



Curriculum Guide

Waimea Country School's mission is to educate children to become confident, responsible, and compassionate people.

Here at Waimea Country School, students learn to be active in their own learning — to think, aspire, challenge, question, and reflect. Our graduates develop into eager, creative learners who are well-prepared, academically, socially, and ethically, for life's challenges.

Our child-centered, multiage learning program incorporates literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, gardening, Hawaiian cultural studies, arts, health and fitness, study skills, character building, and social-emotional learning. Many subjects are integrated, providing students with the opportunity to build depth and relevance in their growth and development.

Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies are the core subjects taught in all classes, with computer skills and study skills incorporated as appropriate. Social-emotional learning, visual arts, music, gardening, and physical education round out the curriculum.

Literacy is key to student success, and we build a solid foundation of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills that fosters academic growth while building a love of learning in all subjects. Students read for information and pleasure, write for a variety of purposes, and have many opportunities for speaking and listening in small groups, class discussions, and whole school meetings.

Character Education



Moral character shapes the course of a student's life more than any academic skill. Our values-based curriculum is woven into the culture of our school and complements our academic curriculum to create a balanced environment where children grow socially and emotionally, as well as intellectually.

We highlight specific monthly values over a two-year cycle. Discussion, sharing stories from other cultures, highlighting individuals of strong moral character as examples, and various practical applications, such as community service projects, are some of the initiatives that define our program.

All students participate in daily lessons in social-emotional learning, including gratitude, mindfulness, making and keeping friends, coping with big emotions, building trust, and so on. We practice, model, encourage, and expect common courtesy and good manners.

Year 1

August
September
October
November
December
January
February
March
April
May

Pono	Respect
Kūpono	Honesty
Laulima	Cooperation
Ha'aha'a	Humility
Maluhia	Peace
Ahonui	Patience
Wiwo'ole	Courage
Makakū	Creativity
Malama 'Āina Aloha 'Āina	Environmental Awareness
Ku'oko'a	Freedom

Year 2

Pono	Respect
Mālama	Respect
Kuleana	Responsibility
Lokomaika'i	Compassion
Mana'o'i'o	Faith
Kūpa'a	Commitment
Aloha	Love
Na'auau	Wisdom
Olakino Maika'i	Health
Ho'omāke'aka	Humor

Language Arts

Our Language Arts program consists of skill development and practice in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each day, teachers create opportunities for students to express themselves and practice their growing skills.

Research shows that reading for pleasure makes a big difference to children's educational performance. Likewise, evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge, and a better understanding of other cultures. In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background.



'Ohi'a ~ Reading Readiness

Reading is the most important skill developed in 'Ohi'a class. Students begin with reading readiness, followed by improving their decoding skills, sight word recognition, and fluency.



The focus of reading readiness is building a foundation in these three areas:

- **Phonemic Awareness** - distinguishing the different sounds in a spoken word
- **Letter Recognition** - knowing letter shapes and the name for each letter
- **Phonics** - understanding the letters and the sounds they stand for

Reading instruction includes a variety of instructional strategies and activities, such as:

- shared reading, such as echo reading where the teacher reads aloud and students repeat
- learning centers that reinforce phonics lessons
- direct teaching of letters and their sounds using a variety of sensory techniques
- building words with word families
- leveled-book reading
- introduction and daily review of high frequency sight words



Writing/Motor Skills Development

'Ohi'a students have direct instruction and guided practice in the *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum to learn to form letters. Students write daily. Teachers model writing and take dictation.

Specific writing skills include:

- writing left to right
- writing first and last name
- writing numbers, letters, and words
- using inventive spelling
- writing complete sentences
- writing in a variety of grade-appropriate formats for different purposes and audiences
- printing legibly using correct spacing, capital letters, and end punctuation
- using periods and questions marks as end marks
- focusing on a single topic in a piece of writing

Language mechanics—spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and usage—are emphasized and taught directly; however, students also free write in order to express themselves creatively.

Listening and Speaking Skills

- using appropriate social conventions in various large and small group situations:
 - waiting one's turn
 - raising a hand
 - showing attention/respect to speaker
- using clear and appropriate vocabulary when speaking
- identifying questions vs comments
- rehearsing presentations
- using complete sentences when speaking
- answering questions from the audience appropriately

We encourage families to read together and build a love of literacy at home that shows reading is valued, important, and enjoyable.

Koai'a ~ Building Literacy

Students build literacy through daily practice with reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Daily reading is vital to building independence and reading skills, such as fluency, comprehension, and accuracy. In addition to reading each day in class, children are expected to read at home; daily reading makes up the majority of homework in Koai'a.

