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August 2018

Dear Eighth Grade Families,

I hope you have had a relaxing summer and are looking forward to a wonderful final year at Gordon for your child. I'm writing to make sure you are aware of a number of components of the eighth grade experience that will make this a special culminating year.

For students, the first big event of the year is the trip to **Farm School** from September 12-14. Included in this mailing is information about this trip to a working farm that always provides fun, bonding, and fond memories. Please return the permission slip and medical information in a timely manner.

As you know, one area we will focus on together is the **high school placement** process. Please plan to attend the High School Information Session with Lynn Bowman, Kim Mongeon, Caroline Walsh, Veronica Jutras and me on **Wednesday, September 12, at 8:15am** in Luke Anderson's classroom after you drop your child off for the trip to Farm School. This meeting is intended to walk you through the logistics attached to applying to or looking at ninth grade programs in private, religious-affiliated, independent, or public schools. We hope you can attend.

I expect that you are already aware of the next exciting adventure in eighth grade, the **Civil Rights Trip**, scheduled this year for February 25-February 28. Students build on the eighth grade humanities curriculum, including a detailed study of the Civil Rights movement, by visiting places and talking to people who were critical to this part of our recent history. Further, they are consistently asked to think about how this period of our history affects them today.

Later in the spring, we ask students to apply the lessons learned from the Civil Rights unit in their own community. Our **Service Learning** program, like the trip to the South, is a model for schools nationwide. Our eighth grade faculty lead students to engage powerfully in issues that affect our communities through this program. Students learn by working with local agencies on a daily basis in May, and they connect their academics to this experience by conducting research regarding the issues being addressed by their agency. Students present their learning at the **C.J. Buckley Experiential Learning Night** on Thursday, June 6, at 5:30pm.

Another piece of work that directly involves the parents of the graduating class is the **Class Fund**. Since 2003, eighth grade parents have come together to establish an endowed fund to support strategic initiatives of the school such as the Civil Rights Trip, Middle School literature, environmental education, arts education, and athletics. These permanent funds make a meaningful difference to future students and are a wonderful way for graduating families to honor their children. If you would like to chair this effort, please contact Paola Martinez, interim Development Director.

With the special events of the eighth grade year come financial costs that we want families to be able to plan for. The following represents our best effort to estimate these costs for you:

- Farm School: Approximately \$350
- Damage and Theft Protection Plan for the 1-1 Laptop Program: \$68 plus \$50 deductible for each incident causing damage to the laptop
- Civil Rights Trip: \$200 fee plus any spending money – none necessary, and definitely no more than \$50 (the rest of the cost is covered by the endowment and operating budget)
- Other possible day field trips: approximately \$100 total
- Class Gift: this gift can include your family's tuition deposit from when your child first entered Gordon
- SSAT registration fee (if applicable): \$139
- Catholic school test registration fee (if applicable): \$25
- SSAT/Catholic test preparation course (if applicable): Approximately \$475
- Application fees to secondary schools (if applicable): \$50-75 per school
- Class party: parents often organize a party for the graduates the night after Commencement, cost to be determined by the group

Beyond these events, the eighth grade year is special because, finally, your child is among the oldest in the school. We ask our “seniors” to take advantage of this opportunity to be **leaders and role models** for the rest of the community. You will note the increased social and academic independence they are given, and we expect responsible action from them as they move through the year.

As always, I invite you to be in touch with your child’s advisor now and throughout the year. The eighth grade team and I expect to partner closely with you as we shepherd your child to the final and perhaps most special event, our moving **Commencement** ceremony, on Wednesday, June 12.

Sincerely,

Gabe Burnstein
Middle School Director



the farm school

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ATHOL, MA 01331
978.249.9944
www.farmschool.org

The Farm School is a non-profit educational farm situated on nearly 400 acres in Athol, Massachusetts. We offer three and five-day programs for visiting school groups and their teachers, a full-time middle school for local children, and a year-long apprenticeship in farming for adults. The work and care of the farm in the dairy and fields, in the garden and forest, are at the heart of all of our programs.

