EST. 1893

WALNUT HILL

SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

International Student Handbook

Student Life Office

Walnut Hill School for the Arts

Natick, MA

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Welcome to Walnut Hill School for the Arts 3
Chapter 2: Pre-Arrival Check List 4
Chapter 3: Pre-Arrival Information 5
Chapter 4: Traveling to Campus 7
Chapter 5: What to Bring 9
Chapter 6: Residential Life 11
Chapter 7: Academic Information 13
Chapter 8: The Arts Program 15
Chapter 9: Health Services 17
Chapter 10: Banking and Money 18
Chapter 11: Communication 19
Chapter 12: School Vacations and Travel 20
Chapter 13: Where to go for help 22
Chapter 14: Practical Information 24
Chapter 15: Cultural Information 26

Chapter 1: Welcome to Walnut Hill School for the Arts

Welcome to Walnut Hill School for the Arts! This handbook provides important information for international students and their families. It is meant to be a supplement to the general Student Handbook; families should read the complete handbook for additional information and policies.

At Walnut Hill we understand that attending school far from home can pose logistical and cultural challenges; our goal is to make the transition as smooth as possible and to support students throughout their time here.

Having lived and studied abroad myself, I know how challenging it can be to adjust to a new school and culture. I hope you will agree with me, however, that the benefits outweigh the challenges! My role as the International Program Coordinator is to be a resource for international students and to support them by answering questions, providing information, and working with other members of the school community to ensure that all students feel at home at Walnut Hill. Please stop by my office, call, or email me with any questions or concerns that you have. I look forward to getting to know you soon!



Lauren Johanson
International Program Coordinator
ljohanson@walnuthillarts.org
+1 (508) 650-5023
Skype: lejohanson
WeChat: laurenjohansonWH

Office location: Academic Technology Center (ATC) Room 209

Chapter 2: Pre-Arrival Check List

☐ **Secure F-1 student visa.**
See the travel and immigration requirements packet for complete instructions.

☐ **Complete Registration Forms.**
Parents will receive these forms via email in May.

☐ **Complete Health Information and Forms on Parent Portal.**
Schedule an appointment with your doctor. Bring the required forms to the appointment. You will need to submit documentation of a physical exam and required immunizations prior to arriving on campus. After your medical exam, upload the documentation on the Magnus Health Portal

☐ **Complete Placement Tests.**
Completing the math and language placement tests before orientation will help us determine your placement before you arrive on campus.

☐ **U.S. Cell phone number**
All students must have a cell phone with a U.S. number. Set up an account with CampusSIMS (SIM card included) or research other options.

☐ **Local Bank Account**
Research banking options and decide if you will open a U.S. account.

☐ **Schedule an appointment with the Health Center.**
If you are arriving early and staying in the area, set up an appointment with the Health Center staff to avoid the line on registration day. Email nurses@walnuthillarts.org and tell them your arrival date and when you are available to meet.

☐ Visit **www.walnuthillarts.org/welcome** for packing lists, orientation schedule, summer reading requirements, and more!

Chapter 3: Pre-Arrival Information

Visas
All students who are not U.S. citizens (except those from Canada or Bermuda) must obtain a F-1 student visa. Please read carefully the instructions included with your Form I-20 to ensure that you have the required documentation ready before the interview. Please note that the consulate will not issue a visa more than four months prior to the program start date listed on the Form I-20. It may take several weeks to schedule an appointment so you should contact the embassy as soon as possible.

Registration Forms
Parents will receive an email with a link to the online forms. The registration forms include course selection, dorm preferences, parent permissions, and contact information. Please review the following points before completing the registration forms.

Course Selection - In the Course Selection section, students select which courses they are interested in taking. Schedules will not be finalized until orientation and all placement tests are taken. Please refer to Chapter 7 (Academic Information) for more details about academics at Walnut Hill. Email the Walnut Hill Registrar (registrar@walnuthillarts.org) or the Director of Academic Studies (bgregg@walnuthillarts.org) with any questions regarding course selection.

Student Information – Students are asked to provide a local cell phone number, so we suggest setting up a Campus SIMs cell phone account before filling out these forms. If you choose a different service provider, you must share your cell phone number with the International Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

Family Contact Information – Walnut Hill uses email as the primary means of communication with families. It is essential that we have accurate email addresses for parents and guardians.

Local Contact – We highly recommend that international families have an emergency contact or guardian living in the United States who speaks English. Guardians will be included on all school correspondence and listed as an additional emergency contact.

Parent Permissions – Students need permission from parents to do the following things:

- *Drive with Anyone*—anyone includes Walnut Hill students, faculty and staff but it also includes anyone outside of the School.
- *Drive with Dorm Parents/Staff*—an example of this would be for field trips and doctor visits.
- *Drive with Students*—there are many day students who drive to campus each day and sometimes groups of kids want to go to lunch or out somewhere, so we would need parental permission to allow students to drive in a car with other students.
- *Drive with Walnut Hill Parents* – any parent of students from Walnut Hill
- *Drive with a Specific List of People*—some parents want to limit the driving permissions to only a few people; a list can be provided.
- *Go to Boston*—Students have permission to travel to metro Boston (including but not limited to Newton, Brookline, Allston, Brighton, Roslindale, South Boston, Dorchester). Students are not allowed to go into Boston on weekdays.
- *Take a Taxi*—students with taxi permissions can call/ride in a taxi or other car service to their desired destinations.
- *Take Public Transportation* —students can ride on public transportation (subways, buses and commuter rail) to all areas accessible by such transportation.

Parents that grant the permissions assume all risks associated with them. The list of granted permissions will be given to the Dorm Parents and Student Life staff.

Health Information
The Health Center uses MAGNUS, an online portal to collect health information and forms. Parents will receive an email with their individual username and password in order to access the system. Please look for this email. In MAGNUS, parents must fill out their student's medical history, including any prior medical or mental health issues and any medications that they currently take. It is crucial that we have an accurate picture of your child's medical history so that we can provide the appropriate care or be on the lookout for any symptoms. This includes any treatment for depression, anxiety, or psycho-emotional issue. The more information we have, the better! The Health Center staff is the only people who have access to this information.

These forms, along with a record of a medical exam and immunizations, must be completed in MAGNUS by August 1.

1. Schedule a physical exam with your doctor;
2. Print the required forms and bring them to the appointment;
3. Make sure to get all of the required immunizations (see list below);
4. After the exam, upload the documents and complete the additional information on the Magnus Health Portal (see link on Walnut Hill Parent Portal). Parents will receive an email with their log-in information. Please contact nurses@walnuthillarts.org if you have trouble logging in.

Health forms are due by August 1st.

