cookies, batteries, etc.

Go easy on the candy and please do **NOT** send any toxic, aerosol, or pressurized items, lighters, matches, carbonated drinks, small candy with wrappers, fireworks, knives, or large amounts of money. Please make sure the magazines and books that are sent are appropriate.

Thank you for choosing Nawa Academy. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.