



Dear Middle School Families,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2020-2021 school year. I hope the summer has provided your family with the opportunity to relax and recharge as we continue to deal with the many uncertainties that have become a normal part of our everyday lives in recent months. While so many unknowns surround us, we remain unwavering in our commitment to the physical and emotional wellness, safety and intellectual growth of all of our Winston students. We are proud of the accomplishments that our community has experienced in navigating these unprecedented times and know that with determination and optimism we will continue to maintain a learning environment where students can reach their personal goals and meet with success.

Back-To-School Orientations

On Thursday, September 3rd, all Middle School families, students and parents, will be invited to one of our Virtual Middle School Back-To-School Orientations. (See [flyer](#) included in this mailing for details.) These orientations will provide families with a look at the recent modifications to our learning environment as well as the procedures and protocols that will enable our school community to offer on-campus learning. This orientation replaces our traditional Back-To-School evening in the early fall. It is our priority to provide our families with information and resources prior to the start of the school year to ensure a smooth transition into our school environment. Our first official day of school for all students will be on Tuesday, September 8th, 2020.

School Day Schedule

Our strong partnership with local Board of Health has guided many of the procedures and protocols that will enable us to move into the school year with a hybrid-learning model. This model includes an updated school schedule, with in-person/in-school instruction four days per week (Monday-Thursday) and a virtual school day on Friday. The official start time for the 2020-2021 school year is 8:15 AM.

As new guidelines mandate daily temperature checks and health screenings, we will have a

staggered drop-off for Middle School students beginning at 7:30 am. This will reduce student density during drop-off, enable optimal safety, and provide the appropriate time for staff to conduct required screenings before students may enter the school building. Time-slot selection for drop-off will take place via SignUp Genius. Dismissal will also be staggered.

Please see the '[ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES](#)' document included in this mailing for specific details.

Computers

This year all Middle School students, grades 6 through 8, will be issued a Chromebook for use during the school year. Eighth grade students will not be using MACBooks.

In-Person or Remote Learning Options

We understand that the decision to send your child to school for in-person learning is a difficult one and that, for a variety of reasons, families may choose to have their child(ren) begin the school year learning remotely. Given the success of our remote learning program last spring and the addition of cameras in classrooms throughout the school, we are prepared to deliver a full academic program remotely. *If you are considering the remote learning option and have not, as yet, let us know of your decision, you must do so by Friday, August 28th.*

Early Fall Highlights

As we navigate our new learning environment, our focus during the first weeks of school will be to introduce and reinforce important school procedures and safety protocols. Additionally, we will review, reinforce, develop, and expand student understanding and facility with Google Classroom, Google Meet, and other tools that they will need to manage our remote learning platform. We want each of our students to develop automaticity with these tools so that learning can continue at the highest levels, regardless of where it occurs.

Middle School Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place virtually during the first full week of October. At that time, teachers will share information about each child's transition into the new school year, identify individualized goals and objectives, as well as address any questions or concerns that you may have.

The Learning Environment

Middle School students will remain in grade-level pods throughout the day. They will change instructional groups as their individual schedules dictate but will not be interacting with students in other grades.

The schedule has been designed so that we can easily pivot between in-person and remote instruction. Most subjects will meet in double periods in order to limit the amount of student movement and the number of transitions throughout the school day. We have also extended the amount of time between classes to allow for cleaning, brain breaks, gentle in-class movement activities, and when possible outside mask breaks. Our classrooms are set up according to the state guidelines. There are additional air filtration systems as well as plexi-glass barriers and hand sanitizers located throughout the building.

Students will have limited access to lockers in order to maintain social distancing and will be taking their backpacks with them from class to class.

Details of the many upgrades and enhancements are highlighted in the correspondence shared by our Head of School, Dr. Lewis, and will continue to be communicated in forthcoming communications.

We find ourselves in a situation that is ever evolving. As circumstances change and we gain additional insight into this new school reality, there are bound to be modifications and changes that we will need to implement. **Please continue to monitor your email for further updates and mark your calendars for our Back-To-School Orientations on September 3rd!** Enjoy the remainder of the summer!

All the best,

Jill B. Schuster

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Important Back to School Links

[Updated Calendar](#)

[Arrival and Dismissal Procedures](#)

[Back to School Orientations on Zoom \(Schedule & Links\)](#)

[Back to School Forms and Information](#)