Every day, students have direct instruction in reading strategies, including continuation of phonics, word families, and sight words. Children read appropriate-leveled texts to build literacy skills. Additionally, a wide range of fiction and nonfiction is read aloud and discussed with the entire class, exposing students to higher level vocabulary while modeling reading and understanding prose.



Koai'a students write every day. Specific writing skills, including the writing process, are taught utilizing the *Step Up to Writing* program and other resources. The Author's Resource Folder (ARF) is a valuable tool in teaching student independence with writing and spelling. Language instruction (writing conventions, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar) is embedded in the writing curriculum and taught in the context of the students' writing.

The *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum is used for handwriting instruction — print and cursive. The expectation is for all students to effectively communicate in writing using neat, legible handwriting.

Koa ~ Literacy to Learn

Students at this level are moving beyond decoding towards independent reading; the emphasis shifts from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. Students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction materials throughout the year, including novels, short stories, informational articles, and poetry. Specific reading strategies and skills are taught on an ongoing basis. Students read daily across the curriculum and are required to read independently every day to practice and strengthen independent reading skills.

Koa students write every day for a variety of purposes. They learn more advanced techniques, still using the *Step Up to Writing* program and other resources, now focusing on specific writing skills and strengthening their written work through editing and revision, sometimes collaboratively. A major objective is ensuring that students can plan and write effective paragraphs. Journaling, blogging, creative writing, and poetry are also integrated into the writing program.

Correct spelling and the ability to understand a wide variety of words and use them well are essential skills. In Koa, students learn to use resources, such as a personal spelling dictionary and words on their assignments or classroom posters, to spell words correctly while writing. Instruction in Greek and Latin affixes helps students develop their vocabulary as they learn these “puzzle pieces” that make up many words in the English language.



Students have many opportunities to develop and practice speaking skills, both for public speaking and for clearly expressing themselves in discussion. They present oral reports and presentations regularly across the curriculum as a means to demonstrate learning and to strengthen their public speaking. With instruction and support, they learn to clearly express their ideas and articulate details and evidence. They practice being active, respectful, and supportive listeners. All 5th graders write and deliver speeches each year as part of their graduation ceremony.

Technology integration

Koa students use Google Docs and other tools to edit and publish their writing. They use tools such as email with a limited and controlled audience, developing skills in a safe and protected environment.

Mathematics

The scope and sequence for all classes is built on National Common Core Standards. Each grade level has a specific set of benchmarks, which teachers reference to ensure inclusion of the necessary skills and concepts in year-long curriculum planning. Rather than school-wide adopted math textbooks, teachers pull from a variety of sources to create a balanced instructional approach designed to reach every student.

At every level, we use visual representations and hands-on manipulatives to teach concepts, build connections, and deepen understanding. Using a wide range of instructional strategies, including small guided math groups, math centers, partner and small group activities, projects, one-on-one instruction, and so on, teachers can meet the needs of each individual student. Mental math and problem-solving strategies are introduced and developed at every level.

Basic Facts

Computational fluency in basic math facts is an essential foundation for success with higher math skills; however, memorization of facts is ineffective without understanding.

At all levels, students engage in activities designed to promote automatic recall of basic math facts, building understanding through ongoing practice and engagement with math tasks. Through hands-on activities, direct teaching of strategies, and number talks, students master basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

In 'Ohi'a class:

Children begin building a foundational understanding of mathematical operations and ideas. Students work in centers, small groups, with partners, and independently. The effective use of manipulatives, guided exploration, and play helps children connect ideas and integrate their knowledge so that they gain a meaningful understanding of mathematical concepts.

In Koai'a class:

Students work in centers, which include a teacher-led guided math session used for teaching specific skills and concepts tailored to the needs of the students. Other centers include independent practice, partner or small group game play, problem-solving, math journaling, and review activities.

In Koa class:

Mathematics is taught both through direct instruction of specific computational skills and through the application of those skills in problem-solving exercises. Small class size allows students to work closely with teachers and peers and allows the teacher to address the needs of each student and challenge each appropriately based on their current needs and where they are headed next.

Key mathematical concepts include:



'Ohi'a K/1st

Koai'a 2nd/3rd

Koa 4th/5th

- place value through 100's
- counting to 120
- skip counting
- addition & subtraction within 20
- commutative property of addition
- measurement w/ nonstandard units
- telling time to the half hour
- sorting by attribute
- basic graphing

- place value through 10,000's
- addition & subtraction within 20
- addition & subtraction with and without regrouping
- using dollars and coins
- telling time to the minute
- pre-multiplication: arrays, repeated addition, equal groups
- measurement: time, length, weight
- basic fractions

- place value through billions and thousandths
- multiplication by two or more digits
- division with single and double digit divisors
- factors & multiples
- fractions & decimals: naming, converting, and calculating
- area, perimeter, volume, angles
- measurement: metric & standard

Number Sense & Growth Mindset



“The best way to develop fluency with numbers is to develop number sense and to work with numbers in different ways, not to blindly memorize without number sense.”

