



MADEIRA

A Message from the Head of School

May 29, 2020

Dear Madeira Community,

Your feedback, whether in surveys, during meetings, at virtual coffees, or while sharing individual experiences, has been invaluable at this unusual time. The faculty and I truly appreciate the support you have shown and the feedback you have provided as we have worked diligently to adapt during the unprecedented global health situation. We have learned much from the last two mods about what has worked, where students and faculty had challenges, and areas to address going forward. Understandably, your biggest questions are about next year.

As a preview, I wanted to share with you the core of the structure we are planning for next year. We will continue to refine this plan in the coming weeks, and communicate further details at the end of June.

We see the 2020-21 school year as a different type of year than past years, and also different from how 2021-22 will likely be. We are keenly focused on continuing to provide the high-quality Madeira experience that you have come to expect for your daughters while also ensuring that we are nimble enough to operate in person and at a distance, and above all, to be able to toggle through what we expect to be an irregular year in terms of health and safety concerns.

During this different year, we will be relying on each other – the School, students, and parents – to work together, to protect the community, and to be flexible as we adjust to evolving health information and guidelines. Working together, we are excited to open the school year, both for our returning students, who we've missed so much these past several weeks, and for the strong group of new girls joining us.

Academics

We are designing an academic program that accommodates both on-campus and distance learning. The educational environment we are creating has the flexibility to operate with students both on campus or at a distance and shift seamlessly between them should a health consideration require us to do so.

Given the pandemic, we know we need the ability to use contact tracing should any member of our community become infected with COVID-19. This necessitates a shift in thinking about where girls are on campus, and requires that we know where everyone is at any given point in their day. We will adapt campus spaces and procedures to be mindful of social distancing. In terms of our overall program, the following will be in place:

- Each day will start at a standard time with a required community event. Four days a week we will meet in advising groups, and the remaining day will be a community meeting or assembly.
- We will follow a schedule each day, and the academic day will provide time for teacher-led instruction and/or class discussion, group work with peers, teacher conferences, and independent work. The timing of A, B, and C blocks will be adjusted for social distancing needs.
- We will have a lengthened lunch period to accommodate social distancing. Class meetings will occur once a week before or after lunch.
- Students will attend D block each day. We remain firmly committed to strong equestrian, arts, athletic, and academic after school activities. For competitive team sports, we follow guidelines from the ISL, our athletic league. Should games not be possible, our athletic activities will focus on fitness, movement, team building, and leadership. Athletic D blocks will be synchronous and offered at a specific time. Some D blocks will have more flexibility and can be completed asynchronously (i.e. yearbook, fitness, newspaper, etc.).
- Co-Curriculum remains a cornerstone of the Madeira education and will begin in Mod 4. We have contingency plans for meaningful and enriching virtual Co-Curriculum experiences should health conditions dictate.
- All academic obligations, Co-Curriculum, advisory meetings, class meetings, and assemblies are mandatory, regardless of whether a student is on campus or participating at a distance.
- Starting in June, we will provide faculty with resources, training, and professional development that ensures we create and deliver engaging classes that adhere to our philosophy of joyful learning in-person and online. We are aiming for consistency and clarity throughout our coursework to ensure that all students can access learning, whether they are on campus or off campus.

Campus Life

The close-knit community, individualized guidance to help each girl achieve her personal best, and robust out-of-classroom experiences are core to Madeira and will remain a foundation, even as public health guidelines necessitate some modifications to our day-to-day operations. I am continuously amazed by the resilience our girls show in the face of change, and I believe they and our adults will be creative partners in finding fun ways to build community and new programs next year.

Some of the protocols we are adopting include:

- Six-foot social distancing
- Daily health screenings to include temperature checks at least once a day
- Hallways and stairs will be adapted for one-way traffic flow to accommodate social distancing
- Regular defined locations for every student at all times
- Mask wearing as needed, according to state guidelines
- Laundry schedules for boarding students
- Given the dynamic nature of this situation, it is more important than ever that every family has a plan for their daughter should she need to leave campus for health reasons. The Dean of Students Office will be sending all families a form in early June asking you to share your plan with us.

Looking Ahead

This is the broad framework of our plan for next school year. In the coming weeks, my team and I will continue to build out the specifics and we will keep you updated, especially on logistics for health and safety. We recognize that the uncertainties around the global health situation make it difficult for you to plan ahead. Please reach out if you have concerns we have not yet addressed or areas where we might be able to assist you.

In the meantime, we are embracing this disruptor and have already learned much about distance learning, delivering virtual admissions events, and re-thinking how to best offer our core mission. We will weather this crisis and emerge stronger.

As we transition to new leadership, my administrative team and I are working closely with our incoming Head, Gretchen Warner, as well as with our Board of Trustees. I am confident that the transition will be smooth, and that we will continue to provide the quality program that you are expecting.

Stay well, and please keep providing your feedback and reaching out to us with any concerns or questions. We so appreciate your partnership.

Sincerely,

Pilar Cabeza de Vaca