August 28, 2026

Watermelon Kickoff - TONIGHT!

Watermelon Kickoff is TONIGHT, **Friday, August 28**! Parents, students, and friends of Episcopal meet us at Mourot Stadium to celebrate our fall sport athletes and cheer our Wildcat football team to a victory in the home-opener against Clarendon. McDonald's hamburgers will be generously provided by the Retzer Family. As always, there will be watermelon, frozen treats, and lots of fun for our Wildcat family. Activities begin at 5:30 p.m. and varsity kickoff at 7:00 p.m.

Check out our new Episcopal Collegiate Parent Playlist

Parenting doesn't come with a handbook, but there are some great voices worth listening to. The **Parent Playlist** is our school's curated collection of podcasts, articles, videos, TED Talks, and other resources chosen to help support parents as they navigate raising school-aged children. We hope these selections will be thoughtful, practical resources worth a listen on your commute or during carpool line or the start to a conversation with other parents. New content will be added regularly and featured in the "New on the Playlist" section, or go back and listen anytime under the Divisional and All Parent sections.

- **Quick Take-** under 10 minutes
- **Carpool**- 10-20 minutes
- **Deep Dive**- 20+ minutes

You can listen at this **link** or scan the QR code below. The link can also be found on our website under Parent Resources.

Education Freedom Accounts - 1st Quarter Payments

The 1st quarter Education Freedom Account funding of $1,802.00 should have been deposited into your ClassWallet account and is ready for you to initiate payment to Episcopal Collegiate School by responding to the Payment Request in the account. It is important to know that the school does not receive the tuition voucher funds directly from the Department of Education. The school only receives payment when you authorize your EFA funds to be used to pay Episcopal Collegiate School via ClassWallet.

This video walkthrough will show how to respond to a payment request in ClassWallet.

Share Your Summer Adventures with the Yearbook!

Did your family travel somewhere memorable this summer? Whether you explored a new city, visited a favorite vacation spot, or set off on an unforgettable adventure, we'd love to feature your travels in this year's yearbook!

Families are invited to send summer travel photos to **Madeline Balgavy**. Please include:

- Student name(s) and grade level(s)
- A short but detailed description of the trip, including where you traveled and any memorable highlights

We can't wait to see where our Wildcats went this summer!

Welcome to the 2026-27 School Year

As everyone settles into the new school year, our **Back-to-School Resources** and **New Family Resources** webpages are here to make day-to-day information easy to find and reference.

Wildcat Warehouse Hours

**September 1, 2026: Wildcat Warehouse will be open 1:00-3:00 pm

- Tuesday 12:00 - 2:00 pm
- Wednesday 12:00 - 2:00 pm
- Thursday-12:00 - 2:00 pm

The Warehouse will also be open during each home football game.

Save the Date: Fly Me to the Moon Auction

Save the Date for the 2027 Parents' Auxiliary Auction on **Saturday, February 20, 2027**. Get ready to play among the stars...more details coming soon!

A Note from Mrs. Schuhmacher

Please join us on Tuesday to learn more about the many ways we support our students in the Lower School. This event is for parents of students in PreK through 5th grade. Please read below for more details about the event.

All students will take school pictures on Wednesday, September 9. Details for ordering photos are included below. Please note that all students should wear their dress uniform that day.

Good luck to our PSL flag and tackle teams this weekend! Episcopal Green plays Catholic Purple at 8:00 a.m., and Episcopal White plays CAC Gold at 9:00 a.m. Both games take place at CAC. Our tackle team plays PA Gold here at Episcopal at 9:00 a.m. There are lots of opportunities to get out and support our Wildcat athletes this weekend!

We hope you'll join us tonight at the Watermelon Kickoff! Activities begin at 5:30 p.m., with kickoff at 7:00 p.m. See you there!

Go, Wildcats!
Catherine Schuhmacher
Head of Lower School

Parent Education Event - Tuesday, September 1

Please join us to learn more about the culture of support we provide in the Lower School. Mrs. Radtke, Mrs. Abbott, and Dr. House will share an overview of our daily routines and approach, along with the range of support services available to students and families. We look forward to sharing more about how we partner with families to help every student thrive.



