



Dear New Students and Families,

Hello and welcome to the Madeira community! We are so excited to have you joining us this fall, I'm sure you are counting down the days until your arrival to campus for the start of Madeira's Orientation in August. Here in the Dean of Student Life & Culture Office, we are also looking ahead and are planning for the upcoming school year and are ready to support you in your transition to community life at Madeira.

With that in mind, here is some information we want you to have as well as some tips and tricks we want to share as you prepare for boarding at Madeira. As the countdown to your first Madeira year continues, please read through this email and reach out with any questions.

#### **FORMS:**

Just last week you [received communication from the Dean of Student Life & Culture Office](#) which included information about forms that each family needs to complete by July 1. These are located in the My Forms section of the [Student-Parent Portal](#) and include the [Travel & Arrival Form](#), Permission Form, and Vehicle Form. Please complete these forms now as the **July 1 deadline** is fast approaching.

In addition, students please complete the [New Roommate Survey](#) and parents please complete the [New Boarding Parent Survey](#) by the same **July 1 deadline** so that the Dean of Student Life & Culture Office can begin the process of getting to know you and working to pair you with a roommate who will be a good fit. You will find out who your roommate is upon arrival at school!

#### **ARRIVAL & ORIENTATION:**

All new boarding students will arrive to campus on [Sunday, August 22 between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.](#) We will use the information you share in the [Travel & Arrival Form](#) to assign you a specific arrival time that best fits with your travel plans.

There is a full day of orientation programming for both new students and parents on Sunday, including a dinner for new parents that evening. Students have their own special dinner, followed by evening activities; boarding students are expected to spend Sunday night on campus. Orientation continues for everyone through Monday morning. At lunch, parents depart, and all students will be engaged. Parents, we welcome your attendance for as much of these two days as you are able to attend. We will share a detailed orientation schedule for new students and families on the [Orientation page](#) of the Madeira website in mid-July.

We realize that some families may want to spend additional time around your daughter's arrival experiencing everything that the Washington, DC area has to offer. We ask that families do

so **before** their daughter's move-in date. Once they arrive at school, the girls are extraordinarily busy with orientation programming, activities, dorm events, and of course classes! In our experience, students transition best when they are fully immersed in the community from move-in day onward.

### **COMMUNITY LIVING:**

Students, I am sure you are both excited and curious about life as a boarding student. Here you will find some recommendations about how you might prepare for the upcoming school year. I have included a "[What to Bring](#)" list so when you think about packing, you'll have a better sense of what is needed as well as the few items that aren't allowed in the dorms.

Here are some additional things to think about as you begin to prepare for community living:

- **If you aren't used to waking yourself up** -- practice for a few weeks prior to coming to school. Use a variety of alarm clocks, sounds, etc. It will be your responsibility to wake up and get to class on time.
- **If laundry hasn't been your thing** -- you definitely will want to learn how to do your own. We supply the machines (free of charge!) but you will want to know how much detergent to use, how to separate colors, and what should be put in the dryer and what shouldn't. Practice doing your own laundry before getting to campus. Don't worry if you are not yet an expert by the time you arrive -- we have lots of older girls and adults in the dorms who are ready to help!
- **Homesickness** -- it is very common and totally normal. Some girls get through it fairly quickly, for others it takes longer. Even returning students experience it! The added time families have spent together over the last year may make the transition to boarding a bit tougher than usual. Parents and students, it can be helpful to discuss the possibility of homesickness in advance and to consider a communication plan for staying in touch once school starts. Maybe you'll plan for a 15-minute call in the morning as you get ready for the day, you could set aside time to Facetime before or after dinner, you could agree to send an email after Study Hall sharing how the day went, or you could decide on all of the above. Talking about and planning for separation will make it easier.
- **Balancing free time with homework time** -- while we have structured study hall, you will most likely need to do some homework during free time or even after study hours end. Think about your study habits and try to figure out what will work best for you. If you are someone for whom free time seems to disappear or who tends to wait till the last minute to do things, use this summer to practice some strategies that will help you manage your time.
- **Used to having your phone with you all the time?** -- take some time this summer to "disconnect." We value personal relationships and face-to-face interactions immensely at Madeira and as such have some cell phone free zones such as classrooms and the dining hall. In addition, when you are walking around campus, we want you to engage with one another rather than your Instagram account so we expect that if you need to use your phone while out and about, that you stop and "pull over"! While it may sound silly that you need to "practice" not checking your phone, it can be harder than you think

to digitally disconnect. So girls, when you sit down with your summer reading books, leave your phone in another room.

