



Hello Upper School Families,

This summer has been one to remember! I hope you have had the chance to relax and clear your minds, take care of yourselves and your families, and have remained safe and healthy.

As we prepare for the beginning of school, it is important to remember that this year will be a year of firsts. There will be a move from what we previously considered normal. There will be a lot of change. One thing that hasn't changed and will remain consistent is our commitment to a unique and meaningful academic experience, cultivating and fostering relationships, and understanding how our actions play a role in the world in which we live. We also want to recognize the times that we are in with a focused view on health, wellness, and equity. While our focus has been on school operations in this new world, we are also focused on the well-being of our students, faculty and staff.

We hope that you have been able to attend our "Ready for School" series events over the past few weeks. As information changes, we are trying to keep everything as up-to-date as possible. Please make sure to check the [Together We Can](#) website for updates, and consider attending our fourth "Ready for School" session on Monday, August 24, at 5:30 p.m. We added this session to communicate any new information as of that date and to answer your questions. Zoom information will be emailed tomorrow.

Below you will find our plans for supporting students and starting school. As a reminder, we will be starting school in a remote/online environment. We will communicate any information about physically returning to campus as soon as we are able.

Advisory

Advisors play a big role in the student experience at Pacific Ridge School and will be facilitators and advocates for your students.

Advisors will be reaching out to contact students and families this week.

- Advisor email to advisees - by Friday, August 21
- Advisory Group Zoom August 24, 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm

This year, the Upper School will be rolling out a new advisory curriculum that focuses on three main tenants:

1. Support for academic growth/skills transitions
2. Personal growth, reflection, and wellness

3. Community building, sense of belonging, and cultural inclusivity

There will be a variety of subtopics that are woven throughout with a focus on grade- and age-appropriate activities. These subtopics will include, but are not limited to: Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, Growth mindset/making mistakes, Managing stress/coping skills, Conflict management/interpersonal skills/difficult conversations, Time-management, Self-advocacy/asking for help/seeking help, Motivation/procrastination/task-initiation, Goal setting/short and long-term/breaking down goals, Organization, Resilience/pushing through struggle, Life balance/self-care, Developing self-awareness and identifying values, beliefs, attitudes and Decision-making.

Orientation

All grade-level orientations will be remote. During this time, Grade-Level Deans and Advisors will host activities that will allow students to get reacquainted, meet new students, and meet some of their teachers. Even through a remote orientation, we believe that we can start the year with making some essential connections.

- 9th Grade Orientation - August 27 10am -12pm
- 10th Grade Orientation - August 28 10am -12pm
- 11th Grade Orientation - August 27 10am - 12pm
- 12th Grade Camp College - August 26 & August 27 9am - 2pm

Tech Information

All new students and families should have received their tech information via email last week. The user IDs and passwords should allow access to PowerSchool Learning, our Learning Management System, Google Drive and Apps, Outlook Email, and Zoom. It is very important that students try to set these up and access all accounts or applications prior to school beginning. Advisors and teachers will be making sure all students are comfortable and able to navigate these platforms over the first few days of school.

If your student has any questions or is having difficulties with any of their account information, please feel free to reach out to me and we will work with our IT department to make sure that the situation will be remedied.

First Day of School

As a reminder, our first day of school for all grades will be Tuesday, September 1. It will be an odd day. Please see our [US Schedule 2020](#) which includes the schedule breakdown of Odd and Even days and a sample schedule. Here is the [US Schedule of Orientation and First Week of School](#) that you may have seen in the August 17 Webinar.

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. We do recognize that there could be prohibitory circumstances that could prevent a student from meeting every single norm. If there is any reason that a student feels like they cannot meet any of the expectations, please have them reach out to the teacher.

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. Upper School students will have a total of 90 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 30 minutes and have not more than 90 minutes of work total.

Keeping in mind our motto for reopening, "Together We Can", we can do so much. We can reimagine how school looks at Pacific Ridge. We can redefine how connections are made in our community. We can make this a positive and successful year. We will do all of this "Together".

Please reach out to Allegra or myself should you have any questions, and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

Alfie Hobbs
Assistant Head of Upper School