Required immunizations:

DTap (Diptheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis)*	4 doses DTaP or 3 doses TD plus 1 dose Tdap
Polio	3 doses
MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)	2 doses
Hepatisis B	3 doses
Varicella	2 doses
Meningitis	1 dose
Tuberculin (TB) Test**	1 test (international students only)

*We are aware that the DTap vaccine is not always available in China. Please complete the other requirements, and we will schedule this vaccine for you when you arrive on campus.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires a TB test for all individuals not born in the United States. **This is not a routine test. Please request this test from your doctor.

Health Insurance
International students are automatically enrolled in the school's 12-month health insurance plan. The plan covers primary care services, emergencies/ambulatory services, surgical services, hospitalization benefits, specialist services, mental health services, and prescription drug coverage.

The nurses will enroll students over the summer; students will receive their health insurance card within the first week of school. Parents will be billed for health insurance in the fall.

Cell Phones
All Walnut Hill students are required to have a U.S. cell phone number. With busy schedules, off-campus lessons, and travel, the school must be able to reach the students by cell phone at all times. We highly recommend using CampusSIMS as your cell phone service provider. The plans are easy to use – Simply download the app on your phone to set up the account and select a phone number. Students can share the number with parents, family, and the school before leaving home. Upon arrival in the U.S., insert the SIM card into your phone and activate it to make and receive calls instantly. You can suspend or cancel the service at any time.

An alternative option is to purchase a pay-as-you go plan (SIM card) when you arrive in the U.S. These cards can be purchased at stores such as Best Buy, Target, and Walmart. If you purchase a U.S. SIM card, we recommend setting up automatic payments in order to avoid any disruption in service.

Pre-Arrival Learning (PAL) Program & English Assessment
All new international students, including students who hold U.S. or dual citizenship but live abroad, are enrolled in the Pre-Arrival Learning program. The online orientation program provides a lot of important information and helps you learn about Walnut Hill, the United States, and American culture before you arrive on campus. After each section is a short quiz to show how much you remembered. Don't worry – the quiz is not graded!

If English is not your native language, you will also be required to take the PAL online English test. This test gives us a general sense of your knowledge of English. You will have another opportunity to demonstrate your skills when you arrive on campus. This in-person assessment will determine your class placement.

International Family Orientation
International families are invited to campus the day before New Student Registration for a full day of orientation activities that are specific to the international student (and parent) experience. Topics include how to handle homesickness and cultural adjustment, traveling over school breaks, the American healthcare system, classroom expectations, school policies, and more. The day is optional, but we highly encourage you to join us and get to know the school better.

Bridge to the Hill Seminar
During their first semester at Walnut Hill, all new international students, including students who hold U.S. or dual citizenship but live abroad, meet weekly in small groups for an extended orientation seminar class. In the discussion-based seminar, students will talk about issues of cultural adjustment and get to know the school and the local community better. Topics will include practical information such as "how to…" (check your bank account, set up and check your voicemail, travel safely on your own, fill out a REACH request) as well as culturally-specific information such as classroom and community expectations, approaches to health and wellness, navigating friendships, time management, self care, and communication. Students will receive more information about the seminar during Orientation.

Chapter 4: Traveling to Campus

We *strongly* recommend that a parent accompany the student to registration. We suggest that you arrive a few days before registration and stay in a local hotel to allow time to recover from jet lag. The first week of school is very busy, and students want to be well rested and ready to engage in all of the activities. Once orientation begins, students are expected to be on-campus full time, and parents are expected to leave at the end of registration day.

Walnut Hill School for the Arts is in the town of Natick, approximately 17 miles west of the city of Boston. The best ways to get to Natick from Logan Airport are:

- **Taxi** from Logan Airport (approximately $100)
- **Logan Express Bus** – The Logan Express provides non-stop bus service between Logan Airport and the town of Framingham (10 minutes from campus). Buses depart every 30 minutes. A round-trip ticket is $22 per adult ($12 each way) and can be purchased on the bus. Children under 17 are free. Travel time is approximately 30-45 minutes. Website: www.loganexpressbus.com

Local Accommodation
The hotels below are within a few miles of campus and offer free local transportation.

The Hampton Inn 319 Speen Street Natick, MA 01760 +1 508-653-5000	Courtyard Marriott 342 Speen Street Natick, MA 01760 +1 508-655-6100	The Verve Hotel Crowne Plaza 1360 Worcester Street Natick, MA 01760 +1 508-653-8800

Traveling to the U.S.

When you travel to the United States, you must carry these important items with you:

- Travel documents (passport, visa, Form I-20)
- Walnut Hill contract
- Proof of financial support (bank statements)
- Receipt of SEVIS payment made online

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Here are some tips about traveling through U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

- **Traveling with money:** Travelers are allowed to bring as much money as they want in or out of the United States. However, if the amount is more than $10,000 (or the equivalent in any currency), you must declare it to the customs official on the Currency Reporting Form. If declared, this money, regardless of amount, will not be taxed or fined.

  PLEASE NOTE: A family traveling together is considered one unit and must declare any amount of money over $10,000. Only one family member should carry the money; do not divide it among travelers.

- **Prohibited or restricted items:** Travelers must declare all food (meat, fruit, cheese, etc.) and agricultural products that they bring into the United States. There are many items that are prohibited or restricted from entering the U.S. in order to protect the environment and reduce the spread of disease to plants and animals. *Restricted items may be confiscated at customs **if they are not declared** and travelers may receive a fine.*

Chapter 5: What to Bring

Clothing

It is important to consider the weather when deciding what clothes to bring. Massachusetts experiences four distinct seasons, and the temperature can range from warm 80° F (27° C) to cold 0° F (-18° C). It is a good idea to bring clothes that you can layer (for example, a T-shirt for warm weather; in colder weather you can wear a long-sleeved shirt and sweater over it).

During the winter you will need a very warm coat, hat, gloves or mittens, scarf, and warm, waterproof boots to protect you from the cold, wind, and snow. Remember that the buildings on campus are spread out, and you will need to dress warmly for the walk from your dorm to your classes. If you are coming from a warm climate and do not own clothing for cold weather, you can purchase these items in the U.S. in the fall.

Suggested clothing to bring:

- Sweaters, jackets
- Long and short-sleeved shirts, blouses
- Underwear, thick and thin socks, tights
- Skirts, dresses
- Pants, jeans, sweats, shorts
- Mittens, hat, scarf, waterproof boots, shoes (dress and casual), slippers, good winter boots
- Warm winter coat, raincoat
- Pajamas
- Sneakers and clothing for exercise
- National or traditional dress for special events or international dinners

Many students bring personal items from home such as pictures of family or friends, posters, favorites books or music, mementos or keepsakes, traditional instruments. Bring anything that would make you feel more at home.