Program for Visiting Schools Participant Registration

Please fill out this form and return it to your child's teacher prior to the trip.

We are looking forward to working with your child!

Student Info:
Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____
School Name: _____
Grade: _____
Date of Trip: _____

We are excited about getting the word out about our programs!

The Farm School offers many events and programs throughout the year. We would love to keep you informed of upcoming events, goings on at the farm and ways to support our work.

If you do NOT wish to be added to our mailing list, please initial here.

You can find us on the web at
www.farmschool.org

On Facebook

And on Instagram @the_farm_school

Check out the hashtags #farmschoolPVS and #thefarmschool.

If you do NOT wish for your child to be used in photos or videos, please initial here.

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Contact Info:	
Name: _____	Name: _____
Street Address: _____	Street Address: (leave blank if same) _____
City, State and Zip Code: _____	City, State and Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Email address: _____	Email address: _____



Dear parents of children with food allergies and dietary restrictions,

We're so excited to have your child visit The Farm School! The kitchen, located in our bunkhouse, is an inviting space and a work area for all of our visiting students. Your child will wield a broom, pop popcorn on the stovetop, wash dishes, stir cookie dough, and set our table.

Our meals are prepared from scratch with ingredients from beans to spinach and beef to maple syrup coming from the land we tend with visiting students.

The Farm School is prepared to meet dietary restrictions and appreciates advance notice of allergies, sensitivities, intolerances and diseases requiring substitutions or modifications. We hope your family will see this as an opportunity for your child to practice communicating about their dietary needs in a safe and loving space.

We understand that each child's needs are different and look forward to working with you, and the sending school, to determine the safest plan for your student. Our primary goal is to make sure your child is nourished and fueled for the amazing work and creative play that happens on our farm every day.

A few things to keep in mind:

- **Our kitchen staff has completed the Massachusetts Food Allergen Certification training**, as required by the Department of Public Health. The Orange Board of Health inspects our kitchen annually.
- **The Farm School is not a nut free facility**, but we are happy to refrain from serving nuts upon school request.
- If there is some food item from home that will decrease any anxiety your child may be having around mealtime, please feel free to send it along.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at kitchen@farmschool.org with any questions or concerns.

Warmly,

Cristina Garcia & Aly Lopez
Kitchens Director Farm School Chef



What to Bring to The Farm School

Everyone Should Bring:

- A closed-lid water bottle
- Lunch for the first day
- **Three** sets of old clothes that you don't mind getting very dirty
- Plastic grocery bags (or something to put muddy boots and dirty clothes in)
- A sweatshirt and a warm jacket (preferably OLD)
- Boots or **close-toed** shoes that you can get mucky (waterproof if possible)
- A second pair of **close-toed** boots or shoes
- Indoor shoes or slippers (to wear in the bunkhouse)
- Many pairs of socks
- Rain gear (we will work even if it's raining)
- Sleeping bag (or a blanket and a top sheet)
- Your favorite pillow (we also have pillows here)
- A washcloth and a towel
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, etc. – no aerosol deodorants)
- A good book
- A flashlight
- NO video games, iPods, cell phones or other electronics

For **cold** weather (generally mid-September- mid-April), also bring:

- A warm winter hat and scarf
- Gloves or mittens
- Long underwear, if you have it (tight-fitting pajamas work well, too)

For **warm** weather (generally late April-early September) also bring:

- a sun hat
- sunscreen

Parents and guardians, please let your child's teacher know:

- **If your child has any allergies, physical limitations, or other differences** that might prevent them from working on a farm or around large animals
- **If your child has any medications that are necessary for the trip**
- **If your child has any sleep/nighttime issues** such as sleepwalking or frequent trips out of bed that would preclude them from sleeping in a top bunk bed.

