

# GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL

300 GARRISON FOREST ROAD • OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND 21117

Dear Middle School Families and Students,

We hope you are having a wonderful summer and that you and your daughter are excited about the coming school year! The Middle School Faculty and I are looking forward to seeing you on campus in just a few short weeks.

This email contains important information about the start of school for new and returning Middle School students and their families. Please review this information carefully and contact the Middle School office (410-559-3281) if you have any questions.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL MOVIE NIGHT:** We hope you will consider joining us for a Middle School Movie Night for all new and returning students and families on Saturday, August 28th. Boarding students and their families will also be invited following their move into the dorms. We are excited to gather on the lawn of Lochinvar at 8pm for this fun community event before school begins! Feel free to drop off your daughter or bring your whole family. Parking in the tennis courts lot. Snacks will be provided; bring your own blanket or chairs.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ORIENTATION:** Middle School Orientation will take place in person on Monday, August 30. This event is mandatory for all middle school students and parents. Students do not need to be in uniform. Middle school-specific Orientation information and schedules will be posted on the Middle School landing page in the Parent Portal at <https://www.gfs.org/parent/middle-school/backtoschool>.

- Optional Locker Move-In, 8:00-9:00 AM: It is recommended that students take advantage of the optional locker move-in time before the Orientation program begins. Families may also choose to move into their lockers immediately following Orientation to avoid crowds. The popular locker shelves may be purchased at Bed, Bath and Beyond, Target, Walmart, or Home Depot; here is a link to the shelving unit on Amazon <[https://www.amazon.com/ClosetMaid-8987-Stackable-3-Shelf-Organizer/dp/B002IT6E5Q/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1471017186&sr=8-1&keywords=3+cube+shelf](https://www.amazon.com/ClosetMaid-8987-Stackable-3-Shelf-Organizer/dp/B002IT6E5Q/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1471017186&sr=8-1&keywords=3+cube+shelf)>. To make the process easier, please build your shelf at home prior to Orientation. Please pay careful attention to the dimensions (11.7x12.2x31.5) and note that our lockers are not magnetic.
- Orientation for all Students and Parents, 9:00 AM-10:30 AM: Orientation for all new and returning students and parents is Monday, August 30. During this time, students and families will have a chance to meet advisors, teachers, administrators and classmates. Students and parents will meet with the student's advisor, receive class schedules and discuss class events for the year. Students are not in uniform on this day. Having at least one parent/guardian attend the Orientation is mandatory.
- Special Program for All 6th Grade and New 7th & 8th Grade Students, 10:30AM-12:15 PM: A special program for all 6th Grade students and new 7th and 8th Grade students will provide the chance to meet more teachers, learn additional routines and expectations of the Middle School, tour the building, participate in a question/answer session and begin to bond with fellow classmates and receive their computers. Any 7th and 8th Grade student who already received their laptop should bring it to Orientation.
- All families are invited to join us for refreshments in the Courtyard immediately following Orientation and can take advantage of optional campus tours.
- Dismissal for Returning 7th & 8th Graders, 10:30AM
- Dismissal for All 6th Grade and New 7th & 8th Grade, 12:15 PM

TIME	PARENTS	STUDENTS
8:00am-8:55am	Registration outside the Middle School  Optional Locker Move-In (Also available immediately following Orientation if you'd like to avoid crowds)	Registration outside the Middle School  Optional Locker Move-In (Also available immediately following Orientation if you'd like to avoid crowds)
9:00am-9:45am	Parent Session in Garland Theater	Advisory Group Meetings in Advisor Classrooms
9:45am-10:30am	Parent-Advisor Meetings in Advisor Classrooms	Middle School Student Assembly
10:30am-12:15pm	Optional Parent Refreshments and Campus Tours in M5 Courtyard  All returning parents (7th & 8th Grade) are welcome to stay to finish locker decorating if need be or take their children home at the conclusion of Orientation	All 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade students special program with Ms. O'Neal & Mrs. Dorman (students only)  All NEW 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade students special program with Mrs. Kelland & Mrs. Miller (students only)

**FIRST DAY OF CLASSES, TUESDAY, AUGUST 31:** The first day of classes is Tuesday, August 31. Please note that on this day, students should come to school in uniform and be dropped off in the Middle School circle. All students will enter through the front doors of the Middle School this year and should check-in at the Middle School lobby between 7:30 am-7:55 am. Classes will begin at 8:00 am.