Picture Day - Wednesday, September 9

All Lower School students should wear their dress uniforms on Wednesday, September 9 for school pictures. Your child will bring home a picture packet on Wednesday, September 2, but you can also order online using the link below using code: 0651WCA. **Click here to order photos online**

Pride Patrol: August 31-September 4

Pride Patrol is a leadership opportunity for our 4th and 5th grade students. These students should arrive by 7:30 am to help open car doors, welcome students, and walk our youngest Wildcats to their classrooms. Pride Patrol student leaders next week include:

- Jonas Goree
- Alice Guthrie
- George Hall
- Sterling Harvey
- Hayleigh Herrera
- Tommy Hogate
- Merritt Holcomb
- Molly Hyde

Lower School Absentee Reporting Form

Please bookmark the following link to quickly report if your child will be absent. Both Nurse Rawn and Ms. Thomas receive a notification once it is complete. Thank you! **Absentee Reporting Form Link**

Wildcat Chorale Signup

Fourth and fifth-grade students have the opportunity to join the Wildcat Chorale! This is a group of Lower School students who meet weekly to sing and share the love of music. If your student would like to join, please fill out the form below and turn it in to Ms. White (in-person or **email**). The rehearsals will be Tuesdays from 3:15pm - 4:00pm beginning September 8. **Sign-Up Form**

Chapel News

This week in Community Chapel we talked about the first three parts of the Wildcat Pledge - " A Wildcat is KIND, HONEST and HARDWORKING. Next week in 1st-5th Community Chapel we will finish talking about the last 3 parts of the Episcopal Collegiate School Wildcat Pledge and the Wildcat W.O.W. Awards that will be given to a student in each 1st-5th grade homeroom beginning in September.

In PreK and Kinder Chapels we talked about the Fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Next week we will read This is the Church by Sarah Raymond Cunningham.

We hope you can join us for Chapel on Wednesdays. You are always welcome!

- 1st-5th: 8:00-8:30pm, Erwin Performance Hall & Gymnasium
- PreK 3: 8:50-9:10am, Godly Play Classroom, Room 142 (next to Library)
- PreK 4: 9:20-9:40am, Godly Play Classroom, Room 142 (next to Library)

- Kindergarten: 10:00-10:20am, Godly Play Classroom, Room 142 (next to Library)

Chapel Duties for Community Chapel on Wednesday, September 2, 2026:

Procession
- Cross: Becca Leacock
- Candle: Max Stiles
- Candle: Clark Tucker

Readers
- Howard Marks
- Jasmine Jones

Cantors (for August 26, September 2 and September 16)
- Alice Guthrie
- Molly Hyde
- Piper Love

1st Grade Partners
- Scarlett Ray
- Grayson Williams
- William Wells
- Dakota Phillips
- Peter Kelley
- Sterling Harvey

Grace & Peace,
Michelle Moore
Lower School Chaplain

Counseling Note from Mrs. Abbott

We are off to a great start this school year! It is so wonderful to see all of the students' smiling faces in the halls! I wanted to provide some information on what to expect from me this year and what services I can provide. I will be doing mindfulness and character lessons in K-5th grade classrooms each month. I really enjoy seeing how our students grow in their faith and values each year. Developing an understanding of different character traits helps them to establish a good moral compass to guide them through life. I will also be available to meet with students and families as needed on a wide array of issues including, any family dynamics changing, coping with grief/loss of a loved one or pet, developing social skills, managing ADHD symptoms and behaviors, general emotional support, anxiety, and challenging classroom behaviors...just to name a few. Even if you are uncertain if it is an issue I can help with, you can always contact me and we can make sure to get you in touch with who can. I begin every year with this same note to remind our families that we are here to support your child however we can:

Handle with Care

If your family is experiencing difficulties at home, I would like to provide additional support at school. I understand that you are not always able to share details and that's okay. If your child is coming to school after a difficult night, morning or weekend, please email me "Handle with Care". Nothing else will be said or asked. This will let me know that your child may need extra time, patience, or help during the day.

Contact Info:

Betsy Abbott, LCSW
Lower School Counselor
501-372-1194 ext.2343
babbott@episcopalcollegiate.org

I am looking forward to a great new school year!!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Abbott

Mark Your Calendars

- Tuesday, September 1 | Supporting the Whole Child Parent Event
- Wednesday, September 9 | Lower School Pictures & Convocation (Dress Uniform A)
- Thursday, October 1 | GP Parent Preview, 8:15am
- Thursday, October 1 | Wildcat Roundup, 4:30-6pm
- Friday, October 2 | Grandparents & Special Friends Day
- Wednesday, October 7 | Lower School Flu Clinic
- October 8-9 | Fall Break (No school)
- Friday, October 16 | Family/Teacher Conferences (No school for students, WCC available all day for 12-month & semester pay)

Helpful Links

- **Lower School Live Morning News**
- **Wildcat Parent Hub**

A Note from Dr. McCormick

Dear Families,

We began fall sports competitions this week, with volleyball, cheer, cross-country, and football all in action. Even if your child is not playing a sport at this time, I encourage your family to attend this Friday's iconic Watermelon Kickoff event, which is a wonderful, all-school event heralding not only the start of football season but really the start of our school year, too.