Dorm Room Items

Each dorm room contains:

- A bed (the size of the bed is Twin XL; mattress dimensions are 39 inches wide by 80 inches long)
- A dresser for your clothes
- A desk, chair and bookshelf for schoolwork and books
- A closet or wardrobe to hang clothes (the closet is usually shared with your roommate(s))

The following items can be purchased at reasonable prices in the area, and we suggest you wait to buy them until you arrive. You can visit the websites for Target, Wal-Mart, and Bed Bath and Beyond to compare prices. In addition, during orientation, we will hold a "Swap Shop" where students will have the chance to pick out items (for free!) that are no longer being used by other students. In the Swap Shop you can get things like hangers, trash cans, small fans, desk lamps, and storage bins.

Essential dorm room items:

- Extra-long twin sheets
- Blankets or comforter
- Pillows
- Towels
- Bathrobe and shower shoes
- Personal hygiene items and container to carry them to and from the bathroom
- Laundry supplies—detergent, laundry bag or hamper
- Hangers
- A battery back-up alarm clock
- Small desk lamp

- Small wastebasket
- Power strip with surge protection
- Personal plate, mug, bowl, cup, and silverware
- A small fan

Extra things you can bring:

- Throw rug
- Curtains
- Radio/iPod dock
- Flashlight
- Computer/printer

Heated hair appliances:
Heated hair appliances including hair dryers, heated rollers, straighteners, and curling irons are allowed but must be kept in the provided baskets in the dorm bathrooms at all times.

Items you are NOT allowed to have in the dorm:

- Medication of any kind (all medications MUST be kept at the Health Center)
- Power strips without surge protection
- TV / Video game consoles / monitors
- Microwaves
- Cooking or heating appliances
- Coffeemakers or electric kettles
- Irons
- Incense or candles
- Matches or lighters
- Pets, including fish
- Empty alcoholic beverage containers
- Lava lamps
- Electric blankets
- Halogen lamps
- Holiday or other string lights

School Supplies

- Backpack or book bag
- Notebooks, binders, pens, pencils

Computers

- We recommend, but do not require, that you bring your own computer to school. We recommend a laptop.
- If you don't have a computer, there are public computers and printers available. No teachers will require that you have your own.
- We do not make specific recommendations in terms of brand, operating system, or other features.
- Most of the academic work is online so even relatively inexpensive machines like Chromebooks will be fine. You are not required to have any specific programs or software.

Chapter 6: Residential Life

Residential life is a large part of the boarding experience. Walnut Hill strives to make its dormitories welcoming, safe, and happy "homes away from home" for students from all over the country and the world.

Dorm Parents
Dorm parents are adult members of the campus community who provide supervision and support to the students in their dorms. Many dorm parents are Walnut Hill faculty or staff members; some are married and have children of their own. Students interact with their dorm parents on a daily basis. Parents are encouraged to meet their child's Dorm Parents at orientation and to contact them throughout the year. A list of the names and telephone numbers of Dorm Parents is sent to parents at the start of the school year.

Roommates
Room assignments are done over the summer. You will find out at registration where you are living and with whom. You can expect to live with one or two roommates during your first couple of years at Walnut Hill. Your roommate will likely be from another culture and may have different customs, habits, and traditions than you are familiar with. Take the opportunity to learn about their culture. Roommates are expected to treat each other with respect and courtesy. Any conflicts should be brought to the attention of the dorm parents.

Dorm Life
Student will learn about specific dorm rules and policies during orientation. Students are responsible for keeping their room clean. Dorm parents will inspect rooms once a week. Students are also responsible for doing their own laundry – including sheets and towels – on a regular basis. There are laundry machines in each dorm, but students must provide their own detergent and dryer sheets.

REACH Boarding System
REACH is the system the school uses to keep track of students' whereabouts when they travel off campus whether it is for a music lesson, field trip, overnight stay with a friend or family member, and all travel during school vacations. Using an app on their phone, students must fill out the details of their trip (called a "REACH Request"). During the week, a member of the Student Life staff must approve the plan before the student can leave campus. For overnight or vacation travel, parents must also approve the request. Parents will receive an email and can simply click "Approve" or "Deny." Parents, please read the details of the request carefully before approving it!

Mail Service
The Mailroom is located in the basement of Stowe Administration building, and hours are posted there each semester. Students can also send mail from the mailroom; stamps are sold in the bookstore.

Parents can send mail/packages to:

"Student's Name"
Walnut Hill School for the Arts
12 Highland Street
Natick, MA 01760
USA

Students are able to make online purchases from websites such as Amazon. When the packages arrive, students will receive an email alerting them that they must come and pick up their mail.

Storage
If you need to ship any boxes to school, you may do so over the summer. Your boxes will be stored in the mailroom until you arrive for registration. At the end of the school year, students must move out of their dorm rooms, as the campus is utilized for summer programs. A local packing company, available on campus during the last week of school, will provide boxes, packing services, storage, pick up and delivery for a fee. Students are encouraged to coordinate these arrangements in advance.

Chapter 7: Academic Information

The Walnut Hill Schedule
Walnut Hill offers a dual curriculum, which means that both the academic and arts classes are rigorous and credit bearing. Students must be successful in both aspects of the program in order to earn a diploma from Walnut Hill.

Academic Graduation Requirements:

- 4 credits of English
- 3 credits of mathematics
- 2 credits of history, one of which must be United States History
- 2 credits of a laboratory science
- 2 credits of consecutive courses of the same world language
- 3 additional academic credits in any of the departments

A Walnut Hill diploma is awarded upon completion of a four-year high school program with at least the senior year being completed at Walnut Hill. A student who fails a course in the second semester of senior year may not be permitted to graduate.

The school year is divided into two semesters: Fall Semester is from September to January and Spring Semester is from January to June. There are four academic blocks each day between 8:00am and 2:00pm. Students also have a scheduled lunch period.

Students take between four and six academic courses each year, so two or three courses each semester. The general recommendation is that students take one course in each of the five academic disciplines each year (English, History, Math, Science, and World Language). All students must take a minimum of four academic courses each year. English language learners are not required to take a World Language.

English Language Learning (ELL)
All non-native English speakers are required to take an English placement test, which consists of reading, writing, and speaking, during orientation. Based on the placement test, as well as sample classes, TOEFL scores, and transcripts, students will be placed into the ELL program (Intermediate or Advanced), a bridge English class (American Literature), or mainstream English.

Students who place into ELL Intermediate spend their first semester studying English intensively to prepare them for future academic classes. Students are re-tested at the end of the fall and spring semesters to gauge their progress. Most students continue in the program as they were placed, however, there is opportunity to move up a level between semesters, if a student shows significant progress.

ELL courses count toward the English graduation requirement. The ELL program incurs an additional fee, which is charged to the student's account in the fall.

