August 18, 2015

Dear Middle School Families,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer and are looking forward to the beginning of school in a couple of weeks. I officially return to the office next Monday, but wanted to make sure you all had this letter this week so you can begin preparations for September. I had anticipated sending it out a few weeks earlier - apologies to those of you waiting for it over the past little bit. As you probably know, this will be the first of many communications I’ll be sending out over the course of the year (others promise to be somewhat briefer, I promise!). Whenever possible, I’ll also post information online on the Packer Website and our online Middle School Family Folder (bookmark this folder as it may come in handy) in my Google Drive.

This letter, in addition to marking the beginning of the countdown to September, introduces our new faculty members and provides you with links to student supply lists, book ordering information, a preliminary calendar for the year, and updated versions of the Middle School Student and Family Handbook and Middle School Curriculum Guide. I am also including important information about arrival times and necessary items to bring on the first day of school, permission slips to sign and return, a few timely reminders, and details of some changes that are new this year.

This letter includes a lot of important information. Please be sure to look at each section, and to follow the links to the appropriate documents. If you are having trouble accessing any of these items, I can forward along copies of them as pdfs and have hard copies available here in the office as well.

**Announcements**

**Program Changes:**

As many of you know, the biggest change we’re anticipating for this fall is the move to our new schedule. After many years with our former schedule, we have been working to put a new model into place that provides more flexibility with scheduling, offers the possibility of longer instructional blocks, builds in more substantial time for outside-of-class programming without sacrificing classroom minutes, and allows for better cross-divisional use of time and space. Beginning this September, we move to a seven-day rotating schedule, which moves advising into the middle of the morning, ends in an extended instructional block, and includes community time each day, allowing for more flexible programming. While the outline of the day (8:10 AM - 3:15 PM) remains the same and won’t impact your family calendar, our new schedule represents a pretty significant change in the way we’re using time during the day - which is exciting, but, especially due to the seven-day rotation, will require some period of adjustment for all of us - students and teachers alike. For a quick view of the new schedule - which will no longer follow a Monday-Friday rotation - look here: [2015-2016 Middle School Schedule.](#) Students will receive copies of the schedule on the first day of school, and, as always, it will also be reflected in the student planbooks, which they’ll receive when they arrive.
The second change to anticipate for this year surrounds grading practices in both the Middle and Upper Schools. Rather than continue to grade students on a quarterly basis (where grades close four times a year), beginning in September, we are moving (for all semester and year-long classes) to a semester-grading system. While we will continue to calculate grades and provide narrative reports after the first and third marking periods (as has been our longstanding tradition), those marks will reflect a mid-semester grade for each course, rather than a final grade for the quarter. The hope is that this change a) allows students to look at their work over a longer period of time, rather than in smaller chunks, and b) gives students more time to make improvements in their work over a semester to meet their goals. While this change is largely one of terminology, I really hope we can collectively use this opportunity to help decrease some of the anxiety that gets created around grades, especially with such short marking periods when one test or project can wind up having such a significant impact on the overall outcome.

Finally, in an effort to more closely align our Middle School WinterSession with the Upper School Symposium and the break between the two semesters, in what will be our third year, we are moving WinterSession (and ERB exams, which are held during the mornings that week) from Presidents’ Days’ Week (February 17-19) to the last week of January (January 27-29) - please mark your calendars.

New Faculty:
This year, we have seven new hires in the Middle School: Sadelle Chain, from the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, will be replacing Barbara Moore in Sixth Grade Core; Anne Marie Mignatti, from the Trinity Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, will be teaching three of our eighth grade science classes, as Ali Gaskell moves primarily up to the Upper School; Jessica Greif, from the Green Vale School in Old Brookville, New York, will be replacing Erin Brust in French; Jackie Kazarian, from the Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts, will be replacing Victoria Kalman in Latin; Victoria Pevzner, from the Renbrook School in West Hartford, Connecticut, will be replacing Juan Lizcano in Spanish while he is on leave this year; Patricia Runcie-Rice, from ArtsWestchester in White Plains, New York, will be replacing Mimi Stauber and Jen Nails in Theater; and finally, Lucas Maia, from the Hope and C.M. Eppes Middle Schools in Greenville, North Carolina, will be replacing Kate Stocker as the Director of our Strings program in grades 4-12.