Relatedly, and in conjunction with our Parents' Auxiliary, we will be hosting our third-annual Middle School Tailgate on the evening of September 10 to celebrate our middle school football and cheer teams specifically. Food will be provided and we hope that your family can join us!

Virtual Book Talks:

Dr. McCormick will lead a virtual book study this semester, and this fall's book is entitled Middle School Superpowers: Raising Resilient Tweens in Turbulent Times. All parents are welcome to attend, including those who have not read the book! Our first conversation will take place on Wednesday, September 16. The second

discussion will be on Tuesday, October 13, and the final conversation will take place on Wednesday, October 28. All of these sessions will occur from 8:15am-9:00am via the following:

- Google Meet link: **meet.google.com/cfy-rkqf-dxo**
- Dial in: (US)+1 252-665-6568 PIN: 738 192 219#

New to Middle School Parent Meeting

Come join Dr. McCormick, Mrs. Radtke, and the rest of the middle school student support team for tips on how to best support your new middle school child. This meeting will be in person on September 10, 8:15-9:00am, in the Middle School's Erwin Library.

Rowing Meeting

Looking for a great sport for your child to start? Why not try rowing? It is a wonderful community and there is an upcoming interest meeting for students/parents in grades 6-9. Please view the below image, and should you have questions, email Coach Ted Riedeburg, rowcoachjax@gmail.com.



A Note from Dr. Graham

Dear Upper School Families,

Happy Watermelon Kickoff!

Thanks to those of you who attended Back-to-School Night on Wednesday. If you couldn't make it, you are always welcome to contact your child's faculty advisor or teachers to learn more about your child's progress and course of study.

On Wednesday and Thursday of this week, all Upper School students participated in the first of two AI training sessions in their English classes. The first session introduced students to large language models (such as ChatGPT and Gemini) and explained how these models work, their limitations, and how to fact-check their output. Next month, the second session will focus on maintaining academic integrity in the Age of AI, and we will review the most common forms of plagiarism, as well as the importance of citation and disclosure of AI tools used on school assignments.

Please come join us at this afternoon's All-School Pep Rally! It pops off at 1:05 pm in the Championship Gym. The Pep Rally will fire us up for tonight's Watermelon Kickoff and Varsity Football Game.

Dean of Students Grace Self, our 9th-grade teachers, and I are excited for next week's 9th-Grade Retreat at Camp Winnamocka. 9th-Grade parents, please check your email for trip info from Ms. Self.

Go, Wildcats, Go...

See you out there,
Kellen

Updates, Reminders, & Action Items

Vine & Village Trips

For the fifth consecutive year, all Upper School students will participate in community service at **Vine and Village**, which operates a weekly food pantry in the University neighborhood each Tuesday. They feed hundreds of families a month, providing weeks' worth of shelf-stable, frozen, and fresh groceries. Led by Episcopal faculty advisors and administrators, our student groups help set up the food distribution, greet clients, and load cars. It's a good way for us to express our values of Respect, Reverence, and Responsibility by assisting our neighbors in need.

Every student will serve at least once at Vine and Village. The trip will count as two hours toward their service-hour requirement.

Contact Us if Your Child is Absent, Late, or Checking Out

Parents, if your child is absent from or arriving late to school for any reason, or if your child needs to check out during the school day, you must contact the School and let us know. If your child is absent, please either call us in the Main Office at 501-372-1194 ext. 3 and leave a detailed message or email Selby Boyd at **sboyd@episcopalcollegiate.org**. Upper School students are expected to communicate any known absences in advance with their teachers, coaches, and advisor.

Planned Absences

Parents should submit a written request for a planned absence to the Upper School Dean of Students, Grace Self, at **gself@episcopalcollegiate.org** at least one week in advance of the absence, explaining the reason for the absence and the dates the student will be away from school. Ms. Self will provide students with a Planned Absence Form to be signed by their teachers. Once the student has collected the signatures, they may return the form to Ms. Self.

College Counseling

College Trip Meeting 9/14 - 6:00 PM - We are having a mandatory student and parent informational meeting about the upcoming Fall College Trip on Monday, September 14th at 6:00 pm in Upper School Room 215.

