



Dear Middle School Parents:

As we turn the calendar to August, I am already looking forward to a wonderful year for you and your children. I hope your family has enjoyed some fun, relaxing time together this summer. I was able to get away for a few weeks this summer, first to join my extended family in Florida and most recently to visit my son in Colorado. It has been over twenty years since I hiked up a mountain that is over 14,000 feet, but my son and I spent a glorious and exhausting day hiking up Quandry Peak, which is just outside of Breckenridge, Colorado and provides amazing views of the surrounding area. Back at sea level in Annapolis, I have recommitted myself to a regular running routine this summer and I have made some progress on the never-ending list of home improvement projects. While the start of school is still several weeks away, we are already beginning the final preparations to welcome all of our families to the new school year.

The Key School campus has remained an active place over the summer, with many academic, athletic, arts, and camp programs bringing students from all over the greater Annapolis community to Key. Alongside the daily Summer at KEY activities, children have attended a wide array of exploratory and enrichment programs including a counselor-in-training course, Scratch coding, emergency vet class, digital photography and other visual arts classes, robot mechanic, Algebra II prep and college essay writing, Minecraft game creation, rock band camp, cooking, 3D printing, chess, musical theater, and the ever-popular Filmsters Academy. At the same time, our popular summer athletic offerings occurred in soccer, mountain biking and ultimate frisbee. Finally, our Outdoor Education staff has led some very exciting trips this summer, including a five-day canoeing trip along the Pocomoke River, and a five-day student leadership excursion to the backcountry of Shenandoah National Park. As these programs are coming to a close and Upper School pre-season sports practices are on the horizon, we are again reminded that the summer is winding down and the school year is upon us.

The Middle School teachers remain very actively engaged in school life during the summer as well. Many teachers continued in the school environment, either by teaching, attending graduate courses, training on new technologies, exploring new field trips, or by working in teams on curriculum development for their classes and programs. Some teachers also participated in our summer programs as camp counselors or running exploration classes or athletic clinics. Wanting a shared summer reading experience, I also asked the faculty to read the book ***iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy --- and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood***, by Jean M. Twenge. Like our students, we will have some interesting discussions about this reading when we return to school

in a few weeks, and as a point of reference throughout the year. As you can see, summer is a time not just of rest, but of regeneration for such a dynamic faculty who are extremely energetic and passionate about working with and for children, and who embody the goal of lifelong learning that we strive to nurture in our students.

I am extremely excited to introduce to you two new faces to our faculty this year. First, with George Waymouth moving into a part-time Science Resource role this year, we welcome **Lew Van Wambeke** to our Key School faculty. With a B.A. in biology and an M.A. in leadership in teaching, Lew was a science teacher and department head for five years at the Cardinal Gibbons School and, most recently, has been an assistant principal of student affairs, assistant principal of academic affairs, and principal at the Archbishop Spalding School for the past thirteen years. Given all of his experience, we are very confident that Lew will make a strong impact as a seventh and eighth grade Science teacher and eighth grade Team Leader. Second, please welcome **Kaitlin Patterson** to our Foreign Language faculty as a part-time Spanish teacher. Kaitlin earned her B.A. in education and human development and her M.S. in clinical psychology. She has filled several roles as a bilingual middle and high school teacher and counselor, first in Monterrey, Mexico and more recently around Annapolis and Washington, D.C. For the past six years, she has been the director of operations for Compass Languages, a translation service provider. She is very excited to get back into the classroom to teach one section of eighth grade Spanish and work as a Spanish Resource teacher with students in grades six, seven and eight. I hope you will join me in welcoming Lew and Kaitlin to their new roles in our Key School faculty this year.

As you know, we have been planning for our 1:1 device program that is beginning this year. **Fifth and sixth grade students will be given School owned Chromebooks at the beginning of each day, while seventh and eighth grade students need to bring their own device to school.** [View additional information and specifications for the 1:1 Laptop Program.](#) While still maintaining the important interpersonal discursive element to our classes, teachers are looking forward to the impact that this device program will have on our capacity to seamlessly incorporate technology into our classes to benefit student learning. We will be providing some direct technology orientation to all students during the first weeks of school and we will share more information with you as school begins and at Back-to-School Night.

In order to prepare for a smooth opening to the school year, please read the list of important scheduling items and reminders below. In the meantime, I hope you and your children enjoy the final weeks of the summer. I look forward with great anticipation to welcoming your children to the first day of school on Monday, August 27.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help you or your children prepare for the beginning of school.

