



Dear Lower School Families,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying these last few weeks of summer adventure and relaxation as you look forward to another wonderful school year at Vail Mountain School. As we put the final touches on hiring the best educators and gear up for another memorable year, we look forward to greeting all of you for our first day of school on August 22. In the meantime, we are busy preparing for a year filled with curiosity and wonder, relationship building, laughter, and joyful moments of learning.

Below you will find some of the programmatic changes and enhancements set to begin this year and then logistical information for the month ahead. I realize that it is a wealth of information at once, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

NEW MATH CURRICULUM

After a year-long process reviewing the math curriculum, Everyday Mathematics, used in Lower School for over twenty years, the math team has selected a new mathematics program called Reveal Math to begin piloting this year.

"By encouraging curiosity, exploration, and a growth mindset, Reveal Math allows students to see math as a dynamic set of problem-solving strategies instead of the application of memorized algorithmic or computational procedures. This powerful paradigm shift allows students to learn the language of math and demonstrate their fluency all along the road towards standard mastery."

Our team was impressed with the student friendly instructional materials, digital platform, games, and spiral review included in the program. Additionally EdReports awarded Reveal Math green ratings across all three gateways: focus and coherence, rigor and mathematical practices, and usability. We look forward to offering parent education after a few months of use so that you can see how your child is learning mathematics.

LOGISTICS

LOWER SCHOOL CARPOOL

Lower School parents should drive into lanes one or two (take a left at the fork) to drop students off for school between 7:50 - 8:05 am. Remember, school starts at **8:10 am**. Classroom teachers will begin their Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting at 8:10 am, so please ensure that your child has the best possible start to their day by having them to school on time.

Afternoon carpool starts at 3:15 pm. We have completed construction in our parking lot this summer which will allow for all four lanes to be utilized during carpool in an effort to get more cars in the parking lot and off of Frontage Road. Further information about the new carpool system will go out later this month.

Parents should be prepared to let Mrs. Douthitt and other callers know whom you are picking up when she greets you in the carpool line. Students will shake out with their teachers and wait by lane signs until a teacher can safely walk them to their car. Students **MUST** be able to buckle themselves into their own car seats, so please practice this prior to the school year starting. Due to liability, faculty and staff cannot buckle car seats. When you enter carpool, it would be helpful for you to pull up as close as you can to the vehicle in front of you so that we can keep traffic off of Frontage Road. Parents should stay in their cars for safety and expediency. Finally, remember carpool is a **no cell phone zone**.

LOWER SCHOOL SUPPLY LISTS

[Click HERE](#) to view the Lower School Supply Lists which are also accessible through the VMS website on [Back to School 2022](#). Students are asked to bring their supplies when they arrive for their first official day of school on August 22.

VMS FAMILY HANDBOOK

The Handbook serves as a guide to understanding our community at VMS. It sets clear expectations and is a good reminder about the best and most inclusive practices for everything from communication to discipline. This year, like every year, there will be a rollout of new policies and changes to existing procedures. Parents and students will be asked to sign and agree to the policies set in our handbook. The new family handbook will be included in the next summer communication email.

LOWER SCHOOL FAMILY SUMMER READ ALOUD

Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate was selected as this summer's Lower School book club. Students attending VMS last year received their books in May. All new families should have received a copy in the mail. Please let me know if you did not receive your book. Please be sure you have either read the book as a family or that your child has read it independently before the school year starts.

LOWER SCHOOL TOWN MEETINGS

Lower School Town Meetings will take place once a month on Thursday mornings from 8:30 - 9:00 am in the theater. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend and will be notified ahead of time if their child will be presenting during a Town Meeting. I've listed the dates below and they can be found on the digital master calendar.

September 22	January 12	May 4
October 20	February 9	
November 10	March 16	
December 8	April 6	

AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMY: First Session begins September 6

Families will receive an email on Friday, August 26 with a link to register for ASA clubs. The first session begins on Tuesday, September 6, and will end on Wednesday, October 12. ASA will run from 3:30 - 4:15 pm.

MABELS LABELS

If you would like to order labels for your children's belongings and also give back to the school, please use the site mabelslabels.com and click on "support a fundraiser" and choose Vail Mountain School. Thank you.

2022-2023 BACK TO SCHOOL TIMELINE

Friday, 8/19: Kindergarten Playdate

Who attends: Kindergarten students and parents

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 am

All incoming Kindergarten students and their parents should arrive on campus at 10:00 am and head to the Peter Abuisi Theatre. There will be an informational session from 10:00 - 10:25 am in the theatre. Following that, families will visit their child's classroom. This will be an opportunity to enjoy a story, explore their new Kindergarten environment, and receive a few details about their first days as Kindergarteners. Teachers will lead their classes outside to the playground for some playtime to get their wiggles out until the New Family Welcome at 11 am.