**FACULTY:** Please join me in welcoming the following new faculty to campus this fall:

- Tricia Dabrowski will join us as our new Middle School Physical Education teacher! Tricia began her teaching career at Holton Arms School, where she taught PE to grades 4-6 and coached Varsity Lacrosse and Soccer along with various MS sports. Most recently, Trish taught Upper School PE at Roland Park Country School, where she served as a ninth grade advisor and coached Middle School squash, JV Soccer and was the Lacrosse Goalie Coach. An All American athlete and 2002 National Lacrosse Goalkeeper of the Year, Trish graduated from Loyola University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. Trish is excited to teach 6th, 7th and 8th grade PE, coach Varsity Soccer and Middle School Squash and join the Sixth Grade Advisory Team! Welcome, Trish!
- Pamela Dorman will be stepping into the role of Middle School Counselor at GFS! Pam comes to us from the University of Maryland School Mental Health Program with 12 years of experience as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in several Baltimore City Public Schools as well as a non-public school in Montgomery County, MD. Pam earned her Bachelors of Science in Psychology and Biology from Virginia Tech and her Master of Social Work, Clinical/ Management and Community Organization with a focus on Child, Adolescent and Family Health from the University of Maryland. Pam will be joining our Middle School Administrative Team and will be teaching Sixth Grade Life Positive classes, Seventh Grade Decision Making classes and Eighth Grade Crossroads classes. Please join me in welcoming Pam!
- Emily Fisher is joining GFS as our new Middle & Upper School Librarian! Emily comes to us with a very strong background in academic research. She began her career as a researcher and instructor in the energy and environmental policy field, most recently teaching graduate students at Johns Hopkins. Emily studied electrical engineering as an undergraduate at Brown University, and earned her Ph. D. and Master of Science in Geography and Environmental Engineering from Johns Hopkins University. She earned her Master of Library and Information Science with a School Specialization from the University of Maryland-College Park. She loves working with and mentoring young people and is thrilled to join the Garrison community. Welcome, Emily!
- Nedria Walker will join us as our 6th & 7th Grade Science teacher! Nedria spent the last several years teaching Biology, Physics & AP Environmental Science at the Kipp DC College Preparatory School in Washington, D.C., where she began her teaching career as a Teach for America Corps Member after working as a Research Assistant & Lab Manager at the University of Iowa. Nedria earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with minors in Chemistry and German and earned her Masters of Science in Education from Johns Hopkins University. She is excited to share her love of science with our Middle Schoolers and join the Sixth Grade Advisory Team! Please join me in welcoming Nedria!
- In addition, we are excited to welcome back Yara Cheikh, who will teach Lauren Anderson's Geography & World Cultures class until she returns from maternity leave in early October. Yara, who has a B.A. in History from Johns Hopkins

University, is a familiar face at Garrison and has previously served as a long-term substitute for English and Geography in the Middle School and History in the Upper School. Please join me in welcoming back Yara!