Students: you will pick your roommate at that time; 2 or 3 per room is the norm. Please start talking to friends about rooming together.

Parents: we will ask you to fill out information on the medications your students will bring on the trip. Please be prepared to list medications. We also will discuss what to pack, behavior expectations, and the final itinerary.

Upcoming College Visits:

All juniors and seniors are invited to attend the college meetings on our campus. To attend you must:

1. Sign up for the meeting in Scoir under “Visits & Deadlines”
2. Have your teacher sign your Green College Visit Permission Slip well in advance, and bring it with you to the meeting. The permission slips are found inside the College Counseling Office door.

Monday, 8/31 - 8:15 AM - Arkansas Tech University

Arkansas Tech University is a public university located in Russellville, Arkansas. ATU enrolls roughly 9,500 students and offers programs across science, business, arts and humanities, engineering, and computer science, with a strong reputation in STEM fields. Arkansas Tech is known for hands-on learning, a wide range of undergraduate research opportunities, and more than 100 degree programs to choose from. Arkansas Tech's athletic teams, the Wonder Boys and Golden Suns, compete in NCAA Division II.

Monday, 8/31 - 10:00 AM - University of the Ozarks

University of the Ozarks is a small, private liberal arts university located in Clarksville, Arkansas. University of the Ozarks is known for its close-knit, multidisciplinary approach to education, including its LENS program designed to prepare graduates for long-term career success. 99% of students attending University of the Ozarks receive some form of financial aid. Their NCAA Division III athletic teams, the Eagles, compete in the American Southwest Conference. Go Eagles!

Friday, 9/4 - 1:25 PM - Hendrix College

Hendrix College is a small, liberal arts and sciences residential college located in Conway, Arkansas. Hendrix has about 1,200 students and top majors include Biology, Business and Psychology. Hendrix is known for having unique internships, collaborative academic experiences, research opportunities, study abroad, and more.100% of students attending Hendrix receive some kind of scholarship and/or financial aid. 30% of their campus is involved in their NCAA DIII athletics programs. Go Warriors!

Coming Up Next Week

9th-Grade Trip - Wednesday, September 2

Our 9th-grade class, along with several faculty and staff members, will travel to **Camp Winnamocka** for a one-day retreat. The bus will leave campus at 7:30 am and return to campus around 4:30 pm. We ask for students to arrive at the school at 7:15 am for breakfast before we loaded the buses. Please make sure to turn in **permission slips** to the Main Office by Monday, August 31. See the email from Ms. Self with a detailed packing list and other important information.

Chapel Schedule

- Monday, 8/31 - Blake Cooper ‘27
- Tuesday, 9/1 - Laramy Downs ‘27
- Wednesday, 9/2 - Father Rob
- Thursday, 9/3 - Green Club
- Friday, 9/4 - Mary Austin Griffin ‘27

Athletics Schedule

Let’s go, Wildcats!

Beyond Next Week

All-School Convocation - Wednesday, September 9
This formal ceremony recognizes the start of the school year. *This is a dress uniform day for students.

School Picture Day - Wednesday, September 9
* Dress uniform day for students.

Family Night - Wednesday, September 16
This is our first Family Night of the year. There will be no school activities after 5:00 pm, and students will not be assigned homework this evening.

CAPS College Fair - Monday, September 28
The annual CAPS College Fair will be held at UALR, in the Stephens Center, from 6:00-8:00 pm. This is a great opportunity for students to meet representatives from many colleges and universities.

Grandparents' & Special Friends' Day - Friday, October 2
We look forward to welcoming our grandparents and special friends on this day. We will run a half-day schedule.

End of Quarter 1 - Wednesday, October 7
The first quarter (marking period) ends on Wednesday, October 7.

Fall Break - Thursday, October 8 - Sunday, October 11
School will be closed for Fall Break.

Fall Conference Day - Friday, October 16
Every Upper School student will participate in a 30-minute conference with their Advisor on this day, and we ask that at least one parent/guardian attend. Conferences are designed to give students, parents, and advisors the chance to discuss students' growth, areas for improvement, and overall school experience. Regular classes will not be in session.

Homecoming & Spirit Week - Monday, October 19 - Saturday, October 24
More details coming soon.

A Note from the Director of Athletics:

Wildcat Parents!

I hope everyone has had a great first week of school. We have some exciting news to announce. Sage food services will be taking over the concessions stand and operating it with their staff. As of now we will not need volunteers to help with our concession stand this year. Please stand by in case we may need a little help in certain situations.

