



Dear New Students and Families,

Hello and welcome to the Madeira community. It is amazing to think of all that has changed in the last few months. Our students and adults have expanded their use of online tools to allow for virtual classes, students have attended advisory from their kitchens and living rooms (a tweak to the pre-COVID scenario where adults would invite their advisees to gather together in their on-campus home or apartment for advisee meetings), we have moved our Gnome Hunt (a tradition which involves dorms competing to find a gnome hidden somewhere on campus with help from Mrs. Newsome's clues) to Instagram, we have attended Class Meetings from all over the world, and our student clubs and groups have hosted virtual movie nights, star gazing, and other gatherings to stay in touch. I am continually impressed with the creativity and resilience of our community as we adapt to our current circumstances.

In the Dean of Students Office, we are already planning for the upcoming school year. We are excited to bring our community back together on campus in August. We are creatively planning for a new normal where we will be living and learning in ways that promote a healthy campus during this global health situation. Part of that planning is around students' safe return to campus, which may include COVID-19 testing. Given that, we expect to be modifying the current arrival and orientation schedule. In addition, we are asking every family to complete this new [Safe Return to Campus survey](#) by **June 19**. Your arrival date and time will be determined by the information you share in this form. As such, please hold off on making any travel plans related to your arrival. We expect to share the final schedule with you no later than the end of next week.

Regardless of when you get here, we can't wait for you to arrive! We are excited to welcome and support you in your transition to community life at Madeira. With that in mind, here is some information we want you to have as well as tips and tricks we want to share as you prepare for boarding at Madeira.

Forms

In May you received [communication from Mrs. Newsome](#), Madeira's incoming Dean of Students, asking you to complete forms. If you have not yet submitted the Permissions Form or Vehicle Form, which can be found in the My Forms section of [The Student Parent Portal](#), please do so now as the **July 1 deadline** is fast approaching.

As is our standard practice, new students will have roommates. We are installing curtains to divide dorm rooms and arranging furniture so that beds will be at least six feet apart (furniture will be stationary for at least the start of the year). Girls should complete the [New Roommate](#)

[Survey](#) and new boarding parents should complete the [New Boarding Parent Survey](#) by the same **July 1 deadline** so that the Dean of Students Office can begin the process of getting to know the new students and pairing them with their roommates. You will find out who your roommate is upon arrival at school!

You have also [received communication from Mrs. Sotos](#), Madeira's Director of Nursing at the Health & Wellness Center, indicating that electronic health forms in your student's Magnus Health portal are required to be completed by **July 1**, while health forms requiring a physician's signature are due **August 1**. A helpful hint, get your influenza vaccine prior to arriving on campus as this is a school requirement this year.

As Ms. Cabeza de Vaca shared in her recent message to families, as we prepare for the start of the 20-21 school year, it will be important for the health and safety of all members of our community that every family have a plan for their daughter should she need to leave campus. The Student Campus Departure Plan document can be found in your daughter's [Magnus Health Portal](#). Parents, please review, complete, and submit the document no later than **July 1**, with the steps your family will take if the need arises for your daughter to leave campus should she become ill or need to quarantine for a period of time. In this scenario, boarding students will be expected to depart campus within 24 hours.

International families, we are aware that you have additional considerations related to travel and that there are currently delays in the process of applying for an F-1 (non-immigrant) student visa. As soon as we have any new information from SEVIS we will reach out and send an update.

Community Living

Girls, I am sure you are both excited and curious about life as a boarding student. Here you will find some recommendations about how you might prepare for the upcoming school year. I have included a "What to Bring" list so when you think about packing, you'll have a better sense of what is needed as well as the few items that aren't allowed in the dorms. Here are some things to think about as you begin to prepare for community living.

- **Health and safety considerations** – this year more than ever, it will be important for us all to practice good hygiene and to follow protocols for the health and safety of our community. At the start of the school year at least, these will likely include practicing six-foot social distancing, washing our hands often, wearing face coverings as directed, and maintaining a clean-living environment, all of which we can practice and get used to over the summer before arriving to Madeira.
 - Students are required to bring **at least 5 to 7 washable, reusable, face coverings (i.e., masks, bandanas, etc)** so you'll have enough to last between each time you do your laundry. In addition, we encourage students to have two sets of sheets, four pillowcases, two towels, and two wash cloths to allow for regular rotation.

