

MONTCLAIR KIMBERLEY ACADEMY

August 2018

Dear Primary School families,

It is my pleasure and an honor to welcome you to the 2018-2019 school year at the Primary School at MKA! I have looked forward to writing this first letter since accepting this role and I am thrilled that the time has finally arrived. It is hard to believe that we have just over two weeks until we begin the new year. The entire Brookside team and I can't wait to open our (new) door and welcome you back to school.

New Community Members

This fall, we are welcoming two individuals to our full-time Primary School faculty and staff. First, **Helen Makohon** is our Associate Director of Admissions for Primary School. Helen comes from First Presbyterian Church Nursery School in New York and has extensive experience with the Pre-K and K admissions processes. Helen and I have worked together quite a bit already this summer, and I am confident in her leadership of our Primary School admissions process moving forward.

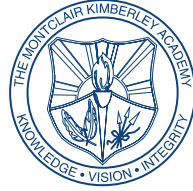
Jennifer MacQuarrie is not a new member of the community but now a full-time faculty member as she takes on the role of first grade classroom teacher this year. Reconnecting last week, I was struck by Jennifer's excitement and energy for the year ahead – I'm so glad she is joining our permanent teaching faculty.

In addition, we are welcoming many new students and families to our community! It is my sincere hope and belief that we will show all our new community members the Primary School's magic and welcoming nature.

Important Information: Dates and Events

All necessary forms and important start-of-school documents have been posted on our website: <http://www.mka.org/back2school>. Please check the "Forms and Info – ALL GRADES" section as well as grade-specific information found in the Pre-K, Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade, and Third Grade sections.

The full Primary School calendar of events is found on the school website: www.mka.org.



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Orientation

As listed on the Back2School site, all Pre-K students, Kindergarten students, and new students in Grades 1-3 are invited to school on Tuesday, September 4 for the following orientations:

- 9:00-10:00 a.m. Pre-K Orientation, **ALL Pre-K students and parents** (no siblings, please)
- 9:00-10:00 a.m. New Student Orientation, **new students only, grades 1-3**
- 9:00-11:00 a.m. New Parent Coffee, **parents of new students in grades 1-3**
- 10:00-11:00 a.m. Kindergarten Orientation, **ALL K students and parents** (no siblings, please)
- 10:00-11:00 a.m. World Language Orientation, **new students only, grades 1-3**

During their orientation, students will have an opportunity to meet their teachers and classmates. Students are welcome to come to orientation in comfortable, casual clothing; they do not need to be in our Primary School Code of Attire.

***Please note that the following evening orientations will take place at the Middle School.**

We will also welcome all Pre-K and K parents for evening orientations (*for parents only*):

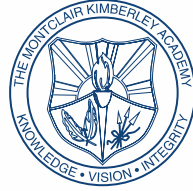
- Pre-K Parent Orientation: Wednesday, August 29, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- Kindergarten Parent Orientation: Thursday, August 30, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Special Events

On my revisit day this past spring, I was fortunate to experience firsthand one of Brookside's beloved traditions, the Maypole Dance. Certainly, such traditions are a significant and beloved part of the school calendar – something we will continue to plan and support in the year ahead. Due to the ongoing campus construction this year, we will not be holding Grandparents/Special Friends Morning. The School considered parking options for visiting MKA family and friends and ultimately made this decision after determining we could not ensure a paved and level surface for all visitors. This year, students will enjoy a Thanksgiving Share lunch with faculty and staff on Friday, November 16; our next Grandparents/Special Friends Morning will take place in our new space in the fall of 2019-2020 school year.

Construction Update

One of this summer's most popular questions has been, "What's the update on the building?" tied with "Do you think we'll get in on time?" As of our construction meeting at Brookside last Friday, we are on schedule! Aside from being interesting and informative, the meeting highlighted just how



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hard the various companies and individuals involved in the construction process have been working. Faculty and staff have been told to expect that we will be in our building on Monday, August 27 and we are planning accordingly. We are prepared to welcome Pre-K, K, and Grades 1-3 new students for their orientation on September 4 and all Pre-K through third grade students on September 5.

Safety & Security

The safety and security of our students is and will remain our highest priority. For that reason, we require that all parents and visitors to the Primary School sign in at the front desk upon entering the building and wear a visitor's badge for the duration of their visit. In addition, all communication to the office regarding play dates, changes in transportation, attendance, etc. must be emailed to psnotifications@mka.org.

For fire safety reasons, there is no parking allowed within designated fire lanes marked in yellow.

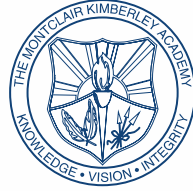
For car dismissal, please plan to arrive no earlier than 2:30 p.m. Cars that arrive early will not be allowed on campus, as we need the buses in place before parent cars can enter the line, and will be asked by security to leave the line and return after 2:30.

Due to the limited car line space this year, we will not be able to offer a separate carpool line; however, we do encourage parents to consider carpooling using the car line.

First Day of School

Our first day of school is September 5! The school day will go from 8:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. That morning, faculty, staff, and administrators will be available to guide all students to their classrooms. We know that the first day of a new school year is exciting for all; for that reason, you are welcome to walk your children into the building and to their classrooms if you wish on the first day of school.

So much of our work is about building relationships – with students and families, yes, but also with each other. From my experiences and interactions during the interview process, my return visit in May, and even some informal conversations with students and families this summer, I see that MKA is the close-knit community I understood it to be. I am honored to join the team and I look forward to getting know you all better in the coming weeks. As a new member of this community, there is so



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much for me to learn about you as well as to share of myself. In addition to greeting you at upcoming orientations and in the car line during the first weeks of school, I look forward to seeing you for deeper conversation about our educational philosophy, curriculum, and instructional practices at Back to School Night on Thursday, September 20. Please mark your calendar!

Wishing you a wonderful end of summer and I look forward to welcoming you at Brookside on September 5!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel".

Rachel Geringer-Dunn
Head of Primary School