However, we will still need your support with volunteering to collect gate money for our sporting events. If your child is participating in a sport this fall, their coach has sent or will be sending you an email with the Signup Genius link also. Please choose a shift to help us out. **Parent Volunteers - Gate Sign ups**

As always, thank you so much for all of your support! Looking forward to a great school year!

Micah Marsh
Director of Athletics | Head Varsity Girls Basketball Coach

Wildcat Rowing!

Join Coach Ted Riedeburg on **Monday, August 24th, at 6:00 p.m.** for a Parent & Athlete Information Session in the film review room behind the athletic offices.

Coach Riedeburg will introduce the **beginner rowing program**, explain what the sport is all about, what athletes can expect during the season, and answer any questions you or your athlete may have.

Then, on **Monday, August 31st**, Wildcat Rowing invites prospective athletes and their parents down to the **boathouse** to see rowing up close. You'll have the opportunity to:

- Watch a practice from the coaching boats
- Tour the boathouse and facilities
- Meet the coaching staff
- Get your athlete signed up for the fall season

Fall Practices Begin: Tuesday, September 8th

Practice Schedule:

- **Tuesdays & Wednesdays:** 4:15–6:00 p.m.
- **Saturday mornings:** 10:15–11:45 a.m.
  Saturday sessions are optional conditioning workouts at the Little Rock Athletic Club for the first four weeks. Beginning **October 10th**, Saturday practices will move to the river.

Weather:
If there is inclement weather, practices will be held at the **Little Rock Athletic Club (LRAC), 4610 Sam Peck Road**, just west of the boathouse. **You do not need to be an LRAC member** to participate in Wildcat Rowing activities.

Coach Riedeburg - Rowing
904-553-7557
rowcoachjax@gmail.com

All-Sports Season Passes Are Here! 🏐🏈🏀

Cheer on the Wildcats all year long! **All-Sports Season Passes are now available for $100** and include admission to all regular-season home athletic contests and events for grades 7–12 throughout the 2026–27 school year.

Please note: Passes are not valid for PSL games or postseason tournaments.

Purchase Your 2026–27 All-Sports Season Pass

We'll see you in the stands—Go Wildcats!

Wildcat Athletics, Right at Your Fingertips

Fall sports are here—and so is our new **Athletics App!** Stay connected to Wildcat Athletics with schedules, scores, team information, real-time updates, weather delays, last-minute changes, news and more—all in one convenient place.

Athletes, families and Wildcat fans are encouraged to download the app and stay connected throughout the season.



See the attachment below for details on how to download and get started.

Episcopal Wildcats Hudl Page

Wildcat Athletics has moved live streaming to the Episcopal Collegiate Hudl Fan Page. This page includes a live stream of events as well as highlights, team schedules, and rosters.**Episcopal Wildcats Hudl Page**

Please note, we will no longer be using the Episcopal Athletics Youtube Page.

Wildcat Club Updates

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer! We're so grateful to our Wildcat Club families and staff who helped make our summer programming such a fun and memorable one. We loved spending the summer with your Wildcats and are excited for another great school year ahead!

More Wildcat Club updates—including our faculty list and additional fall programming—will be shared as we get closer to September. We're looking forward to a great year!

Fall Super Sessions

Fall Wildcat Club sessions will begin after Labor Day. Faculty and staff will receive the session submission form on August 25, and we look forward to sharing this fall's offerings with families soon.

STEAM Wednesdays & Fun Fridays

A reminder that Wednesdays and Fridays are extra fun at Wildcat Club! **STEAM Wednesdays** and **Fun Fridays** feature special activities and programming, so if your schedule allows, these are great days to let your Wildcat stay a little longer and join in the fun.

Weekly Reminders

Volleyball pickup will take place every **Tuesday and Thursday**, and Chorale will continue every **Tuesday**. We'll keep families updated as additional clubs, camps, and activities are added throughout the year.

Student Appointments & Off-Campus Activities

To help us keep students safe and accounted for throughout the school day, parents should provide **written permission** any time a student will leave campus for an appointment or outside activity. Please include the

activity or appointment, day and time, expected return time (if applicable), and who will be transporting the student.

For students who will be leaving campus for recurring services such as **speech, occupational or other therapy**, families should also complete the **Therapy Request Form** below.

- **Complete the Therapy Request Form**

Thank you for helping us ensure we know where our Wildcats are throughout the school day!