Common Course Sequence
All students and transcripts are different, but here is a rough guide to the most common course sequences by grade. All possible course options are listed; course selection is determined by placement tests and previous course credits in English, math, and science.

	Grade 9	**Grade 10**	**Grade 11**	**Grade 12**
English	English 9 ELL Intermediate ELL Advanced	English 10 ELL Intermediate ELL Advanced	English 11 American Lit. Writing & Thinking	English 12 American Lit. Writing & Thinking
History	World History I	World History II	U.S. History Creating America	History Elective
Math	Algebra 1 Geometry Intro. Algebra 2	Geometry Intro. Algebra 2 Adv. Algebra 2	Intro. Alg. 2 Adv. Alg. 2 Statistics Math Applications Precalculus	Adv. Alg. 2 Statistics Math Applications Precalculus Calculus
Science	Biology	Chemistry	Chemistry Physics	Chemistry Physics Science Elective
World Language	French or Spanish 1A, 1B, or 2	French or Spanish 2, 3, or 4	French or Spanish 3, 4, or 5	French or Spanish 3, 4, 5, 6

The U.S. Classroom
Many classes are interactive and discussion-based. Students should contribute to the discussion and participate in every class. The student-teacher relationship in the U.S. is generally more informal than in other countries. It is acceptable and expected for students to ask questions and discuss topics with the teacher. Students are also encouraged to seek help outside of class if they need it. Teachers respect a student who takes initiative of their own learning.

Attendance
Daily attendance is critical to success at Walnut Hill, and students are expected to attend class every day. You are expected to go to class on time, to notify your teacher ahead of time if you will be absent, and to participate. It is better to be late than to skip a class. If you must miss class because of illness, you MUST see the nurse BEFORE class begins in order to be excused.

Academic Support
X block
X block is a 35-minute block built into the schedule every day to provide students with time to meet with teachers for extra help or to get their work done. We strongly encourage students to actively seek out support and individual attention from their teachers during X block. X block is not just for students who are struggling.

Academic Support Center
The Academic Support Center is an area where students may study during the day. They can also attend a math drop-in study session for support in math. The Director of Academic Support can meet individually with students to provide support in time management, executive functioning issues, memory retention, essay writing, work completion, and other academic issues that may create barrier to learning.

Fee-for-Service Tutoring
The Director of Academic Support coordinates professional, fee-for-service tutoring for students who require additional support in meeting course requirements. Professional tutors are available to support academic coursework as well as to strengthen general reading, writing, and study skills.

Chapter 8: The Arts Program

Arts classes take place between 2:00pm and 6:00pm. Students' arts schedules vary by artistic discipline. All arts placements occur during Orientation in the fall. Placement decisions are made to ensure the appropriate level of challenge for all students. All students are re-auditioned every fall to ensure proper class placement.

Music
The Walnut Hill Music Department is the only high school program linking a major conservatory, New England Conservatory (NEC), with an independent school. This partnership engages students in a comprehensive music curriculum delivered both at NEC and at Walnut Hill. Students can major in an orchestral instrument, piano, voice, composition, or jazz. The curriculum is enhanced by innovative performance projects, master classes by dynamic guest artists, and the thoughtful integration of contemporary topics such as entrepreneurship and civic engagement. Our program, offered within an inspiring creative com-munity, prepares graduates to thrive in a conservatory, university, or college setting.

Instrumental Program Requirements:
Private Lessons*, Chamber Music, Large Ensemble*, Music Department Masterclass, January Project, Music Theory 1, 2 and Form & Analysis, Ear Training, Solfege, Music History, Piano Seminar* (Pianists Only)

Voice Program Requirements:
Private Voice Lessons, Private Coachings (with piano), Youth Chorale*, Music Department Masterclass, Voice Masterclass, Voice Repertoire, Voice Skills, January Project, Diction for Singers, Piano Lessons, Music Theory 1, 2 and Form & Analysis, Ear Training, Solfege, Music History

Composition Program Requirements:
Private Composition Lessons, Composition Seminar, Piano Seminar* (Pianists Only), Music Department Masterclass, January Project, Music Theory 1, 2 and Form & Analysis, Ear Training, Solfege, Music History

Jazz Program Requirements:
Private Lessons*, Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Theory*, Jazz Styles*, Jazz History*, Jazz Combo*, Music Department Masterclass, January Project, Music Theory 1, Ear Training, Solfege, Music History

* Courses at New England Conservatory; all others are on campus at Walnut Hill

Visual Art
Visual art students take three or four studio art courses per semester. At the start of each semester, scheduling for each visual art student is arranged on an individual basis between the student and the Art Department faculty. Students are required to take studio classes in a broad range of mediums each year, as they work to build a well-balanced portfolio. Over their time at Walnut Hill, students may repeat studio classes as they develop their technique and individual artistic interests.

Writing, Film & Media Arts (WFMA)
Writing, Film & Media Arts Department offers a possibility-rich environment in which students can develop an original voice and vision. Through studio courses, practicums, and master classes with notable guest artists, students invest in the process of creating dynamic stories with words and images. Technique is woven seamlessly into the curriculum in classes such as fiction, screenwriting, poetry, and filmmaking. After being exposed to various mediums through core classes, students can shape their course plan based on their primary artistic interests. In all areas of study, supportive faculty help students cultivate the skills and habits necessary to approach their college pursuits with a creative and technical edge.

WFMA students take four classes per semester. Classes meet once a week, Monday through Friday, from 2:00pm to 5:00pm, with some options occurring in the evening. One afternoon a week, students have Open Studio, a structured time for them to work independently on assignments and projects from their classes. Classes are intentionally small and mixed-level, incorporating elements of collaborative learning. New students benefit from their returning peers' guidance and support; returning students expand their capacity as mentors and gain confidence as class leaders. Class placement is determined through a combination of student interest, faculty recommendation, and years of experience in the program. Students are encouraged to take a range of classes, though curricular focus in a specific medium is permitted.

Theater
Theater classes are generally organized by grade, with some exceptions. All theater students take Acting Class and Movement for the Actor every year, as well as three years of Musical Theater. In addition, they must take two years of Design and Production. Each theater major is also required to successfully complete assignments on production crews each semester. Crew assignments are made after casting and include production work in lighting, costume, scenery, rigging, props, running crew, and front-of-house operations. Failure to successfully complete production requirements will jeopardize a student's standing as a theater major. In addition, theater students may take classes in Music Theory, Fundamentals of Music, Choir (all by permission of the Director of Music and if these courses do not conflict with scheduling of theater curriculum), Piano, and Directing.

Casting in productions and performances is based on student performance and audition and is not guaranteed. All theater students are involved in productions throughout the year, either onstage or as part of a crew.