Fluency Without Fear, Jo Boaler, Professor of Mathematics Education, Stanford University

Teaching and learning at Waimea Country School is informed by the latest research in brain science — namely, that students who embrace a growth mindset develop deeper understanding and more readily accept challenges, failures, and mistakes as opportunities to improve their skills and learning. While this approach benefits learning in all subjects, it is particularly important and effective in learning mathematics.

Number sense means being fluid and creative in thinking about how numbers work so there is actual understanding that goes well beyond rote memorization. Building and practicing number sense is an essential component for long-term success in mathematics.

Music & Hawaiian Studies

Throughout the school year, students receive music/hula instruction twice weekly, with music taking place in the first semester, and hula in the second.

Music

We develop a love for, an appreciation of, and a foundation for music in each of our students. We want our students excited about music!

‘Ohi‘a students begin with singing, chanting, and beat-keeping to develop awareness of tone, pitch, and rhythm. Detecting sound is an important part of auditory processing and plays an essential role in literacy.

Koai‘a students focus on singing and chanting and are introduced to more complex percussive sequences and instrumental music. This is also when ‘ukulele instruction begins.

Koa students build on foundational musical skills and concepts while working to master the ‘ukulele.

When possible, guest artists are brought in for both teaching and performance. All students attend community performances, for example at the Kahilu and Parker School Theaters, throughout the year.

Hawaiian Studies

Hawaiian Studies is integrated into many areas of the curriculum, rather than taught as a separate class. Our goal is to expose students to aspects of the culture — including songs and chants, cultural beliefs and practices, the importance and history of the Hawaiian people, and the significance of place. In addition, Koai‘a and Koa students learn about state history and geography, encompassing early Hawaiian life, voyaging and exploration, and cultural influences.



In the second semester, in addition to hula and chants, students learn basic Hawaiian words and phrases, primarily through songs and conversational call-and-response. Our annual May Day performance is a wonderful opportunity for students to showcase what they’ve learned.



Science



Science helps us make sense of the world around us using our minds, observation skills, previous knowledge, and intuition. Students participate in hands-on activities, making observations, and performing experiments that help them think critically while stimulating their natural curiosity. We encourage collaboration in seeking knowledge and understanding, emulating the approach of real life scientists, while also encouraging students' individual interests.

Science Fair

Each class conducts a Science Fair during the year, with independence and autonomy building over the 6-year program. During each fair, Guest Scientists from our community spend time with student scientists listening to presentations, asking questions, and providing feedback.



‘Ohi’a students work in small groups to run hands-on science centers. Students learn the scientific process as they work together on a single topic.

Koai’a students work with a partner or in small groups to share knowledge about a unit of study they have been working on. For them, this serves as an introduction to the scientific method, with student scientists often designing their own experiments.

Koa students each choose a scientific question that is personally interesting to them. They research, investigate, perform experiments, draw conclusions, and report their findings. They learn numerous skills, including how to use the scientific method to solve problems and answer questions.



Social Studies

The primary purpose of social studies is to help students develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society. We prepare students to be responsible citizens by stressing the safeguarding of rights, fulfillment of responsibilities, and honoring of the dignity of all people. Through their studies, students develop lifelong learning skills in communication, information technology, teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making. Our program is designed to give students a strong understanding of the local community around the school, to respect

diversity, to recognize the rich cultural history of our island home, and to become engaged citizens.

By 5 and 6 years old, **‘Ohi’a** children begin to realize that they are unique individuals who interact with other people, groups, and cultures, including family, friends, classmates, their community, Hawaii, the nation, and the world.

Koai’a students begin to understand their relationship to their home community.

Koa students begin making wider connections (local, national, and international) through a variety of digital platforms and global education projects.



Experiential learning is a powerful instructional tool that makes a real impact on student learning. Throughout the year, students participate in a variety of Learning Trips to enhance their education. They might travel to Anna Ranch in Waimea to learn about the history of our town or visit important members of our community, such as police and firefighters. Every other year, Koa students overnight to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and learn from master navigators about the history of voyaging.



Science & Social Studies Rotation

While the content rotates on a two-year cycle, basic skills in science and social studies are covered each year. Science skills include predicting, observation, safety, measurement, data collection, and drawing conclusions. Social studies skills include finding source materials, reading for information, taking notes, and sharing/presenting learned ideas both orally and in writing.