**MASKS:** Based on the most recent guidance for schools from the CDC, we will be requiring masks for all students, faculty and staff while inside (except when eating); outside, masks will not be required except when students cannot maintain at least three feet of physical distancing. Consistent and correct mask use is an important component in our ability to keep our community safe and in school due to the new definition of a close contact, which takes into account the added protection that masking provides. Please keep in mind that many of our students are not eligible, at this point, to be vaccinated, which makes proper masking vital to protect our entire community. Our mask requirements remain the same as last year:

- All students and faculty and staff should have a cloth mask that fits securely, covering the mouth and nose.
- Please make sure masks conform to the [current guidance from the CDC](#) (no valves, preferably made of at least 2 layers. Gaitors are not permitted.)
- Each student should have a spare mask in case the first becomes soiled or damp, or extra disposable masks should be available. While individuals may choose to wear a face shield as supplemental protection, they may not be worn without a mask underneath.
- Face masks should be solid colors without writing or patterns.

**FALL 2021 COVID-19 PROTOCOLS:** [Please review the school's COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategies here](#). If you have not already signed the [GFS Health Agreement](#) and uploaded it into your child's Magnus Health account, please do so as soon as possible.

**NEW GATE CODE FOR 2021-22:** We will be changing the code to both gates effective Monday, August 23. The new code will be 4144.

**DINING HALL AND SNACK BAR ACCOUNTS:** We are excited to reopen the Dining Hall and O'Zone for Middle School students! We will once again use My Kids Spending for the 2021-2022 school year for purchasing lunches and items at the O'Zone snack bar. These accounts must be pre-funded and use a declining balance system to cover your daughter's purchases throughout the year. If you already have an account, please log in and review your balance to determine if additional funding is necessary. Any balances remaining from previous school years will automatically be rolled over for the upcoming year. If your daughter is new to Garrison Forest School, or if you do not currently have an account, please visit [www.mykidsspending.com](http://www.mykidsspending.com). You will need your daughter's student ID number (the number used when setting up your FACTS account) to register. If you need the ID number, please email [StudentBilling@gfs.org](mailto:StudentBilling@gfs.org).

**BUS TRANSPORTATION:** We are pleased to once again be offering bus transportation to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Meadowood and Boy's Latin/Roland Park--and introducing new stops in Catonsville and Westminster/Reisterstown! If you are interested in transportation for your child but have not yet registered, please do so **as soon as possible and no later than August 18**. There is a minimum of three riders per bus route needed in order for routes to proceed. [See routes and registration information here](#). **(Note: All buses will depart from GFS at 5:15 p.m. for the afternoon route;** Lower School families taking GFS transportation will need to add aftercare through Harford Heights.)

**A NOTE FROM THE COUNSELOR:** Please complete [this questionnaire](#) for the MS Counseling Department. Your answers will help us identify students who may need additional support as they transition to school this fall. If you have any questions, please contact Pamela Dorman, Middle School Counselor at [PamelaDorman@gfs.org](mailto:PamelaDorman@gfs.org).

**BOOKS, COURSE LISTS, SUMMER READING & MATH:** Please remember that you may check your daughter's full course list in Parent Portal (<https://www.gfs.org/parent>) which will serve as a guide to purchasing books through MBS Direct (<https://bnck-12.com/gfs>), our online bookstore. If you are having difficulty with this process, please do not hesitate to contact us at 410-559-3281. For reminders and notes about the process of purchasing books, please see the July Mailing here: [https://www.gfs.org/cf\\_enotify/view.cfm?n=4899](https://www.gfs.org/cf_enotify/view.cfm?n=4899) Summer Reading and Math, as well as the Supply List, can be found on the Middle School Parent Page <https://www.gfs.org/parent/middle-school>.

**EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM:** GFS offers after school riding lessons, polo & Saturday riding lessons during the school year. Students interested in riding or learning more about the program should plan to attend the beginning of school meeting on Thursday, September 2 from 3:45- 4:30 PM at the barn.

- [Riding Program Agreement](#)
- [Riding and polo Program Policies](#)

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS:** Middle school students will have the opportunity to sign up for Volleyball, Soccer, Field Hockey or Cross Country for the fall sports season. Interested students should plan to attend the Fall Athletics Information Session on Wednesday, September 1 from 3:45- 4:15 PM in the MS Auditorium. If you have questions about Athletics at GFS, please contact Jessy Morgan, Athletic Director ([JessyMorgan@gfs.org](mailto:JessyMorgan@gfs.org)).

**MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK:** All parents and students must closely review the [Middle School Handbook](#) prior to the start of the school year. Within the Handbook, you will find important and helpful information for your daughter's day-to-day experience in the Middle School.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE:** Families can find the [Curriculum Guide](#) here, which outlines the Middle School Program of Study and provides an overview of Middle School classes.

**WEEKLY COMMUNICATION:** Once school begins, you will receive weekly emails each Sunday afternoon sent to all Middle School parents with updates about events, dates and news. If you do not see our communication in your inbox, please check your spam folder. Please let Stephanie Boteler ([StephanieBoteler@gfs.org](mailto:StephanieBoteler@gfs.org)) know if you are not receiving weekly communication from us.

**LATE START ON FRIDAYS:** Friday mornings are late-start days for students, with check-in at 8:45 AM. These Friday mornings are used for faculty professional development in the areas of curriculum and instruction, student-centered learning, diversity, equity and inclusion, innovative programs, and digital teaching and learning. Middle School students can still be dropped off at 7:30 AM if necessary.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT:** Mark your calendars! Parents are invited to join us for Back to School Night on Thursday, September 9 from 6:30-9:00 PM. Parents will have an opportunity to meet with their daughter's teachers and learn more about her classes. Please note that this event is for parents/guardians only. Stay tuned for a detailed schedule and more information.

**FOREST FESTIVAL:** The Garrison Forest Parent Association is thrilled to host our first-ever Forest Festival on the first day of school, August 31st! Parents and children are invited to gather right after school from 3:30-5:30 for music, food, fun activities and mingling (outdoors and COVID-friendly).

**CHROMEBOOKS/LAPTOPS:** All new students will receive their Chromebooks during Orientation on Monday, August 30. All returning Middle School students should plan to bring their laptops to school on the first day of classes fully charged and labeled with their names.

## GENERAL PARENT INFORMATION

### PARENT PORTAL LOGIN:

If you are ready to login:

1. Go to <https://www.gfs.org/parent>, then choose "My Student(s)".
2. At the Login prompt, enter your email address and password.
3. You are now logged into the Parent Portal page and you can select the links for Report Cards, Magnus and Household Updates. Select Magnus to upload your child's required health forms.

If you do not know your password or are a first-time user:

1. [Click here to go to the password reset page.](#)
2. A new page will appear. Enter your e-mail address under the Forgot Password section and click the Submit button.
3. An e-mail will be sent to that account with a link to change your password. (Note: It may take up to 1 hour to receive the message and you may also need to check your SPAM filter.)
4. Once you receive the email click the link contained in the email and a new page will appear.
5. Under the Change Your Password section enter your new password and click the Change Password button.
6. Next go to <https://www.gfs.org/parent>, then choose "My Student(s)".
7. At the Login prompt enter your email address and password.
8. You are now logged into the Parent Portal page and you can select the links for Report Cards, Magnus and Household Updates. Select Magnus to upload your child's required health forms.

### Trouble-shooting:

If you have trouble logging in please contact the GFS Tech Support Office at 410-559-3456 or email [techsupport@gfs.org](mailto:techsupport@gfs.org).

**REQUIRED MAGNUS HEALTH FORMS:** GFS uses Magnus Health, an online student medical record system (SMR), to store and access all of your child's medical health records and important vital health information. You may log directly into Magnus via those emails or the [GFS Parent Portal](#).

- **EVERY STUDENT ENROLLED (Preschool through Upper School) IS REQUIRED TO HAVE UPDATED HEALTH RECORDS IN MAGNUS**, whether or not the student is participating in GFS sports.
- **MAGNUS FORMS DUE JULY 23 so the Health Center can review prior to the opening of school.** If a student does not have updated, complete health records by **Tuesday, August 31**, the first day of school, that student will be unable to participate in classes until the forms are complete.
- Due to privacy issues, Garrison Forest cannot upload your child's health forms.
- Any Middle School athlete who comes to practice without a current physical and all up-to-date information in Magnus will not be allowed to practice until forms are completed in Magnus.

