



Dear Middle School Families:

I hope this letter finds you and your family doing well and excited about the upcoming school year. We have all endured the rollercoaster of the Covid-19 pandemic. The spring was hard and the spread of the virus over the last few months created a summer like none other. That said, I am feeling excited and energized about the upcoming year, whether remote or on campus.

This summer I spent six weeks in a graduate program zooming most of the day; I have been working whenever possible through video meetings with PRS admin, deans and faculty; and I have had the opportunity to meet a number of our new students attending our summer skills classes. Connections through remote platforms can happen and they are effective. Although it is not an ideal environment, we are going to have a great start to the year and we will build the relationships and community needed to support the growth and learning of all of our students.

Please read the information below about how we are going to build that support system and start the year. Again, we look forward to your questions and conversations so please email or call whenever you want or need to.

Advisory

Our advisory program is an important part of a normal school year and more important than ever in this current situation. We want to make sure we build that relationship as it will be an important and necessary resource for the entire school year. A few things to know:

- Advisors will be reaching out to students and families before orientation and classes start.
 - Advisor email to advisees - by Friday, August 21
 - Advisory Group Zoom August 24, 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm
 - Advisory Families Zoom August 31, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Advisors are the advocates for the students and should be a main point of contact for students, families, and teachers regarding each student.
- Please communicate with your student's advisor. Connecting home, teachers, student and advisor will ensure the best support system.

Orientation

Grade level orientations will be remote. Students will meet their teachers and spend more time with their advisory group and advisors. Through some fun activities and small group discussion time, students will continue making connections to other students, their advisors, and their teachers so they are comfortable starting the new school year.

- 7th Grade August 27, 10:00 am -12:00
- 8th Grade August 28 10:00 -12:00
- Expectations- Log into Zoom and be open to meeting people and having a little fun

- Student schedule templates (Remote)- The remote schedule is slightly different than the on-campus version so we want to make sure we set students up with an accurate schedule by having them create their own version from a template. (see link below)
- Together We Can care packages- Friday, August 28
 - 7th-grade pick up: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
 - 8th-grade pick up: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Tech Information

New students have received all user information for google drive, Outlook (Email), PowerSchoolLearning (LMS), and Zoom through an email sent to parents email addresses on Friday, August 14. Please try to let your student navigate logging into each and support them when they have trouble. A few things to consider:

- Bookmark all of these sites as they will be using them every day.
- Write down and save login information and passwords in a safe and convenient place
- Advisors and teachers will be making sure all students are comfortable and able to navigate these platforms over the first days of school.
- Tech Support-
 - helpdesk@pacificridge.org or call 760-579-4910.
 - Speeden@pacificridge.org or call 760-827-6822
- Tech Support Office Hours with Ms Peeden:
 - August 17: 8:00 am – 9:00 am
 - August 17: 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
 - August 18: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
 - August 19: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
 - August 20: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Schedule Change

It looks like we are going to get off the county watch list and back on campus sooner than we thought (Still TBD). As a result, we are going back to the original MS schedule. As you may recall, the change did not change any academic classes but the middle of the day. Thank you for your flexibility in this change and let me know if you have any questions.

- Please see our [MS Schedule 2020](#) which includes the schedule, sample 7th and 8th grade schedules. Here the [MS Schedule of Orientation and First Week of School](#) that you may have seen in the August 17 Webinar.

Schedule for September 1, 2020

We will be starting the school year on Tuesday September 1 with our Odd Day classes. Students will be accessing the zoom links through PowerSchool learning (Check each class page and the calendar for zoom links and assignments and resources). A few things to remember:

- Nervous?- Yes! We all are nervous the first day of school...we know that students are new to this school and to this style of learning at PRS, to the schedule, to their teachers and their expectations. We are not expecting anyone to be perfect the first few weeks of class (including teachers!). We will support each other and help us all get comfortable.
- Students should check email and powerschool pages before the first day of classes.

Supplies

Be sure to look over and purchase the supplies listed on our [Middle School Supply List 2020-21](#). Some teachers may ask for some specific things as we start the year but this list will make sure we are prepared for the start of the year.

Attendance

Teachers will be taking attendance at the start of each class. If your child is going to miss class or the school day, please email Andrea Hamm at Ahamm@pacificridge.org or call 760-448- 9820. Students should email teachers to get caught up on what they missed.

Zoom Norms

As we get ready to head back into remote learning, please review the [PRS Zoom Norms](#) so you and your student know what is expected during Zoom meetings and classes. Engagement is harder online and we need to make sure we are set up and acting in ways to best support effective meetings.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Work

Given the remote learning environment we will be starting the year in and the possibility of being in a hybrid or remote learning environment throughout the year, we will be working to cap the amount of screen time students have every day. Middle school students will have a total of 70 minutes of class time and homework for each class. Teachers may use the synchronous and asynchronous time differently but students will meet synchronously for each class for at least 20 minutes and have not more than 70 minutes of work total.

Grades in the Middle School

Given the need to make strong connections between students, advisors and teachers, the current situation requires us to allow for more time than usual to ensure that students are on-boarded with the new technology platforms, settled into the routines of a new school (especially in remote learning mode), and, most importantly, connected to their teachers and advisor. Therefore we will report grades for trimester one (interim and end of trimester one) as pass / fail. Teachers will still be giving assignments, assessing assignments, giving feedback, and using the PowerSchool Learning gradebook as usual. We know that more feedback is needed at this moment and we are working to make sure students know how they are doing and what they need to focus on in their classes. We will return to normal grading for trimester two and three.

Wellness

We know that part of managing the upheaval in the spring was finding balance and taking care of ourselves. Be sure to make time for students to reflect on how they are feeling. We must focus on

spending time off screens, getting plenty of sleep, exercising regularly, connecting with people, and pursuing a passion or project. A few resources for you to look over:

- Student Support [Self Care Infographic](#).
- [Managing Remote Learning at Home](#)
(Spring 2020 presentation slidedeck)

Returning To Campus

We will discuss all the details of getting on campus, including drop off and pick up procedures, training for being on campus, and the daily schedule as well as how we plan to build up the density of students on campus, as soon as we know more about when we are likely to return.

Connections and Community Opportunities

Please take advantage of the events schedule below and reach out to people in the community to help build the school we want for our students this year.

- **New Parent Webinar 8/19 5:30pm** ([Zoom Link](#)) Bring your questions, comments and concerns as we informally gather to make sure we are all set for the start of the year.
- Parent Trivia with Dr. Ogle and Jenny Bjornstad 8/25 at 5:30pm & 8/27 at 6:30pm
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Coffee talk series- continuing this fall...more info to come
- Please email or call to talk or set up a zoom conversation.

Together we can. We look forward to seeing you and your kids soon and working with you to have a successful school year.

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