In addition to those new hires, we have three teachers more formally joining our Middle School faculty this fall: Elizabeth Eagle, long-standing Packer art teacher, is taking on all of our Visual Arts classes and becoming an advisor; Ashleigh Petillo, who was our leave replacement for Bessie Oster in Health last spring, will be staying on to teach fifth and sixth grade Health this year; and Amy Hand, our Math Department Head, will be teaching only in the Middle School this year at the fifth and sixth grade level.

As far as schoolwide roles go, you may have read in the Packer magazine that we have three new hires that will significantly shape our program in the years to come: Tene Howard has been named our new Director of Global Outreach, Service and Sustainability; Bill McCarthy is our new Director of Learning Support; and Sara Shulman is our new Director of Development. In
addition to those three important new colleagues, I’m pleased to announce that we’ve also hired a new Food Service Manager, Richard Costas, who will be replacing Chef Nancy in the kitchen this year.

Finally, as some of you may know, Joan Whitlock, our Middle School Administrative Assistant, finished working at Packer at the end of June. I spent the first several weeks of July in an extensive search, and I’m pleased to announce that I hired Cesar Ayala as our new Administrative Assistant. Cesar, who began yesterday (on Monday, August 17), can be reached at either cayala@packer.edu or 718.250.0261. Moving forward, please reach out to Cesar directly for any general information about the calendar, schedule, or attendance, and copy him in on any communication to me that needs a quick response.

I had the pleasure of participating in the hiring of each of these people this spring and I am thrilled to welcome them as they begin their work with us this year in their new roles. With all of our new hires, please give them a few weeks (or at least a few days) to get fully up to speed as they meet your children and begin to familiarize themselves with this new community.

Our last piece of staffing news is that with her return from her maternity leave, I’ve asked Bessie Oster to step into a leadership role with our advising program. While her work in this capacity may not be as public as some other roles, I am excited to be able to support her as she helps us activate and deepen this critical piece of our Middle School program. Because of the scope of this new role, Bessie will no longer be able to serve as Eighth Grade Head Teacher - her replacement will be named shortly before school begins - and will join me, Marisa Mendez (Dean of Grades 5/6), Nitya York (Dean of Grades 7/8), and Coy Dailey (Dean of Student Life), as well as our other three Head Teachers, Patrick Kieffer (Grade 5), Colin Levitt (Grade 6) and Catherine Jennings (Grade 7) in planning and leading grade-wide programming.

**Advising Groups, Schedules, and Class Placement:**

As we do each summer, the Deans and I have a number of opportunities to check and finalize student schedules and class placement. In creating advising groups and classes, whenever possible, we make sure we keep in mind the balance of gender, race, learning style, student personalities, friendship groups, student-teacher dynamics, and any requests made during the registration process. This is not an exact science, and is complicated the more specialized individual schedules get, particularly in the older grades. However, within the constraints we have, we try very hard to create the best groupings we can. This is all to say, we’ve done the very best we can, but were not always able to honor every request and preference - even some we very much wish we could.

In anticipation of Orientation Day on Wednesday, September 9, I will send home a final list of advising groups (we haven’t done this before but hope it will help) so students know who to look for when they arrive. Advising lists will also be posted in the front hall on September 9. In their first advisory meeting, students will receive their schedules and have a chance to make sure they know how to find all their classes for the next day.
To Do Items Before September

School Supply Ordering:
To help make sure our students have the necessary supplies for the coming year, each spring, our faculty assembles a list of supplies for families to purchase. While there may be other items that come up during the course of the year, these lists are rather exhaustive, and will ensure that students are well prepared for the start of school. Please note, you do not need to send your child on the first day of school with all of the supplies indicated below; he/she should have these items available at home to bring in as requested by his/her teachers. Additionally, given the weight of many student backpacks, please use your thoughtful discretion in your purchases – these supply suggestions are made to help students have what they need for each of their classes, but should not override your best judgment (think thin, light and organized) nor preclude regularly-scheduled backpack and notebook organization, particularly for those children who need extra support in this area.

