

Greetings Families of Rising Freshmen,

This is an exciting time for you and your son as he prepares to embark on his upper school career at St. Paul's. It's my great honor and privilege to be a part of that experience while serving as the Class Dean for the incoming class of 2026. I hope this note can serve both as an introduction from me, and as a resource with important information regarding the Class Dean role and your son.

The 2022-23 school year will mark my third at St. Paul's School for Boys. I began my time at St. Paul's as a fellow teaching in the World Religions & Theory of Knowledge Department. Since that first year, I've made the transition to the Mathematics Department, teaching geometry and algebra II courses this past year. Accompanying the move to math, I was also able to grow in my role from advising students in the class of 2021, to serving as class dean for this year's graduating class of 2022. Throughout this time, I've worn a few other hats, from leading sophomores down the Potomac River during Kinsolving trips, to coaching varsity wrestling and JV lacrosse. I am thrilled to be returning to the class dean role next year, and to be doing so with this incoming freshman class.

At its core, my role as 9th Grade Dean is to work with Dean of Students Kevin Benzing to lead student life for the class of 2026. We and the other deans will offer support regarding a host of student-life matters: fostering a healthy school culture, facilitating school and class-wide events, managing disciplinary issues, and supporting action plans for students when needed. As part of this last point, I will be working closely with 9th grade advisors, teachers, the learning support team, and counselors. We will be dedicated to supporting your son in all phases of life at St. Paul's, be it academically, artistically, athletically, socially, and personally.

As we prepare for the upcoming fall, I believe it's important to outline a few specific goals for the incoming 9th grade.

First, encouraging a smooth transition from middle school to the upper school:

New challenges can arise when evolving from 'big men on campus' in 8th grade, to restarting that climb in a new building with new peers. We will be orienting the freshmen class to all the nuances of life in the upper school—spanning social, athletic, and academic expectations. One way that I plan to encourage a culture of integrity and honor is by working closely with the Honor Council to establish a clear understanding of the honor process and expectations related to academic integrity.

Second, promoting the growth of each student as an individual:

I see freshman year as a time for students to start gaining a little more independence and sense of self. Students see opportunities to branch out as they enter high school. I challenge each incoming student to step out of his comfort zone and try something new—there are so many options for students to find their interests, spanning athletics, clubs, the arts, student government, vestry, and various other outlets.

With these opportunities there is also an increased level of personal responsibility expected from each student. This upcoming year will be marked by increased self-advocacy. I will emphasize the importance of clear and consistent communication with teachers and coaches, as well as proactive approaches to the challenges posed by transition into life in the upper school.

Third, guiding our students as they find their identity as a class:

Over the course of their freshman year, we will try and forge as many meaningful bonds in the classroom, on the field, at special events and beyond. Much of this is fostered simply by communicating with one another, building relationships, and promoting an understanding of others' perspectives.

As we close on one school year and enter this new chapter together, I encourage you to share this letter with your son and begin to engage in conversations focused on the start freshman year. This is certainly an exciting time, but I also know it's one that can raise challenges as well. Rest assured, there are countless resources and individuals devoted to seeing all students succeed and find a home here at St. Paul's for the next four years. There is so much anticipation and potential as we start this journey, and I'm thrilled to begin building a positive and supportive community with you all and with this class of 2026.

Warm regards,

TJ Feagan