Dance
The Walnut Hill Dance Department is a pre-professional training program. The students participate in an hour and three quarter ballet technique class Monday through Saturday. The ladies then have a forty five-minute pointe class, the men have a forty-five minute men's class. During the course of the week, all dancers have Modern, Jazz, Yoga, TRX (cross training), Partnering, instruction on proper stretching techniques, as well as lectures on nutrition, injury prevention, and Dance History. We offer four electives: Choreography Jr. and Sr., Pedagogy, Advanced Modern, Dance on Film, and a Master Class Series. We are very proud of our Health and Wellness Program. The department works closely with Dr. Michalei's office at Boston Children's Hospital. Additionally, a fellow from Dr. Michalei's practice visits campus twice a month and physical therapy is available three times a week. Ample performance opportunities for students are offered: ten to twelve Nutcrackers, five Spring Repertory, and three New Works performances. We also have partnerships with the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and Ballet Austin in which current alums are attending and performing.

For parents:

Livestream
Walnut Hill offers live video streaming of some performances to provide access to parents, family, and friends who are not able to attend. To view live events or past performances visit: https://livestream.com/walnuthill.

Pre-Order Flowers
The Walnut Hill Family Association sells flowers for many performances during the school year. This is an easy way for you and your loved ones to celebrate your young artist during the school year. The flowers are fresh and beautifully arranged. To purchase flowers for a student visit the Walnut Hill Family Association page on the Parent Portal.

Chapter 9: Health Services

The Health Center provides medical assistance seven days a week, Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 7:00pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00am to 1:00pm. If you feel ill during the school day, you must visit the school nurse in the Health Center before you miss a class. During hours that the Health Center is closed, you can go to your Dorm Parents for health-related issues. A medical professional is on-call at all hours when the Health Center is closed. A local doctor is available as needed for student appointments. In the event of a medical emergency, a hospital with a pediatric emergency room is five miles from campus.

Medications
Students may not keep any medicines – including prescription medication, non-prescription, herbal or traditional medicines – in their dorm room. All medication must be supervised by the School Nurse or a Dorm Parent.

On Registration Day
You must bring any medicines to the Health Center including, prescription medications, over-the counter medications you take daily, vitamins, and supplements in the original bottles/containers. Do not pack them in your luggage, as you cannot move into your dorm until the Health Center reviews your medications. The Health Center cannot accept medications that do not have labels in English.

Non-prescription medicines
The School provides most over-the-counter (non-prescription) medicine, such as pain relievers, cold, and allergy medicines. Please do not bring these medicines to school.

Counseling Services
The School Counselor provides free individual personal support to students experiencing any type of emotional issue. The counselor's office is located on the second floor of the Health Center, with hours posted at the beginning of the year. The School Counselor works closely with students and their parents; standard rules of professional confidentiality apply in the counselor's conversations with students. The School Counselor maintains a referral list of local mental health providers and will arrange care as needed or requested. Use of these providers incurs additional cost.

Staying Healthy
Walnut Hill students have incredibly busy schedules with academic and arts classes, rehearsals, lessons, and performances. It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Here are some suggestions:

- **Get enough sleep.** While this can be difficult to do, students must learn to use their time wisely. Get as much homework done during the day as possible so that you do not have to stay up late doing it. Also, students should not be on the phone after 11:00pm so that they can get a good night's sleep and not disturb their roommates and neighbors.

- **Eat a balanced diet.** The dining hall offers many diverse, healthy options. Eating French fries or take-out food for dinner every night is not a good idea!

- **Exercise regularly.** To help students do this, Walnut Hill requires students to exercise for 30 minutes three times a week. The fitness center offers classes such as Zumba and yoga. The student athletic club organizes games of soccer, American football, and other sports. Students can also do activities on their own. Students should come prepared with sneakers and clothes for exercise.

Chapter 10: Banking and Money

You may choose to open a bank account here in the U.S or to use a credit card from home. PLEASE NOTE: *Some stores and websites do not allow you to pay with an international credit card.* Check with your bank to see what the fees are for international purchases, withdrawals, and money transfers to determine which option is best for you.

Opening a Bank Account
If you decide to open a bank account in the U.S., there are a few things to keep in mind. A parent or guardian must be present if the student is under 18 years old. A Walnut Hill faculty or staff member cannot be a co-signer on a student's bank account. When you go to open the account, you must bring your passport and I-20. Your parent/guardian must also bring their passport.

There are many banks in the area. A few that current students use are:

Needham Bank	www.needhambank.com	walking distance from campus; Mandarin-speaking staff
Citizens Bank	www.citizensbank.com	walking distance from campus
Bank of America	www.bankofamerica.com	located at the Natick Mall

Using an ATM
Automated Teller Machines (or ATMs for short) allow you to make cash withdrawals, deposits, and transfers between accounts. You can also view your account balance. This is free at your own bank and its braches, but when you use another bank's ATM, both your bank and the other bank could charge you a fee of between $1.50 and $3.00. There is a First Republic Bank ATM in the Campus Center (above the Dining Hall) for students to use. There is a limit on how much money you can withdraw from an ATM at one time or on one day. Check with your bank to find out what the limit is.

You should set up an online account with your bank and log in frequently to monitor your purchase history and account balance.

Tuition and Billing

Walnut Hill uses a system called FACTS Tuition Management for online billing and payment options. After you completed your enrollment, you should have received an invitation to enroll via email. All families should enroll in FACTS in order to have real-time access to their student's account, view any outstanding payments, and make payments through Flywire. Website: online.factsmgt.com.

Families must pay all tuition and fees by the dates indicated on their Enrollment Agreement in order not to incur a 1.5% late charge for each month the payment is overdue.

International families should pay tuition via Walnut Hill's FlyWire account, a cost-effective and secure way to make international payments. Please visit Walnut Hill's website and click About > Payment Information to make secure payments online.

Monthly Billing Statements

Even if tuition has been paid in full, parents must make monthly payments for any incidental charges that their student incurs. This includes any purchased made in the school store, weekend activities with a fee, extra transportation charges, etc. These charges will be billed on the last day of each month. The due date will be the 15th day of the next month. Late payments will incur a late fee.

Chapter 11: Communication

Email
Walnut Hill uses email as a primary method of communication with students and parents. All students receive a Walnut Hill email address at orientation. Students are expected to check their email regularly (at least twice a day) to be aware of important notices about their classes and school events. Parents, please make sure that we have an accurate email address for you and that we can reach you by email.

Parent Portal
The Parent Portal is a website for all current parents that is a central hub of information – calendars, upcoming events, and important updates are posted there. Parents can also view student grades and comments on the Portal. Parents will receive an email with their login information over the summer. This information should be saved and used to access the Portal throughout the year. There is a button in the top right corner of the page to translate the website into various languages.