Fifth Grade Supply List
Sixth Grade Supply List
Seventh/Eighth Grade Supply List

Additional supplies (seventh/eighth grade lab notebooks and English journals, for example) will be provided to students by their teachers once the school year begins.

Laptop Ordering:
Because of our new model for laptop ownership/rental, new Middle School families no longer need to arrange to purchase a laptop computer for their children over the summer. If you have not already received it, you will be getting a letter from Jim Anderson, our Director of Technology, with details about our laptop program and any information you need to ensure that your child has a laptop ready for him/her in September. Please take careful note of our Acceptable Use Policy that governs technology use by Packer students, and any need for third-party insurance for the school laptop.

Book Ordering:
Packer uses Follett as its official textbook vendor. All of the books that you will need to purchase for your child are listed on Packer’s page on the Follett website. Books are listed by department and then by grade (All Middle School classes begin with MS), except in the case of World Language and Learning Skills – which are listed by course names under the department heading. Please note that: a) not all courses have texts that need to be purchased; b) most texts can be purchased used; c) a number of texts can be rented for the year from Follett (though they cannot then be annotated – so please don’t rent books for English classes); and d) all language classes follow the same course sequence: first year, Level 50; second year, Level 100; third year, Level 200. If you don’t know which language/level your child is taking, please contact Cesar Ayala after August 24, who will be able to give you that information.

Because the Follett website can be a little confusing, our Head Librarian, Andrew Parson, also created a Book List that summarizes the books needed for each grade and language class.
Please use this list as a guide to help you organize your purchases, especially if you choose not to use Follett as your textbook source.

Summer Reading:
As I imagine you all know, all Middle School students must complete three books to fulfill Packer’s summer reading requirements. Fifth and eighth grade students choose three books from their book lists, while sixth and seventh graders must read one required text and choose two others from their lists. Students should have received their lists at the end of the school year (and hopefully, completed their reading!). If your child still has some reading to do, the lists can be accessed online on the Blackburne Library’s Homepage and are also linked here:

Fifth and Sixth Grade Summer Book Lists
Seventh and Eighth Grade Summer Book Lists

Permission Slips:
I have linked three permission slips to this letter. The first is a blanket permission slip that will allow your child to participate in homeroom or class field trips throughout the year, the second is a permission slip for our annual Middle School Field Day, and the third is the out-to-lunch permission slip for eighth graders only.

This year, we are continuing with the three updates to our Blanket Permission Slip that I made last fall:

1. In addition to asking your permission for your child to participate in local field trips, it also asks your permission for your child to leave and return to the building between 3:15 and 3:30 PM if he/she is staying after school. Details are found in the letter.
2. In order to help us reach students in case of an emergency, it asks you to provide your child’s cell phone number (if he/she has one). This was enormously helpful in at least two instances last year, and, in the case of an emergency, could prove even more critical.
3. To accomplish #2 in a manageable way, this permission slip (as many others will be over the course of the year) was made as a Google survey. It will allow us to keep this information in a sortable, easily accessible form. This worked really well last year - thank you, to all of you who filled it out!

Please fill out the Blanket Permission slip online and print out and sign the other relevant slips (one for fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, two for eighth grade) and have your child bring them to his/her advisor by Wednesday, September 9.