- While it is important to disconnect at times, it is also important that we be able to get in touch with students during the school year, especially when they are off campus on trips. All students are *required* to have a cell phone with an American phone number that they keep with them, charged, and turned on. In addition, the phone cannot rely solely on Wi-Fi to make calls and voicemail must be set up and able to accept messages.
- **Have a conversation about a budget** -- parents often ask us how much money their daughter needs at Madeira. This is a highly personal decision that each family must determine on their own. We recommend having this conversation before arriving to Madeira so you are all on the same page but know that things change and the budget can always be adjusted. Below you will see details about MAD Money.
- **MAD Money, the school's debit payment system** -- most campus transactions, such as at the campus store, class and club fundraisers, and weekend activities, can be paid for with MAD Money. We encourage each family to load a minimum of at least \$100 in their daughter's MAD Money account by the beginning of the school year. If they do not, the Madeira Business Office will add money to their account in order to reach \$100 and will bill the family. A parent may load more funds onto their student's MAD Money account via The Student Parent Portal website. This site will also allow you to monitor your student's purchasing activity and reload the account as needed. A student may add funds by visiting Ms. Cappel in the Business Office in the basement of the Student Center and using cash, check, or a credit/debit card. Students will also be able to withdraw up to \$20.00 at a time for cash needs. More information will come in a future Madeira Digest to be sent this summer. For questions about MAD Money, please contact Ms. Cappel ([ccappel@madeira.org](mailto:ccappel@madeira.org)) in the Business Office.
- **Enjoy our wide range of Weekly Activities** -- Madeira offers lots of on and off campus events every week. Both day and boarding students are welcome and encouraged to attend all of them. Students can keep track of weekly activity offerings using their REACH account they will set up after arriving at Madeira, by listening for weekly activity announcements at Community Meeting Time (CMT), or taking a look at the bi-weekly activity calendar at the entrance to the Dining Hall in the Student Center. Parents can see the activities on offer by looking at the bi-weekly list posted in the New Parents Can Use (NPCU) electronic newsletter they'll receive. Many of these trips are free but we also offer big trips which have a fee attached.
- **Get to know your RAs** -- each dorm has three Resident Assistants (RAs). These are selected junior and senior leaders who live with you in the dorm and they can be really helpful in solving little problems and showing you how things work in the dorm. You will receive emails from them and other Student Leaders this summer -- they are [sending videos](#) with tips and hints about life at Madeira and some of their favorite Madeira Traditions. The RAs are always a friendly face who can help you navigate all of your Madeira "firsts." They are eager to support you; please, please use them when you need them.
- **This last one may sound a bit odd, practice asking for help** -- you are about to embark on a new, exciting adventure. Starting high school is big, throw in living at your

high school and that is huge, especially if you did school from home last year! There will most definitely be times when you are overwhelmed, excited, happy, worried, or flummoxed, sometimes all at once. Believe it or not, this is totally normal. You, of course, always still have your parents to lean on, but often an adult who is here on campus can be enormously helpful. Our job is to be available for you when you need it so don't be afraid to reach out to us.

**Continue to check your Madeira email regularly this summer (*at least once a week, hopefully more often*) for more updates!** There is a lot of great (and important) information headed your way over the summer and you need to stay tuned in to new communication from Madeira. As always, if you have questions throughout the summer, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. Our hours are not as regular during the summer, so email is often the best option. I can be reached at [hsouthworth@madeira.org](mailto:hsouthworth@madeira.org) or via phone at 703-556-8211. I would love to hear from any of you!

All the best,  
Mr. Hunter Southworth  
Associate Dean of Student Life & Culture