

GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL

300 GARRISON FOREST ROAD • OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND 21117

Dear GFS families,

As summer continues on, I know many of you are turning your thoughts toward the fall. We are -- and have been -- hard at work planning for the 2020-21 school year. Though many unknowns still exist, I'm writing to share with you additional details for our re-opening plan. Please note: the information below is as of July 10, 2020. Information, recommendations and requirements that we are getting from local, state and federal agencies are fluid, and updates may need to be made accordingly. We will keep you informed at every step.

Overview

We are planning to return to school, in person, as close to a normal schedule as possible. The first day of school will be Tuesday, September 1, with Orientation for all divisions held on Monday, August 31 and boarding student/family Orientation on Sunday, August 30. Additional details will be forthcoming.

The unique layout of our 110-acre campus makes a safe return to school possible, allowing creative use of space to ensure health and safety is our top priority as we welcome back our students. We also worked with professional architects to perform an occupancy audit of all spaces and are following the Center for Disease Control's recommendation of maintaining 6 ft distance in classrooms. Safety precautions will include:

- Reconfigured classrooms that allow for safe distancing
- New traffic flows into and within buildings to minimize contact
- Reduced mobility inside buildings--ie, specials teachers coming to students, eating lunch in classrooms, etc. (More information will be provided in our next update around lunch options and protocol.)
- The use of masks indoors for all students, faculty and staff
- At-home daily temperature checks for all students and faculty
- Whenever possible, extensive use of outdoor spaces
- Restrictions on parent and non-essential visitor entry into buildings
- Enhanced hygiene and cleaning protocols, including additional touchless hand sanitizing machines across campus and increased shifts for our housekeeping staff

Preparing for Hybrid Learning

We know that in-person instruction is important not only for academic progress, but for ensuring community connections and providing a sense of structure and normalcy for your child. While we are dedicated to remaining in-person, on-campus as much as possible throughout the year, the nature of this virus is such that online learning may be necessary -- for individual students who may not be able to be on campus, or potentially campus-wide in the case of a temporary closure. Our administrative team and faculty have been working hard for the past several months to evaluate online learning norms, procedures and expectations to ensure that we are ready to swiftly and seamlessly transition to hybrid or online learning if needed. This includes both classroom work and the community time that we value so much as a school. School-wide, we will be following this structure:

LEVEL 1	Resume Normal Operations
LEVEL 2	School Open With Modifications and Distancing Restrictions
LEVEL 3	School Open With Heightened Restrictions and Online Learning Components (as needed/if necessary)
LEVEL 4	Fully Online

We will be opening at a Level 3, and additional information will be provided about each of these levels, by division, in our next update.

In addition, our next update will provide details about lunch service and options, specific schedules and co-curricular activities. Please note: at this time, we are anticipating that we will not be able to offer before care for Preschool or Lower School for the first few weeks of school. We will provide an update with full details around before- and aftercare by the end of the month.

Preschool

In addition to general state and federal recommendations, our Preschool operations are governed by specific restrictions around facilities that care for younger children. Preschool students will have their temperature taken upon arrival at school each day. Hours will be 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., with no Early Birds or Little Woodlands offered until further notice. We will provide additional details about Preschool in the coming weeks.

Boarding Students

We know that boarding students, particularly our international families, will have additional questions and concerns about their return to school, including quarantine and testing requirements as well as arrival times and travel challenges. Please be on the lookout for an email from Jodi Blackburn, Director of Residential Life, for more specifics.

Athletics

We do not yet know if there will be a fall season. We are working closely with the IAAM athletic conference on these details and will share an update as soon as it is available. In the event fall interscholastic sports cannot be held, we will offer strength and conditioning and/or practice options for our athletes.

Summer Details

As we are preparing for fall, please take a moment to review the Summer Information and Back to School page for your division. Here, you will find details on required summer work, forms that are needed for your child's return to school, supply lists (if applicable), uniforms and more.

Please click on your division below to access:

[Preschool](#)

[Lower School](#)

[Middle School](#)

[Upper School](#)

Next week, you will receive more information on accessing the Parent Portal, submitting required health forms and, for Middle and Upper School students, retrieving your child's schedule and ordering books.

I hope this information is helpful as you prepare for the fall. I know it is a lot to take in, and I encourage you to reach out to me or your Division Head if you have specific questions or concerns. We will be releasing a full reopening plan with more details the week of July 27 and will also have opportunities for

parents to ask questions and get more details at virtual sessions soon after that. We will continue to update you as more information is available.

Thank you again for your support, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Warmly,



Chris Hughes
Head of School



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