Friday, 8/19: New Family Welcome

Who attends: New students in grades K-5 and their parents

Time: 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Families who are new to our VMS community and all incoming Kindergarten families will gather together outside on the field. Teachers and staff will be greeting families and getting to know new students and parents. We will have pertinent announcements and play a game to get to know each other better. Then we will enjoy a barbeque lunch outside near the front doors. Homebase teachers in grades 1-5 will be gathering their new students for a quick tour of their classroom after lunch. Please meet us at the flagpole at 12:45 pm.

Monday, 8/22: First Day of Classes

Who attends: All Lower School students K-5

Time: 8:10 am - 3:15 pm

This is the first full day of the school year. Students should arrive on campus before 8:10 am and head to their Homebases for their first scheduled day of classes. This day provides an optional opportunity for Kindergarten parents to walk their children into school and to their classroom should they wish to do so. If you would like to, please come to carpool between 8:10-8:15 am and park along the curb in lane one. Enter through the front door and walk your Kindergartener to class. Be sure to catch that first

day photo, but please do not linger too long in the classrooms so that the Kindergarten teachers can start their first “real” day of school with your children. We will have coffee and tissues set up in the Common afterward for anyone that wants to linger longer.

Monday, 8/22: After School Care Begins

Who attends: Open to LS students that have signed up using the Back-to-School forms

Time: 3:15 - 5:15 pm

Along with your mandatory back-to-school forms, you will receive information to sign up for After School Care. After School Care begins on Monday, August 22. Any Lower School student that stays after school needs to attend After School Care as they must be supervised by adults.

Wednesday, 8/24: Lower School Testing Day

Who attends: All Lower School Students

Time: Scheduled Appointment Time

Parents, please use the Sign-Up Genius Links below to schedule a half-hour appointment for your child to meet with either their Homebase teacher or a member of Student Support Services to take the DRA Reading Assessment. Completing this assessment during the first week of school allows teachers to begin reading instruction tailored to your child’s level as quickly as possible. Your child only attends school for their appointment time on this day. [Click here to view class lists and homebase teachers.](#) Homebase assignments were made by grade level teams with thoughtfulness given to both academic and social-emotional aspects in order to give each student the best opportunity for growth, character development, lifelong learning, and friendships.

[Mrs. Szmyd's Class](#)

[Mrs. Adam's Class](#)

[Mrs. Robinson's Class](#)

[Mrs. Evan's Class](#)

[Mrs. Peterson's Class](#)

[Mrs. Sotter's Class](#)

[Mrs. Powell's Class](#)

[Mrs. Scherpf's Class](#)

[Mrs. Towle's Class](#)

[Mr. Lambert's Class](#)

[Mrs. Davies' Class](#)

[Mrs. Stavisky's Class](#)

Thursday 8/25: Kindergarten and Senior Flag Raising

Who attends: Kindergarteners, their families and Seniors

Time: 9:15 - 9:40 am

Kindergarteners will meet their senior buddies during this special morning ceremony. Parents of Kindergarteners are welcome to attend and take photos of this time-honored tradition.

Friday 8/26: Lower School Orientation Day

Who attends: Students in grades K-5

Time: 8:10 am - 3:15 pm

We are looking forward to Lower School Orientation Day. This day was developed to give Homebases the opportunity to: build community through teamwork activities, engage in classroom games to get to know one another, establish classroom norms together, and touch on the nitty-gritty details of their school days in their specific grade. Students should arrive on campus between 7:50 and 8:05 am and bring their water bottles, sunscreen, hats, and a snack. Students may be off campus for parts of this day participating in outdoor education activities. Teachers will communicate their specific plans with parents. Afternoon carpool will begin at 3:15 pm. Please note that students DO NOT need a specific T-shirt color for this day as they have in the past.

Wednesday 9/7 Lower School Ambassadors Training

Who Attends: All confirmed LS ambassadors in grades 1-5

When: 3:15 pm - 4:00 pm

Being an ambassador for our Lower School gives students the opportunity to improve their leadership skills while playing an important role during student visit days. A description and application for ambassadors are found in this same communication. Applications are due on August 26.

Thursday 9/8: Back to School Night

Who attends: All parents

Time: 5:30 - 7:00 pm

The Lower School portion of Back to School Night will start at 5:30 pm with a Lower School classroom session from 5:30 - 5:55 pm. At 6:00 pm, parents will gather in the theater to enjoy remarks from Steve Bileca. There will be a second Lower School session from 6:30 - 6:55 pm. The Lower School offers two sessions so that families with multiple children can hear from all their teachers. The 2nd/3rd and 4th/5th teams will be presenting their back-to-school information together. More specific details will be provided as the date approaches.

As I said, that was a lot of information at once, so if you have any questions, please reach out. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Kristin Douthitt

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Director of Lower School

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