- **If you aren't used to waking yourself up** -- practice for a few weeks prior to coming to school. Use a variety of alarm clocks, sounds, etc. It will be your responsibility to wake up and get to class on time.
- **If laundry hasn't been your thing** -- you definitely will want to learn how to do your own. We supply the machines (free of charge!) but you will want to know how much detergent to use, how to separate colors, and what should be put in the dryer and what shouldn't. Practice doing your own laundry before getting to campus. Don't worry if you are not yet an expert by the time you arrive -- we have lots of older girls and adults in the dorms who are ready to help!
- **Homesickness** -- it is very common and totally normal. Some girls get through it fairly quickly, for others it takes longer. Even returning students experience it! The added time families are currently spending together may make the transition to boarding a bit tougher than usual. Parents and students, it can be helpful to discuss the possibility of homesickness in advance and to consider a communication plan for staying in touch once school starts. Maybe you'll plan for a 15 minute call in the morning as you get ready for the day, you could set aside time to Facetime before or after dinner, you could agree to send an email after Study Hall sharing how the day went, or you could decide on all of the above. Talking about and planning for separation will make it easier.
- **Balancing free time with homework time** -- while we have structured study hall, you will most likely need to do some homework during free time or even after study hours end. Think about your study habits and try to figure out what will work best for you. If you are someone for whom free time seems to disappear or who tends to wait till the last minute to do things, use this summer to practice some strategies that will help you manage your time.
- **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 and the dining hall. 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. So girls, when you sit down with your summer reading books, leave your phone in another room.
 - While it is important to disconnect at times, it is also important that we be able to get in touch with students during the school year, especially when they are off campus on trips. All students are required to have a cell phone with an American phone number that they keep with them, charged, and turned on. In addition, the phone cannot rely solely on Wi-Fi to make calls and voicemail must be set up and able to accept messages.

- **Have a conversation about a budget** -- parents often ask us how much money their daughter needs at Madeira. This is a highly individualized question that each family must determine on their own. We recommend having this conversation before arriving to Madeira so you are all on the same page but know that things change and the budget can always be adjusted. Below you will see details about MAD Money.
- **MAD Money, the school's debit payment system** -- most campus transactions, such as the campus store, class and club fundraisers, and weekend activities, are paid for with MAD Money. Each student starts the year with \$100.00 in MAD Money preloaded into their account. A parent may load more funds onto their student's MAD Money account via The Student Parent Portal website. This site will also allow you to monitor your student's purchasing activity and reload the account as needed. A student may add funds by visiting Ms. Cappel in the Business Office in the basement of the Student Center and using cash, check, or a credit/debit card. Students will also be able to withdraw up to \$20.00 at a time for cash needs. More information will come in a future Madeira Digest to be sent this summer. For questions about MAD Money, please contact Ms. Cappel (ccappal@madeira.org) in the Business Office.
- **Get to know your RAs** -- each dorm has two Resident Assistants (RAs). These are selected junior and senior leaders who live with you in the dorm and they can be really helpful in solving little problems and showing you how things work in the dorm. You will receive emails from them and other Student Leaders this summer -- they are sending videos about Madeira traditions. The RAs are always a friendly face who can help you navigate all of your Madeira "firsts." They are there to help you; please, please use them when you need them.
- **This last one may sound a bit odd, practice asking for help** -- you are about to embark on a big, exciting adventure. Starting high school is big, throw in living at your high school and that is huge! 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 here on campus can be enormously helpful. Our job is to help you when you need it so don't be afraid to reach out to us.

Continue to check your email regularly this summer (*at least once a week*) for more updates! There is a lot of great (and important) information headed your way over the summer and you need to stay tuned in to new communication from Madeira. This is especially important this summer as we will be sharing updates as we make decisions about school next year in response to COVID-19. In coming communications you can expect to hear more details about our testing, tracking, and safety protocols related to COVID-19, self-quarantining prior to arrival to campus, and our changes to the move-in process which will look very different than in years past (possibly a staggered move-in with assigned dates and times).

As always, if you have questions throughout the summer, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. Our hours are not as regular during the summer, so email is often the best option. I can be reached at hsouthworth@madeira.org or via phone at 703-556-8211. I would love to hear from any of you!

All the best,
Mr. Hunter Southworth
Director of Residential Life
703-556-8215