Comments and Grade Updates
Teachers write comments about each student's progress halfway through each semester and at the end of the semester. The comments will include what the student is doing well and what they could do to improve. Parent will need to log in to the Parent Portal in order to view these comments and their child's grades.

Progress Reports
At any point during the semester, a teacher will write a progress report to update parents, advisor, and dorm parents about a student's progress in class. Progress reports are sent by the Walnut Hill Registrar. Progress reports usually indicate that the student needs additional help in the class and should meet with the teacher or a tutor. Parents should communicate with the student and teacher if they receive a progress report and encourage the student to follow the teacher's recommendations.

WeChat
For parents in China, we have created a Walnut Hill parent group on WeChat. Please add the International Program Coordinator (laurenjohansonWH) as a contact on WeChat and she will add you to the group. When you add the contact, please indicate your name in English (if possible), as well as your child's name, arts major, and year of graduation. For example: Your Name (Student's Name, Music, 2022). Feel free to reach out to the International Coordinator at any time via WeChat (keeping in mind the time difference). The ability to translate messages has been very useful for parent communication.

General Communication
Communication between the student, parents, and school is essential to success at Walnut Hill. We understand that parents may not be fluent in English and do not want that to impede communication with the school. We try to translate as much as we can into various languages including the Head of School's monthly letter, bi-monthly updates from the International Program Coordinator, and important letters and emails on an individual basis. We also use a spoken translation service that has enabled us to have conversations with parents over the phone or video chat.

If you have a question or concern about your child, please do not hesitate to contact the school *in any language.* We will do whatever we can to connect with you.

Chapter 12: School Vacations and Travel

Please consult the School Calendar on the Parent Portal for travel dates! These dates are posted in December for the following academic year to allow families to plan ahead.

School Vacations
The school buildings, including dormitories are closed for Thanksgiving Break (one week in November), Winter Break (two weeks in December), and Spring Break (two weeks in March). During the breaks, boarding students arrange to go back home or visit friends and relatives. The school does not arrange homestays during breaks, however a few options are listed below.

Travel Days
Please travel only on the travel days indicated on the School Calendar. While we know that flight prices fluctuate greatly and a better price might be found a day earlier or later, we must minimize disruptions to the school program and cannot allow students to leave early or return late. Students who do not adhere to the travel dates will incur unexcused absences and the consequences outlined in the attendance policy.

A few weeks prior to the break, students submit their travel plans via the REACH system. Parents receive an email asking them to approve or deny their child's plans. Please read the details of the request carefully before approving it!

PLEAE NOTE: Students may not stay in a hotel unless they are 18 or older. Walnut Hill does not approve of any students staying un-chaperoned without an adult present.

Unaccompanied Minor Policy
Please check your airline's unaccompanied minor policy before booking flights. Some airlines (such as Delta) require passengers less than 15 years old to be escorted to and from the boarding gates. If students require this service, they must contact the Student Services Office at least three weeks before travel. Cost for this service is $100 each way and will be billed to the student's account.

Transportation

Departing for Major Breaks:
Walnut Hill provides direct shuttles to Boston Logan Airport on travel days for major school breaks. The cost for this service is $20 per student and will be billed to the student account. Students must sign up in advance. Students should plan to depart campus at least three hours before their flight time and take the appropriate shuttle.

Shuttle Departure Times:

Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Breaks

Friday	5:00pm
Saturday	6:00am, 10:00am, 2:00pm
Sunday*	6:00am, 10:00am

Summer Break

Saturday	1:00pm, 4:00pm
Sunday	6:00am, 10:00am

*PLEASE NOTE: Music students must depart on Sunday due to NEC classes on Saturday.

Returning from Breaks:
Walnut Hill offers a free shuttle from the Logan Express Bus Station in Framingham on both return travel dates for each break. The shuttle runs continually from 9am – 7pm, and students do not have to sign up in advance. They just have to take the Logan Express Bus from Logan Airport to the Framingham station and a Walnut Hill van will be there picking up students.

The Logan Express is a non-stop bus service between Logan Airport and the town of Framingham (10 minutes from campus). Buses depart every 30 minutes. At the airport, follow signs for Ground Transportation and look for the Logan Express signs. Make sure to take the bus that say "Framingham" on the front.

Students must be on campus to check in by 7:00pm on return travel days. Out of respect for dorm parents and staff, as well as to ensure you are well rested and prepared to return to classes, please do not book a flight that gets you back to campus after that time.

Options for Breaks

During school breaks when the dormitories are closed, students may not be on campus. Most students stay with friends or family living in the United States. Sometimes parents come to visit the student and travel with them during the breaks. In addition, there are programs and homestay options to explore. The International Program Coordinator is available to answer questions and provide information, however, students are responsible for making their own plans.

Please note: The information below is being provided to Walnut Hill students and families for informational purposes. None of the programs are in any way sponsored by or affiliated with Walnut Hill. Families who opt to use one of these programs release and discharge Walnut Hill from any liability relating to their experience during the homestay and assume any and all risks associated with such experience.

Boston Homestay
Boston Homestay Inc. is a homestay placement service for International Students. Breakfast and dinner are provided and rooms are private with Internet access. Homestay families live in the Greater Boston area and within walking distance to public transportation. For more information, please contact Boston Homestay Inc. Website: www.bostonhomestay.com

Colibri Boston Camp Programs
Colibri Boston School Vacation Camps provide fun, flexible and supervised stays in the heart of Boston for middle and high school boarding students when dorms are closed. Accommodations are in a downtown Boston hostel, and camp leaders are college educated and experienced in working with students (mostly Harvard/MIT/BU graduate students). The program fee includes accommodation, meals, and daily activities. Students may choose to participate in many excursions and activities during the week. Website: www.colibriboston.org/our-services/summer-camps/student-breaks/

Lexington Prep School – Short Vacation Programs
Lexington Prep School's vacation program offers students an opportunity to use their break time productively by offering test preparation for TOEFL and SAT tests as well as private tutoring. There are also opportunities for local exploration and field trips. Lexington Prep offers state-of-the-art facilities, gourmet cuisine, security, and support from highly trained facilitators.
Website: www.lexingtonprep.com/thanksgiving-program/

Chapter 13: Where to go for help

During the school year, you will probably have questions or an issue that you need assistance with. You will find that there are many friendly and helpful adults on campus who can help you.

International Program Coordinator
The International Program Coordinator serves as resource to all international students. She is a liaison between international students and families, staff and faculty, dorm parents, and other individuals on campus. She is available to speak with students about immigration and visas, academic, social, or cultural issues, or just general questions. Students can even speak with the International Coordinator about extremely personal issues that normally may only be discussed with family. Discussions are kept confidential unless the safety of the student is at risk.