Blanket Permission Slip
Field Day Permission Slip
Eighth Grade Out-to-Lunch Permission Slip

Health Forms:
In order for your child to begin school in September, you need to provide our nurse’s office with a current health form, signed by your child’s pediatrician. As I’m sure you all know, beginning this year, you must fill out your child’s health information in CareFlow, where you’ll also upload
your child’s form, once filled out by his/her pediatrician. The link to our nursing page on Packer’s website can be found here: Health Form Information

**After School Sports:**
If your child is interested in participating in an after-school sport this fall, please read the [2015 Middle School Athletic Letter](#) from our Athletic Director, Darrin Fallick and take a look at our Athletics Page on the Packer Website. For more specific information about individual team schedules, please see the specific team pages, linked here: Athletic Team Schedules. In general, fifth and sixth grade teams meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and seventh and eighth grade teams meet on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. To participate, please make sure your child can commit to the practice/game schedule, and that he/she attends our Fall Sports Interest Meeting on Thursday, September 10 at 3:30 PM in the Chapel. If you have any questions, contact Darrin Fallick at dfallick@packer.edu.

**Instrument Rental:**
If your child is continuing the study of a musical instrument, you probably already know where/how to rent an instrument for him/her. If you have a fifth grader who is beginning an instrument for the first time, the teachers generally prefer to meet the students, help fit them for an instrument (and perhaps a particular instrument within their chosen family) before committing to a rental/purchase. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to our Instrumental Music Coordinator, Paul Riggio at priggio@packer.edu.

**Important Resources**

**Middle School Student and Family Handbook:**
As always, the Deans and I have taken some time this summer to update our [Middle School Handbook](#), which outlines the Middle School program and the policies, procedures and expectations we have in place for students and families. In addition to a number of small changes to several sections of the handbook, the biggest changes revolve around shifts in grading practices, that we initiated in the 2013-2014 school year.

While it may not be a thrilling read, the Handbook does a very good job of articulating what our hopes are for our students and it is full of valuable information for families - including guidelines for anticipated and unplanned absences, early dismissals, academic and disciplinary issues, etc. Especially if you’re a first-time Middle School parent, I’d encourage you to give it a quick look before school opens and to contact my office if you have any questions. Students will have a chance to go over the handbook in their advising groups once the school year begins.

**Additional Policies:**
Two other policies that are worth looking over at some point this summer include our [Student Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)](#) (also linked above), which governs student technology usage and our [Student Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy](#), which governs student behavior in what can be murky and painful interpersonal situations. While both are written primarily with Upper School students in mind, both are recently adopted (2012 and 2013,
respectively) school-wide policies that set the standards for how we teach students about these issues and how we respond to incidents as they arise.

**Middle School Curriculum Guide:**
Each year, we also make updates to our Middle School Curriculum Guide to ensure that it reflects our current classroom practices. As most courses go through some shifts each year in terms of scope, sequence, content and emphasis, please don’t expect each course to hew exactly to the language in the Guide. However, it does offer a pretty good picture of our academic program and is worth a read over the course of the year, especially if you have questions about course progression, program content or goals.

**Calendar for the Year**
As always, you can expect a busy year, full of events to attend, and many opportunities to participate in the life of the school. I’ve linked an updated Middle School Family Calendar (this is really important, I should have probably linked it higher up in the letter) here to give you a sense of what’s coming up between now and mid-June. While it is fairly comprehensive, it is by no means exhaustive, and it is inevitable that a number of things will change over the course of the year. With that in mind, I encourage you to consult the calendars posted online at www.packer.edu/calendar for periodic updates (which you can actually subscribe to). This year, I’ll try once again to make sure all of the Middle School events have descriptions attached to them on the Packer calendar to help make sure you all know what’s coming up and what to expect. Additionally, please look out for monthly notes from your Parent Association Class Representatives as well as my newsletters, which I try to send out roughly twice a quarter.

**First Week of School (September 9 - 11):**
School begins for all Middle School students with Orientation Day on Wednesday, September 9, followed by two days of a modified schedule on Thursday and Friday, September 10 and 11. During those days, we are building in extra time for advising and for students to meet by grade and by Field Day Teams in order to provide our students with a smooth, supportive and positive transition to the school year. Note, both Thursday and Friday are full days (8:10 AM - 3:15 PM), though our regular schedule (reflected in the seven-day schedule) won’t begin until Tuesday, September 15, following the day off for Rosh Hashanah.