Questions? Contact the Health Center at [healthcenter@gfs.org](mailto:healthcenter@gfs.org) or 410-559-3200.

**NON-HEALTH FORMS WERE DUE AUGUST 2:** You will need to download and complete the [Middle School Permission Form](#). Please turn this form in to the Middle School Administrative Assistant, Stephanie Boteler ([StephanieBoteler@gfs.org](mailto:StephanieBoteler@gfs.org), 410-559-3281).

**UNIFORMS:** Please visit the [Uniform link](#) on the Parent Portal for information on Grizzly Gear, School Store summer hours and ordering uniforms from Flynn and O'Hara, as well as detailed uniform regulations.

**SCHOOL STORE:** The school store will open again on Monday, August 16 and will remain open Monday-Thursday from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM through Thursday, August 26. Please contact Kerry Myers ([KerryMyers@gfs.org](mailto:KerryMyers@gfs.org)) with any questions.

**2021-22 CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS for GFS:** Calendar Highlights for each division are under the ["Quicklinks" tab](#) for each division.

**GFS DIRECTORY:** The GFS Parent Directory is available online through the [Parent Portal](#). You may search by student, parent, address, graduation year and class. To ensure that this resource is as up-to-date as possible, please go to the "Household Updates" section of the Parent Portal and ensure that your contact information is correct. In mid-September, we will load a printable PDF of the directory and will have a limited number of printed directories for sale in the school store. You may also request a class list from your division assistant.

**IMPORTANT DATES:** Below are all of the important dates for the opening of school.

- Saturday, August 28: Boarding students move-in.
- Saturday, August 28: Middle School Movie Night, 8pm
- Monday, August 30: Middle School Orientation as described above.



- Tuesday, August 31:
  - First Day of Classes, Week One, Day 2; all students will be in uniform; our doors open at 7:30 AM every day and students should arrive no later than 7:55 AM.
  - Forest Festival Event for all GFS students and families, 3:30pm; Stay tuned for more information from the Parents Association
- Wednesday, September 1: Fall Sports Organizational Meeting: Any student interested in participating in a fall sport (soccer, field hockey, volleyball and cross country) will meet with coaches from 3:45-4:15 PM to learn more about expectations and logistics.
- Thursday, September 2, Riding Interest Meeting: Any student interested in riding in the Fall will meet at the barn at 3:45 PM.
- Friday, September 3:
  - Late Start, 9:00 AM; doors still open at 7:30 AM
  - Friday, September 3: Light Blue / Dark Blue Sorting Activity from 2:10-3:25 PM, Weather permitting; All returning students will be out of uniform in their spirit team colors and new students may be out of uniform wearing any color.
- Monday, September 6: Labor Day, No School
- Tuesday, September 7: Rosh Hashanah, No School
- Wednesday, September 8:
  - MS Picture Day; please wear kilts and polos; more information will be available during Orientation.
  - MS Sports Begin
- Thursday, September 9: Back to School Night for Middle School & Upper School Parents/Guardians, 6:30-9:00pm
- Tuesday, September 14: 8th Grade Field Trip with Outward Bound
- Thursday, September 16: Yom Kippur, No School
- Wednesday, September 29:
  - 6th Grade Field Trip to the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
  - 7th Grade Field Trip to the Adventure Park at Sandy Spring
- Friday, October 22: Faculty Professional Development Meetings, 12:00-3:30 PM, no late start and noon dismissal for students.
- Friday, November 19: Parent Conference Day. No school for students.

Please do not hesitate to call our MS Office should you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you soon,

Best,

Shannon Schmidt  
Head of Middle School



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