Student's Advisor
Every student is assigned an adult advisor that they meet with once a week. Advisors meet with their small group of advisees weekly and get to know students on a personal level. The advisor receives all progress reports and updates on their advisees and will have a big picture view of the student's life at Walnut Hill. Students and parents will meet the advisor at registration.

Below is a list of offices and contact information you may find helpful.

For questions about…		Contact…
1.	**Academic Matters**	• Your teacher, if the issue is related to a specific class • Your advisor • Director of Academic Studies, Ben Gregg bgregg@walnuthilarts.org, 508.652.7819 (for questions about academic class placement) • Director of Academic Support, Sayrona Gifford sgifford@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5055 (for questions about tutoring and academic support)
2.	**Academic Records**	• Registrar registrar@walnuthillarts.org, 508.652.7811
3.	**Admissions & Enrollment**	• Assistant Head of School, Susanne Carpenter scarpenter@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5085
4.	**Attendance**	• Attendance Line attendance@walnuthillarts.org, 508.652.7821
5.	**Financial Matters**	• Business Office, Lauren Gaspar lgaspar@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.7865
6.	**Health Care and Insurance**	• Director of Health Services, Beth Minnucci eminnucci@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5030 • School Counselor, Eve Berman eberman@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5054 • School Nurses, nurses@walnuthillarts.org 508.650.5030
7.	**Personal Problems**	• International Program Coordinator, Lauren Johanson ljohanson@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5023 • Your Advisor • Dean of Students, Melissa Cassel mcassel@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5029 • School Counselor, Eve Berman eberman@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5054 • School Nurses, nurses@walnuthillarts.org 508.650.5030 • Dorm Parents
8.	**Leaving Campus & Travel**	• Student Life Office, Amanda D'Angelo

		adangelo@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5029 • International Program Coordinator, Lauren Johanson ljohanson@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5023 (for international travel)
9.	**Residential Life**	• Dean of Students, Melissa Cassel mcassel@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5029 • Dorm Parents ○ Clark – 774.270.5984 ○ North House - 774.270.5988 ○ New Cottage - 774.270.5987 ○ Eliot - 774.270.5985 ○ Westerly - 774.270.4955 ○ Highland - 774.270.5986 ○ Stowe - 774.270.5989 ○ Bishop - 774.270.5409
10.	**Arts Program**	• Your Art Department Director ○ Dance – Michael Owen mowen@walnuthillarts.org , 508.650.5046 ○ Music – Jennifer Elowitch jelowitch@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5024 ○ Theater – Joe Cabral jcabral@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5035 ○ Visual Art – Jim Woodside jwoodside@walnuthillarts.org, 508.6505056 ○ Writing, Film, & Media Arts – Margaret Funkhouser, mfunkhouser@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5083
11.	**Campus Activities**	• Student Life Office, Campus Center • School Calendar (Walnut Hill portal) • Coordinator of Residential Life and Student Activities, Amanda D'Angelo adangelo@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.5029
12.	**Information Technology**	• IT Department, support@walnuthillarts.org, 508.650.7880 (for anything computer or technology related)
13.	**Security on campus**	• Campus Safety, 508.397.5759
14.	**Emergencies**	• Administrator on Call, 774.286.9513

Chapter 14: Practical Information

Weather

The weather in Massachusetts changes greatly with the seasons. When you arrive for registration, you can expect hot, sunny days and temperatures near 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26 C). While it can be hot outside, some buildings on campus have air-conditioning so indoors can be cool.

- **Fall/Autumn: September through November**
  Fall often has warm days and cool nights. People frequently wear layers they can take off throughout the day as it gets warmer or cooler. Bring long-sleeved shirts, sweaters, and a light-weight jacket.

- **Winter: December through March**
  Winter brings freezing temperatures and the potential for a lot of snow. A warm coat, hat, gloves, and boots are essential.

- **Spring: April until mid June**
  Similar to autumn, spring can bring warm temperatures during the day and cooler temperatures at night. Dressing in layers is essential.

- **Summer: June through August**
  Summer in New England varies quite a bit, however, days are generally warm and sunny. Shorts, T-shirts, and sandals are often worn.

Local Transportation

The school provides free transportation to off-campus music lessons (one per week), programmatic rehearsals at NEC, weekly shopping shuttles, and all school-sponsored activities and events.

The school will arrange transportation for a fee that is billed to the student's account for medical appointments, airport shuttles for school breaks, SAT / ACT / TOEFL tests, and senior college audition travel.

For all other travel, students are required to make their own arrangements and pay the costs. Many students take Uber or taxis for local transportation. The commuter rail train station to Boston is a 10-minute walk from campus. Students pay a discounted fare and may pick up a reusable travel card in the Student Life office. The train ride to Boston is approximately 40 minutes.

Shopping

You can find almost anything you need within 10 miles of campus. The school provides free weekly shuttles to the Natick Mall, which has many stores, as well as large all-purpose stores like Target and Wal-Mart where you can buy anything from batteries and notebooks to food and toothpaste. The listed prices usually do not include sales tax, which is 7% in Massachusetts, and should be factored into the total cost. There is no tax on food or beverage items.

General purpose:
Target
Wal-Mart
Walgreen's
Rite Aid
CVS

School Supplies:
Office Max
Office Depot
Staples

Electronics:
Best Buy

Discount clothing:
Marshall's
TJ Maxx
Nordstrom Rack

Grocery Stores:
Stop and Shop
Roche Brothers

Asian Food Markets:
Well Come Asian Market
Formosa
HMart

Dining Out

You do not usually need a reservation at a restaurant, unless you have a group of six or more. Waiters and waitresses usually receive a 15-20% tip.

If you order food that is delivered to campus, the delivery person usually receives a 15-20% tip.

Traveling within the U.S.

There are many ways to travel around the Northeast and the U.S. if you choose to visit friends or family during the year. One option is to fly from Boston Logan Airport. Many places are also easily reached by bus or train, especially if you are traveling to places like New York, Washington, DC, or Philadelphia. Amtrak provides train service to many cities. There are also bus companies that offer extremely cheap fares if you purchase far enough in advance.

Amtrak (train) www.amtrak.com
Peter Pan Bus www.peterpanbus.com
Megabus www.megabus.com
Bolt Bus www.boltbus.com

Chapter 15: Cultural Information

Names

First or given names are used in the U.S. more frequently than anywhere else. The last name is the family name. If they are about the same age or status, people may call each other by their first names immediately after they meet.

When you meet someone who has a title like “Professor” or “Doctor,” it is appropriate to use that title and the person’s last name. “Ms.” is an appropriate way to address both married and unmarried women. If invited to address someone by their first name, you may do so.