**Wednesday, September 9: Orientation Day**
ALL 5th GRADE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES should plan to attend a welcoming reception in the Garden (the Commons, in case of rain) at 8:30 AM. There will be a light breakfast followed by a brief welcome for students and families in advising groups. After a quick goodbye, parents will gather again for additional orientation information and introductions (location TBD). We should be finished by 9:45 AM. Students will remain with their advising groups until 12:00 PM, when they will join the other students for a picnic lunch in the Garden.

NEW 6th-8th GRADE STUDENTS (as in students NEW to Packer this year) should arrive for orientation at 10:00 AM. They will get their computers, meet their advisors, get familiarized with the building, and get ready for the year ahead. At 12:00 PM, they will join the other students for a picnic lunch in the Garden.
RETURNING 6th-8th GRADE STUDENTS (ALL students who were Middle Schoolers at Packer last year) should arrive to Packer by 12:00 PM for a picnic lunch in the Garden.

ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS will be eating lunch together in the Garden. Please send your child to school with a lunch from home as the cafeteria will not yet be open for students. Directly after lunch in the Garden, the entire Middle School will gather for our first Middle School Chapel. Following Chapel, students will meet in advising groups, where they will receive their schedules, teacher assignments, planbooks and locker assignments. This information is not sent out before school begins.

We will have a normal dismissal on Wednesday at 3:15 PM. In order to ease congestion in the front hall between 3:00 and 3:30 PM, students may not exit the building through the main entrance at 170 Joralemon. During this time, Middle School students must exit the building through the Pratt exit at 160 Joralemon Street (the corner of Clinton and Joralemon) or through the back gate in the Garden. When you make arrangements to meet your children after school, please remember this important information.

Thursday, September 10: First Full Day of Classes
ALL STUDENTS should plan on arriving to Packer by 8:00 AM. Students will start their day at 8:10 AM. Please send your children to school with the supplies that they will need for their first day of classes, including appropriate clothes for gym, etc. Students will have an opportunity to go to all of their classes in a slightly abbreviated schedule.

Friday, September 11: Second Full Day of Classes
ALL STUDENTS should plan on arriving to Packer by 8:00 AM. We’ll follow essentially the same schedule as Thursday, to allow students to visit all their classes, with extra time for advising and for Field Day teams to meet.

Upcoming Events:
In addition to the first week of school, I wanted to highlight a number of events coming up early this fall:

Transition Breakfasts:
Following successful events over the past several years, we will be hosting Transition Breakfasts for sixth, seventh and eighth grade parents during the second week of school. The breakfasts will be held as follows:

8th Grade Transition Breakfast: Tuesday, September 15, 8:00 – 9:00 AM. Grade 8 RSVP
7th Grade Transition Breakfast: Wednesday, September 16, 8:00 – 9:00 AM. Grade 7 RSVP
6th Grade Transition Breakfast: Thursday, September 17, 8:00 – 9:00 AM Grade 6 RSVP

All three breakfasts (really just coffee and pastries) will take place at 8:00 AM (locations TBD). These presentations, hosted by the Head Teacher and Dean for each grade, will provide you an opportunity to meet some key support people for the grade (deans, learning specialists, health teachers, psychologist), to learn about what you can expect over the course of the year and what might feel different from the previous grade. Because we held a formal Introduction to the Middle School for fifth grade families last spring, and are having a brief Fifth Grade Parent
Orientation on September 9, we're not holding a separate transition breakfast the following week.

**Middle School Parents Night:**
Please plan on joining us on Thursday, September 24 at 6:00 PM for *Middle School Parents Night*. It’s an important evening where you’ll meet your children’s advisors and teachers and learn about our Middle School Program. Please plan on being here with us until at least 8:30 PM. We’ll provide coffee and light snacks to keep you going.

