

August 6, 2021

Dear Upper School Families,

I hope you have found summer as a time to relax and rejuvenate. I'm writing to bring you some updates from VMS.

Please read the following information carefully so you're prepared for the first few weeks of school!

NEW DAILY SCHEDULE LAUNCH

As a reminder, we'll be launching a new schedule for the 2021-2022 academic year. We're eager to make this big change, and we recognize it will take all of us time to adjust. Right now, the most important information to remember is as follows:

- Monday, Wednesday Friday, Homebase begins at **8:10 am**
- Tuesday and Thursday Homebase begins at **9:00 am** (Upper School students can use 8:10 - 9 am to meet with teachers, to work on homework in or out of the building, or to sleep a bit later!)
- We'll review the overall schedule with students on our first day back from orientation trips.
- Student schedules will be available to all students and parents on August 20. The school will send an email with instructions on how to log in to the PCR Parent or Student Portals to download individual schedules, which includes their homebase assignment.
- Should you want to review aspects of the new schedule in detail, look on our website on the [Back to School 2021 page](#) for sample template schedules (see the 6/4/21 communication), view the 7/21 Town Hall, or check out the April Town Hall, also linked.

BACK TO SCHOOL REMINDERS

- We look forward to seeing **new** students at **New Student Orientation for Upper School on Friday, August 20 at 10 am**. At 11 am we will host a gathering for all new students in grades K-12 and their families. Parents and students **new** to Vail Mountain School will join us for lunch with the faculty and staff.
- **Friday, August 20 from 1:00-2:00 pm, we will host ALL Upper School students for their Orientation Trip Meetings**. Groups will discuss itineraries, logistics and packing lists in order to depart for their respective adventures on the morning of August 23. It is ideal for students to carpool on this day, as there will be many families on campus.
- Parking applications are "in process" - thank you to the many who have applied. The deadline to complete an application is August 6. Those who applied will hear from the parking committee by August 10.
- Students who are enrolled in AP classes should be fastidiously working on their AP summer assignments, which can be lengthy in nature. Please give yourself plenty of time.
- Similarly, students should be well into their summer reading by now. Go to the [Back to School page](#) on our website, view the June 4 communication should you need clarity on summer reading. ALL Upper School students should be reading *Perestroika in Paris* in addition to their summer reading novel specific to their grade level. Please arrive prepared on August 26.
- Please be on the lookout for communications about Orientation Trip groups as well as messages from College Counseling in the coming weeks.
- Orientation Trips begin Monday, August 23 and will return on the afternoon of Wednesday, August 25.

- Thursday, August 26 is our official first academic day in the building. Our seniors will pair with their kindergarten buddies for the opening of school by the flagpole and parents are welcome to join us for this very special tradition. *Reminder, school begins at 9 am on all Tuesdays and Thursdays for upper school, including August 26!*

UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Upper School Student Leaders who were nominated and elected last spring will be meeting on August 13. Honor Council Members, Cross-Age Mentors, Student Life Representatives, the Wellness Committee, Philanthropy Service Group members, Student Equity Committee and club leaders will gather to discuss the traits of good leaders and how to lead by example. Students should look for an email from Mr. Sweeney and Ms. Sideli detailing both the schedule of the retreat and the future Leadership Board Meetings. We look forward to gathering with our student leaders on Friday, August 13. Please be in touch with Mr. Sweeney and Ms. Sideli should you have further questions. For new students and ninth graders, there will be opportunities for leadership development once the year begins.

VMS FAMILY HANDBOOK

The VMS Family Handbook will be finalized and sent to all families in the August 13 communication. The Handbook sets baseline understandings for our community at VMS, outlines clear expectations, and serves as a good reminder what are the best and most inclusive practices for everything from communication to accountability. This year, like every year, there will be a rollout of new policies and some changes to existing procedures. Therefore, families new and returning should take the time to note these and other changes. Attached to the handbook will be the Acceptable Use Policy for Technology and the Athletics Policies - both especially important for Upper School families. Parents and students will be asked to sign and agree to the policies set forth in our handbook.

TECHNOLOGY

Students and parents are reminded that all Upper Schoolers need to provide their own computer for the academic year ahead. **Chromebooks and iPads are NOT powerful enough to support student needs.** Please see Mr. Chamber's email from the July 16 communication (also on the [Back to School page](#)) in order to have the proper technology.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS & DATES AFTER SCHOOL BEGINS

- Back to School Night is on September 2. Senior parents are asked to join us at 5 pm for a senior parent meeting to understand the calendar and traditions of students' final year at VMS. Programming for ninth, tenth and eleventh grade parents will begin at 6 pm but snacks will be served before then - so we highly encourage a 5:30 arrival! The program will consist of a welcome from Mike Imperi, and then all departments will present (science, mathematics, world language, English, history and the arts) to parents of 6th - 12th graders. Mr. Imperi's introduction and the department presentations will be live streamed.
- This fall, we are eager to bring back Parent Peer Groups. Our goal in Parent Peer Groups is to bring parents together to discuss the inherent challenges in raising teenagers. Parents who have students in grades 9 and 10 will gather on October 21 at 5 pm. Parents who have children in grades 11 and 12 will gather on November 9 at 5 pm. We will center our brief presentation and discussion around Parent-Child relationships and family functions as researched by Dr. Suniya Luthar, of Authentic Connections. More details will be provided to parents in early October.

I recognize this is a lot of information to digest! Please be in touch should you have any questions. I hope this letter finds you relaxing and enjoying the weeks before school begins.

Sincerely,

Maggie Pavlik
Director of Upper School

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