SCIENCE	‘Ohi‘a K/1st Multiage	Koai‘a 2nd/3rd Multiage	Koa 4th/5th Multiage
Year 1	<u>Year 1 ~ 2025/2026</u> • Rocks & Minerals • Dinosaurs & Fossils • Whales • Plants	<u>Year 1 ~ 2025/2026</u> • States of Matter • Relationships in ecosystems • Simple Machines • Computer Science	<u>Year 1 ~ 2025/2026</u> • Geology - earth structure • Geology - earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis • Heredity/genetics
Year 2	<u>Year 2 ~ 2026/2027</u> • Science Fair: What is Science? • Weather & Seasons • Human Body & Dental Health • Animals	<u>Year 2 ~ 2026/2027</u> • Food and Nutrition • Cycles: sun, earth, moon, water • Constellations • Insects • Computer Science	<u>Year 2 ~ 2026/2027</u> • Astronomy • Electricity • Human Body Systems
SOCIAL STUDIES	‘Ohi‘a K/1st Multiage	Koai‘a 2nd/3rd Multiage	Koa 4th/5th Multiage
Year 1	<u>Year 1 ~ 2025/2026</u> • Identify on map: ◦ Hawaii State ◦ USA ◦ Continents & Oceans • National holidays	<u>Year 1 ~ 2025/2026</u> • Family history • Early Hawaiian life • US Geography regions with focus on Native Americans • Migration and transportation	<u>Year 1 ~ 2025/2026</u> • Pacific geography • Early Hawaii history • Early American history: Colonial America, Revolutionary War • US States and Regions
Year 2	<u>Year 2 ~ 2026/2027</u> • Family • Community • Citizenship • National holidays	<u>Year 2 ~ 2026/2027</u> • Waimea Community • Physical Geography of North America • Natural resources • Famous Americans	<u>Year 2 ~ 2026/2027</u> • US Government • Modern Hawaii History • World Geography & Cultures • Elections

Art



The goals of visual art education are:

- develop skills with a variety of media
- nurture the natural joy of creating
- help children develop an appreciation for art created by the great masters, contemporary artists, artists from around the world, and of course themselves and each other!



Art is integrated throughout the curriculum in all classes and largely taught by individual classroom teachers. Students draw, paint, collage, chalk, stamp, make dioramas, create sculptures, and much more as a way to respond to reading, express understanding of scientific or mathematical concepts, culminate a unit of study, celebrate a holiday, express emotions, or even just to have fun trying new techniques..



In addition, all students have art classes. The art curriculum includes lessons that are based on the elements of art — line, shape, form, color, texture, value, and space — and are often inspired by the works of famous artists. When possible, guest artists are brought in to work on a variety of techniques or special projects.

Students in all classes keep an art portfolio that collects their work throughout the year. Non-juried student Art Shows provide an opportunity for students to share and display their artwork.



Health & Fitness



The physical education program provides a range of learning experiences. With an emphasis on healthy choices, units are characterized by locomotor skills, body awareness, endurance, practicing sportsmanship and being pono. Each class focuses on stretching routines, skill building, practice, and healthy competition. All students participate in our multiage Makahiki event, celebrating and honoring Hawaiian culture.

Students are expected to come to class prepared with appropriate footwear, clothing, and attitude.

Health and Fitness skills and activities may include:

- Gross motor development
- Fitness routines
- Fitness challenge/testing
- Rhythmic activities; dance
- Sports introduction - rules, skills, practice
- Basic gymnastics/tumbling
- Using equipment like bean bags, balls, hoops, ropes, streamers, parachutes
- Running, catching, throwing, kicking, targeting, dodging



Garden ~ Na Keiki Aloha 'Aina

Our creative, safe, and welcoming learning garden fosters children's connections to the natural world, raises awareness about food and nutrition, and creates a bridge between outdoor and indoor classrooms.

All students spend regular time in the garden, engaging in all aspects of the program:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| • amending soil | • transplanting | • weeding | • tasting/eating |
| • composting | • mulching | • harvesting | • recipe planning |
| • planting | • watering | • seed saving | • using tools |

Garden classes often tie directly into units of study in science, art, mathematics, language, or social studies. Students learn how to live a sustainable lifestyle and how to care for the land. Children find great satisfaction in being outside and harvesting the food they plant and grow. Students learn to prepare and utilize the plants we harvest, promoting healthy eating habits and knowledge of how to eat local, slow, nutritious food. All students participate in the Spring Plant Sale, showing off their work in the garden and earning money for the garden program.

The garden is fully accessible during recess, and students observe, harvest, weed, and otherwise tend garden beds during weekly classes. They receive instruction on proper use and care of garden tools, which they then use to perform manual tasks in the school garden and yard. Closed-toed shoes or boots are required for garden class. Children learn proper procedures for washing and preparing fresh produce, so they can harvest and consume the fruits of their labor.

All students participate in GART, a gardening/art hybrid where students experience both classes. On Wednesday afternoons, 'Ohi'a students work in small groups. On Friday afternoons, Koai'a and Koa students are combined and split into two groups.