**Parental/Guardian Permission Slip
For Farm School**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED, SIGNED, AND RETURNED ON OR BEFORE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2018

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian,

Your child/guardianship is eligible to participate in a Gordon School sponsored activity, which requires transportation to a location away from school. This activity will take place under the guidance and supervision of employees from Gordon School. A brief description of the activity follows:

Destination:	Berkshire Outdoor center
Designated Supervisor of activity:	Irene Horton
Date of Departure:	September 12, 2018
Date of Return:	September 14, 2018
Method of Transportation:	Charter Bus

In order for your child/guardianship to participate, please complete, sign and return the following statement of consent and release of liability. As parent or legal guardian, you remain fully responsible for any legal responsibility, which may result from any personal actions by the student named below.

Statement of Consent and Release of Liability

I hereby consent to participation by my child/guardianship, _____ in the event described above. I understand that this event will take place away from the grounds of Gordon School, and my child will be under the supervision of the designated employees on the stated dates. I further consent to the conditions stated above on participation in this event, including the method of transportation. The Gordon School is hereby released from liability for any damage or injury to my child, which may be sustained.

I understand that during this trip the designated supervisors will have on hand the Emergency Authorization form that I have previously executed. These forms provide the school authorization to obtain medical treatment for my child in the event of an emergency.

Parent/ Guardian name/signature

Date

THIS TRIP SHOULD BE CONSIDERED PART OF SCHOOL; THEREFORE ALL MEDICINES UTILIZED ON SCHOOL DAYS SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED ON THIS TRIP. IT IS NECESSARY FOR YOU TO INFORM THE SCHOOL AS TO WHETHER OR NOT YOUR CHILD/GUARDIANSHIP WILL NEED TO TAKE PRESCRIBED OR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS.

Medication Authorization

My child/guardianship does not have permission to take any medication on this trip.

I hereby authorize my child /guardianship to take over-the-counter medication (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin/Advil, and Benadryl.) I will deliver a supply to the school nurse by **Tuesday, September 4, 2018**, labeled in the original container to be held by the chaperone.

I hereby authorize my child/guardianship to take prescribed medications that they may need during this trip. I am aware that a chaperone will hold the medication for them and will make it available only at the designated time. **PLEASE SEE ATTACHED MEDICATION PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM. This release form (if there are changes to your child's Student Medical Information) along with the exact amount of prescribed medications in the original container, labeled with the doctor's prescription, will be delivered to the school nurse by Tuesday, September 4, 2018.**

Parent/ Guardian name/signature

Date

Medical Permission and Release Form

Field Trips

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Over-the-Counter (Non-Prescription) Medication Permission

___ My child/guardianship does not have the permission to take any medication on this trip.

___ I hereby authorize my child/guardianship to receive the following over-the-counter medications checked below.
(I will deliver a supply to the school nurse labeled in the original container, to be held by the chaperone for the duration of the school-sponsored trip)

___ Tylenol (Acetaminophen) ___ Advil/Motrin (Ibuprofen) ___ Benadryl

Prescription Medication Permission

Please fill out the sheet on the back of this form for the daily medication(s) that your child will be taking during this trip. ***The medication MUST be in the original container labeled with physician's prescription.***

___ I hereby authorize my child/guardianship to take prescribed medications that they take on a daily basis during this trip. *(I am aware that the medication must be in the original container labeled with the doctor's prescription.)*

___ My child/guardianship may need their inhaler during the trip *(I will provide the medication and a physician's prescription if there is not one on file with the health office.)*

___ My child/guardianship may need their Epi-pen during the trip for allergies to: _____.
(I will provide the medication and a physician's prescription if there is not one on file with the health office.)

I am aware that no medication(s) will be given if they are not in their original labeled container.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Daily Prescription Medication Administration Field Trips

My child/guardianship will need the following medication (s) during this school-sponsored field trip. I am aware that a chaperone will hold the medication for them and will make it available only at the designated times listed below.

Medication Name: _____

Dosage: _____

Time(s) to be given: _____

Special instructions: _____

Medication Name: _____

Dosage: _____

Time(s) to be given: _____

Special instructions: _____

Medication Name: _____

Dosage: _____

Time(s) to be given: _____

Special instructions: _____

I am aware that no medication(s) will be given if they are not in their original labeled container.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date