**Reception for New Parents:**
If you are a parent new to Packer, I hope you will join us for a *Reception for New Parents* at 6:30 PM on Thursday, October 15. It is an informal gathering for all new families where you’ll have an opportunity to meet other parents, administration and members of the Board of Trustees.

**Class Potlucks:**
Please stay tuned for information from your PA grade representatives about *Parent Class Potlucks*, great opportunities to catch up with friends, meet new parents and to kick off the year. They typically take place in October and November, and I hope to see you all there.

**Middle School Parent Coffees:**
Over the past four years, in conjunction with the Parent Association (PA), we’ve hosted a number of successful *Parent Coffees* on topics of general interest to Middle School families: technology usage, limit-setting, adolescent development, sexuality, drug and alcohol use, etc. This year, please expect at least one each quarter - they tend to be well-attended, well-organized, and useful. If you have particular issues or concerns that you’d like to see addressed in this format, please reach out to your PA class reps.

**Other Announcements**

**Accessing Course Assignments from Home:**
Because Middle School students do not always accurately record their assignments every day, may not always fully report the work they have to do, and can be out from class, teachers are asked to post their assignments online, which can be accessed by students and parents from any computer.

In the hopes of streamlining what can be a confusing, idiosyncratic system, in addition to any particular place where teachers post assignments, this year, I am asking all teachers to post all assignments, assessments, and projects to one central calendar for each grade - the links to which will be sent out once school begins. Because of the number of courses at each grade level, students (and any adults who support them) will need to learn to navigate the grade-wide calendar over the beginning of the school year. While I welcome feedback, please wait until the year is up and running and everyone has had a chance to practice using this new system.

**Parent Association (PA) Representatives:**
It has been a pleasure to work closely with the PA Class Reps over the past number of years and to develop with them a thoughtful, productive structure for information sharing and
communication. I rely heavily on them for a sense of what’s on parents’ minds, for feedback about the work we’re doing in the Middle School, and for making sure all families get the information they need about our program. If you have any questions about Packer, concerns or suggestions you want to raise, or need some help or advice, your PA reps are a great place to start. I meet with the Middle School Reps three or four times over the course of the year and check in with them by email every month before their monthly notes go home. They will be reaching out to you once the school year gets underway.

As soon as I have a final list of the Middle School Reps for the 2015-2016 school year, I will forward them along.

**Fifth Grade Music and Sixth Grade Language:**

Our spring registration always yields somewhat imbalanced classes for music in Grade 5 and language in Grade 6. This year, in Grade 5, there is a lot of interest in woodwinds, and slightly lower than average interest in brass. In Grade 6, interest in Spanish and French is very high, with much lower interest in Latin or Chinese. While we can run our programs with the numbers we have, more balanced sections are better for our students. Fifth grade families, if your child signed up for woodwinds, but would be equally interested in brass, please reach out to me over the next few weeks. Similarly, sixth grade families, if you registered your child for Spanish or French, but would consider switching to Latin or Chinese (where class sizes will be much smaller), please let me know.

**Final Reminders**

A few things that bear repeating each year:

**Before School:**

The building is open to Middle School students beginning at 7:30 AM, when students are able to be in the Commons or the Garden (weather permitting). All students are expected to be at Packer by 8:00 AM, so that they are able to make a locker stop before first period class begins at 8:10 AM. Please make every effort to help your child get to school on time. As students are not allowed to bring food to first period, please also make sure that your children eat breakfast at home, or that they get to Packer before 8:00 AM so they have time to eat before the day begins. Students who are late more than five times in a marking period will be given a detention. Multiple detentions will result in a meeting with their Dean.

