

Dear New Students and Families,

It is amazing to think that in just a couple months we will all be gathering here on campus for the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. Campus currently is buzzing with campers here for summer programming, so it is anything but empty. In the Dean of Students Office, we quickly made the shift from last year to the upcoming year. If you have not yet submitted your arrival form, permission form, (both of which you can access through [MyBackPack](#)), and other forms from the [New Girls](#) webpage please do so now, the deadline is July 1.

If you will attend fall varsity tryouts for athletes or play auditions for actors, you will be arriving on August 27 between 8:00 - 11:30 a.m. (Please note that riding preseason is not open to new students). You should have already heard from the Athletics department with detailed information. Most new students will be arriving on August 31 between 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

We will have [orientation sessions](#) for girls that day until 6:00 p.m. and for parents until 4:45pm, and then a dinner for new parents from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Day girls do not depart that day until 9:45 p.m. Parents, we welcome your attendance for as much of that day as you are able to attend. You can find the full orientation schedule [here](#). There will be many exciting activities on campus that first weekend including mini carnival on Friday evening, plenty of off-campus opportunities on Saturday, and Dorm Olympics on Sunday, as well as our annual Red-White Team sorting ceremony and games the following weekend so all girls will want to make plans to attend.

Since September will be here before we know it, I wanted to share some suggestions about how you might prepare for the upcoming school year:

- **Think about how you will get involved.** It's the single most significant thing you can do to maximize your Madeira experience and ease your transition to high school. Join a team, try out for the play, join a club or an interest group or an affinity group. Don't have experience as an athlete or actor? No problem! This is your opportunity to try something new or continue an activity about which you are passionate. We have opportunities for girls of all experience levels. Parents, we encourage you to get involved in the community as well. There are many opportunities to work with other Madeira parents, faculty and staff over the course of the year.
- **Take advantage of weekend activities.** In that same vein, participate in weekend activities! We offer lots of events every weekend both on campus and off. All girls, day and boarding are welcome and encouraged to attend all of them. Got an idea for a weekend activity? Please share it with us! You are welcome to stop by my office, located behind the Adult-On-Duty (AOD) desk in the Student Center, submit it through the [Weekend Activity Suggestion Form](#), or bring your ideas to our bi-weekly Social Activities Think Tank meetings. Weekend activities are planned at least two to three weeks in advance, so the more notice you can give us, the better.
- **Check your email daily!** Much of the communication at Madeira (and especially from the Dean of Students office) happens over email. Girls, if you have signed up to attend a bigger weekend activity, such as away mixers or the annual trip to Kings Dominion, you will always get an email from me with all the detailed information about the trip, including departure from campus and return to campus times. Parents, that is a resource for you as well - please ask your daughters about it in advance of the activity in question.
- **Practice disconnecting.** Used to having your phone with you all the time? Take some time this summer to "disconnect." We value personal relationships and face to face interactions immensely at Madeira and as such have some cell phone free zones such as classrooms, the dining hall, and the

library. In addition, when you are walking around campus, we want you to engage with one another rather than your Instagram account so we expect that if you need to use your phone while out and about, that you stop and “pull over”! While it may sound silly that you need to “practice” not checking your phone, it can be harder than you think to digitally disconnect. Girls, when you sit down with your summer reading books, leave your phone in another room.

· **Get to know the juniors and seniors.** They are your team captains, club heads, resident assistants, and representatives in student government, and soon they will be your friends! You are getting to know some of them through the videos that we are sending this summer. They can be helpful in solving little problems, showing you where things are, or just being a friendly face who can help you navigate your many Madeira “firsts.” They are here to help you, so don’t be afraid to reach out to them! Remember, they were new to Madeira not that long ago and are happy to help however they can.

· **For that matter, get to know Madeira's faculty and staff!** Some of the best relationships you will forge at Madeira will be with your teachers, coaches, dorm faculty, and other Madeira adults, so get to know us! Have lunch with your advisor, or set up a conference with your French teacher and learn more about each other. Many teachers and staff members live on campus year-round. You will have the opportunity to join their families for dinner through "Dinners at Home" throughout the school year. All students are welcome and encouraged to sign up for these - day students, that means you! The first one is on Thursday, September 7th. You'll be able to sign up soon after you arrive on campus!

· **This one may sound a bit odd...practice asking for help.** You are about to embark on a big, exciting adventure. There will be times when you are overwhelmed, excited, happy, worried, or flummoxed, sometimes all at once! You, of course, always still have your parents to lean on, but often an adult who is on campus can be enormously helpful. Our job is to help you when you need it -- don’t be afraid to reach out to us.

As always, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. I am out of the office over the summer, so if you need assistance, please email aod@madeira.org or contact us via phone at 703-556-8211.

I look forward to meeting you all in September!

Best wishes, and welcome!
Sarah Yarborough '09
Director of Student Activities