Sincerely,

David J. Magnus
Middle School Head

Important Dates and Reminders

The following information should help us have a great start to the school year. Please share this with your children so they know what to expect as the year begins:

Orientation for new students and all fifth graders will be held from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Friday, August 24 in the Barn. **All fifth graders are invited and will go directly to their homerooms. All 6th, 7th and 8th grade new students will meet in the Barn Commons.**

For all other returning students, the **first day of school will begin at 8:15 a.m. on Monday, August 27.** Letters with information about homerooms will be mailed during the week of August 6-10. On the first day of school, all students should go directly to their homerooms. If you have questions about where to go, we will be happy to assist you.

Middle School students will begin each day with **homeroom/advisory** at 8:15 a.m. and the school day will end at 3:20 p.m.

To support parent work schedules, we do offer a **Middle School After School Program** every day until 5:30 p.m. Please [click here](#) to access the After School Program Registration Form.

Key takes its responsibility to be a good neighbor very seriously and we rely on our parents and students to help us maintain a good relationship with the residents of Hillsmere. As we prepare to begin the school year, **please remember to adhere to all posted speed limits while driving in Hillsmere and to be considerate of the residents** when parking around the campus.

Please note that the **Middle School drop-off** location is the driveway in front of the Science and Library Center. This is for drop-off only; please do not park in this area.

Student schedules will be distributed on the first day of school. The schedules will provide students with information about their teachers, classroom locations and order of classes each day.

Located under the "Parents" link found on the top of the website's landing page, [Key's Parent Portal](#) comprises important resources you can refer to throughout the year. Middle School specific information is found under the "Forms, Letters, Lists & Resources" box.

On the Parent Portal, you will find:

- **Carpool Module and Bus Transportation** information: The School encourages the formation of carpools. A Google maps-based carpool module and bus transportation information is available on the password-protected Parent Portal.
- **Online health and emergency contact information** can be completed by clicking on the **Magnus Health** button. All forms must be completed by Friday, August 10.
- In June, we posted a **list of supplies** required for Middle School students on the Middle School tab under Forms, Letters, Lists & Resources.
- Please make sure your children have completed their **summer math and reading** work prior to the first day of school. The work is found on the Summer Math and Reading button on the Portal or, for student access, on the O-Zone.
- In June, we posted a list of **textbooks for students in grades 7-8** that need to be purchased for the upcoming school year. It is found on the Middle School tab under Forms, Letters, Lists & Resources. If you have difficulty obtaining these books, please contact the Middle School Office.

Below are some important Middle School calendar items for August, September and October:

August

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| 24 | New Student / Fifth Grade Orientation (10:00 – 11:30 a.m.) |
| 27 | First day of School /PA Back-to-School Coffee for parents (8:15 – 9:00 a.m.) |
| 31 | Fifth Grade Outdoor Education Activities |

September

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| 3 | Labor Day (NO SCHOOL) |
| 4 | Middle School Fall Sports practices begin (6th, 7th, 8th grades) |
| 5 | Parents' Association Meeting (7:00 p.m.) |
| 6 | Middle School Back-to-School Night (7:00 p.m.) |
| 10 | Rosh Hashanah (NO SCHOOL) |
| 11 | Student Picture Day |
| 11 | 5th Grade Intramurals begin |
| 17 | Fall After School Enrichment Activities begin |
| 18 | Sixth Grade NorthBay Trip Orientation for parents (8:30 a.m.) |
| 19 | Yom Kippur (NO SCHOOL) |

- 21 Seventh/Eighth Grade Backpacking Trip Orientation for parents (8:30 a.m.)
- 28 Fifth Grade Parent Coffee with School Counselor Randi Alschuler (8:30 a.m.)

October

- 3-5 Sixth Grade NorthBay Outdoor Education Trip
- 4-5 Seventh Grade Appalachian Trail Backpacking Trip
- 15 Eighth Grade Field Trip to Holocaust Museum
- 17 Parents' Association Meeting (8:30 a.m.)
- 17-19 Eighth Grade Old Rag Mountain Backpacking Trip
- 21 Parents' Association 5K/10K and Family Fun Run
- 25-26 Middle School Parent Conferences (NO SCHOOL)
- 25 Optional Fifth and Sixth Grade Hiking Trip
- 25-26 Eighth Grade Shadow Days in the Upper School
- 31 Halloween Parade/Eighth Grade Halloween Fair (8:45 a.m.)
- 31 Gazebo Giving Day