If you don’t know how to address a person you can follow these general rules:

- Address people of your own approximate age and status by their first name.
- If the person is older, use Mr., Mrs. Miss, or Ms. and the last name. Ask them “What shall I call you? Or “How should I address you?”
- If somewhat appears uncertain about how to address you say, “You can call me…”
- It is fine to ask someone to repeat their name a few times, even after you have already met them. Simply say, “Please remind me of your name.”

Be patient with people in terms of helping them pronounce your name. Just like some sounds are new to you, there will be sounds that are new to others. At Walnut Hill some students prefer to use their English name and others use their given name. Both are completely acceptable; decide what is most comfortable to you.

Cultural Values

Below are just a few of the most prevalent values that shape American culture and society.

Independence

The United States was founded by people who valued independence. An independent spirit is still evident in this culture. Many people from the U.S. believe that they are responsible for their own destinies. Being self-reliant is considered more important than relying on family and friends. Privacy is valued for many of the same reasons. Even among members of a family, issues such as money, marriage, and career decisions may not be discussed out of respect for a person’s privacy.

Work Ethic

People from the United States tend to value being busy and we often are! You may notice that people in the U.S. walk quickly, talk quickly, and pay little attention to manners and politeness. We want to “get down to business” rather than make polite conversation. We don’t mean to be rude! We just have a lot to do (or think we do).

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Many people in the United States like to think that all people are equal – race, color, religion, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation are unimportant to our value as human beings. Words like “tolerance” and “appreciation” are words that we may use to describe our relationship with people different from ourselves. For this reason, racist and sexist jokes and comments are not tolerated in most social or business settings.

U.S. Holidays

There are many different holidays in the United States. The most widely celebrated ones are:

- **New Year's Day (January 1)**. Beginning on the evening of December 31, Americans celebrate the New Year.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Third Monday in January)**. This holiday celebrates the life of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., a leader of the U.S. civil rights movement.
- **Presidents' Day (Third Monday in January)**. This is a day to remember past U.S. presidents George Washington, the first U.S. president, and Abraham Lincoln, the 16thpresident who led the country during the Civil War and is credited with abolishing slavery. Both were born in this month.
- **St. Patrick's Day (March 17).** Named for the patron saint of Ireland, this day is often celebrated with parades and parties. Many people wear green clothing and put up decorations—even if they're not of Irish decent!
- **Easter (Springtime – date varies).** This is a traditional Christian holiday and many Christians attend church services. Families also decorate eggs and children are visited by the Easter Bunny.
- **Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)**. This holiday is a time that Americans remember all of those who died in war for the United States.
- **Independence Day (July 4).** On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, a document the United States used to declare its independence from England, was signed. Americans celebrate this holiday with picnics and fireworks.
- **Labor Day (First Monday in September)**. This holiday recognizes the efforts of American workers.
- **Halloween (October 31)**. People often celebrate this holiday by wearing costumes and carving scary faces on pumpkins. Children dress up in costumes and go trick-or-treating to get candy.
- **Thanksgiving (Last Thursday in November)**. According to legend, the first European settlers of the United States gave thanks for their first harvest season by eating a feast with Native Americans. This is a traditional time for families and friends to eat a big turkey dinner together.
- **Christmas (December 25)**. This holiday, at one time a traditionally Christian one, is now a time for most people to exchange gifts, decorate homes, and attend gatherings and parties for the few weeks before December 25.

On some (but not all) of these holidays, Walnut Hill does not have classes. For a complete calendar, see the WH website.

Cultural Adjustment

Everyone who moves to a new country experiences a period of adjustment and adaptation to the new culture. This is sometimes referred to as "culture shock" because of the difficulty of leaving your home culture and living in a new culture. It includes the shock of a new environment, meeting lots of new people, and learning the ways of a different country. It also includes being separated from the important people in your life, such as family, friends, colleagues, or teachers.

Culture shock is entirely normal, usually unavoidable, and it does not mean anything bad about you or your new home. Actually, it can be a very significant learning experience because it makes you more aware of your own culture as well as the new culture you have entered. It will give you valuable skills that will serve you in many ways in the future—it's part of the benefit of international education.

Some typical symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Loneliness
- Avoiding contact with other people, especially Americans
- Negative feelings and hostility toward American culture and people
- Anger, frustration, confusion

• Tiredness or need for excessive amounts of sleep
• Boredom
• Inability to concentrate or work
• Loss of appetite
• Loss of enjoyment in daily activities
• Lack of confidence
• Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
• Depression and feelings of helplessness

There are many adults on campus who understand and can help you if think you are experiencing symptoms of culture shock. Talk to the International Coordinator, School Counselor, or your advisor about your feelings. Here are some additional suggestions that might make you feel better:

- Understand that your reactions are normal
- Be open-minded and curious about your new environment – ask questions!
- Join a club and meet students with similar interests
- Attend International Student Association meetings and participate in events – other international students are experiencing or have experienced culture shock too
- If you struggle with academics, talk with your teachers – they want to help you
- Exercise – take walks around campus, go to the fitness center, do a class
- Try a new activity that you can't do in your home country.
- Stay busy with arts, academics, and weekend activities
- Don't forget the reasons you came to the U.S.
- Be patient with yourself and your new culture

If you feel like you are experiencing culture shock, just remember that it is a normal part of being an international student. You will pass through periods of ups and downs, but in the end it will all be worth it. Try to focus on all the positive and rewarding aspects of your experience!

For more information on American culture and living in the United States, take a look at the following links.

http://www.leaderu.com/isr http://www.isep.org/Family/helping_before.asp
http://www.internationalstudent.com

Tips for Success at Walnut Hill

Life at Walnut Hill is fast paced but fun. In this boarding school environment, most students must take more initiative and be more self-reliant than they ever have before. Students are responsible for managing their time, setting priorities, and meeting the requirements of the program. Here are a few tips for succeeding at Walnut Hill.

- Take initiative – Make sure you fully understand and meet the program expectations. If you are not sure about something – ask!
- Time management – Our students are very busy! Set a schedule for yourself and stick to it. Use your free time to get your homework done.
- Organization – Keep your schoolwork organized by using binders and folders for each class.
- Self Care – Students succeed when they take care of themselves, which means eating healthy meals regularly, getting enough sleep, and maintaining healthy hygiene habits (showering, brushing teeth, doing laundry, etc.).
- Seek help when needed! There are many adults on campus who are eager to help all students succeed. Talk to your advisor, dorm parent, teacher, or any faculty member if you are having a problem.

We are eagerly awaiting and making plans for your arrival. If you have any questions as you prepare for Walnut Hill, please contact Lauren Johanson, International Program Coordinator, at ljohanson@walnuthillarts.org. We are here to support you and look forward to welcoming you to the Walnut Hill community!