**After School:**

As we have for a number of years now, we provide supervision from 3:15 – 6:00 PM for Middle School students who wish or need to stay after school at Packer. Supervision is provided every day, except on designated holidays when the building closes early, or on TALL Tuesdays, when we have very limited staffing available after school. As detailed in the Student and Family Handbook, after school, students not participating in a structured activity (athletics, theater, music lessons, after school classes, etc.) may be in the Garden, the Commons or the Library until 4:30 PM. After that point, students must be in the Library or the Middle School classroom designated as a study hall. Students who wish to leave school to purchase a snack after school
are allowed to leave the building and return between 3:15 and 3:30 PM with permission from their parents. As noted above, between 3:15 and 3:30, all Middle School students must exit the building from the Pratt Exit at 160 Joralemon (the corner of Clinton and Joralemon).

While we do have after school supervision in place, we do not have the same level of coverage that we have during the school day, and therefore our after school staff cannot be responsible for students who are not where they are supposed to be or who are not following our after school guidelines. Students who are not able to follow our after school rules will need to meet with their Dean and may lose their after school privileges.

**After School Classes:**

In addition to our three seasons of after school sports and our two theater productions, there are a number of after school classes offered through Packer Plus, our after school program, that are geared to Middle School students. Please take a look at our after school catalog, published online here: [Packer Plus Classes](#). If you have any questions, please contact our After School Director, Chuck Nwoke, at cnwoke@packer.edu or 718.250.0279.

Sixth grade students who signed up for our After School Math Support class will be contacted once school begins. Classes will be held Mondays and Wednesdays after school from 3:30 - 4:30 PM and will begin on Wednesday, September 16.

**Contacting the School:**

We try very hard to be open, accessible and available to families throughout the school day. Here’s a quick guide to help you reach the right person at Packer (this is my subtle way of communicating that, no matter how much I love to chat, I am not the right person for every question or concern).

For all matters pertaining to attendance (absence, sickness, lateness, early dismissals, doctor’s appointments, etc.), upcoming calendar events, or to get a message (or an instrument or a lunch) to your child during the day, please reach out to Cesar Ayala: cayala@packer.edu or 718.250.0260.

For general concerns or questions, please reach out to your child’s advisor.

For class-specific concerns or questions, please reach out to the specific teacher.

For specific questions concerns about our academic or extracurricular program, please reach out to the appropriate Department Head or coordinator. The six most commonly sought after folks are:

- Arts: Debbie Pressman, dpressman@packer.edu
- Instrumental Music: Paul Riggio, priggio@packer.edu
- Athletics: Darrin Fallick, dfallick@packer.edu
- Math: Amy Hand, ahand@packer.edu
- World Language: Danielle Pappas, dpappas@packer.edu
- Learning Skills: Bill McCarthy, bmccarthy@packer.edu
For specific concerns or questions about your child’s learning, please reach out to one of our learning specialists:

- Roz Grunebaum, rgrunebaum@packer.edu
- Jenny Britt, jbritt@packer.edu
- Kate Gleeson, kgleeson@packer.edu

For concerns, questions or advice about your child’s emotional world, please reach out to our Middle School Psychologist, Josh Srebnick: jsrebnick@packer.edu or 718.250.0215. Please note that Josh is only at Packer on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

For global concerns or questions about your child, or if you need help navigating our system or connecting to the right person here at Packer, please contact your child’s Dean:

- Marisa Mendez, mmendez@packer.edu, 718.250.0387 (Grades 5/6)
- Nitya York, nyork@packer.edu, 718.250.0262 (Grades 7/8)

For anything else, please drop me a note or give me a call.

**Looking Ahead:**

If you haven’t yet submitted current [Medical Forms](#) for your children, please make sure to get this done before the beginning of school. It’s really important (that’s why I’m reminding you again).

I wish for all of you and your families a wonderful last few weeks of summer. I’m looking forward to a terrific year and to seeing you and your children soon. For those of you who are new to the Middle School this year, a very special welcome to you and your families - I hope it’s a great beginning to the next few years.

My very, very best,

Noah Reinhardt
Middle School Head
nreinhardt@packer.edu
718.250.0261