



Katherine Smithwick Swain
Dean of Students

Jason M. Sport
Dean of Students

August 2023

Dear Students,

We hope that you are enjoying your time off to explore, relax, and have fun with family and friends. In about a month, we look forward to seeing you back at school. We also look to welcome 135 new students, a number of new faculty and staff members, and a new Head of School! Please make sure you introduce yourself to any new faces on campus.

This year we want to focus on having an *attitude of gratitude*. We want this to not just be a catchy phrase, but something that reminds us daily to appreciate one another and lead with kindness. We are grateful for each and every member of our community, whether that be faculty, staff, parents, or students. Our contributions shape the culture of the School and can powerfully shape our experiences on this campus. Research by Dr. Robert Emmons, a professor of psychology at the University of California Berkeley, shows how gratitude provides numerous physical and psychological benefits for individuals, but also community benefits. He describes gratitude as a “relationship-strengthening emotion that requires us to see how we have been supported and affirmed by other people.” Our hope is that a focus on gratitude can shape the school year in positive ways and help us appreciate what we do for one another throughout the school year.

We also urge you to look beyond yourselves and the Middlesex “bubble”. Take advantage of the opportunities to learn from those around you. Take interest in your peers and in the broader community. There are a lot of pathways to “find your promise” so be brave and don’t be afraid to try a few different ones.

There are a number of new and exciting changes this year. First off, we will have a new Head of School, Bessie Speers, and her family. We hope you will provide them with a warm Middlesex welcome. After collecting feedback from you, we are launching a new schedule. It will take some time to get used to, but we expect you to feel the benefits of a better paced week immediately. Please read carefully the document titled “[A Guide to the 2023-24 Weekly Schedule](#).” We also have parted ways with Moodle, and we will be using a new sign out system. There will be training for all students during the Opening of School weekend. As always, we would like you to take the time to [read the Handbook](#) with your families. Many of our rules and regulations have remained the same; however, there are a few adjustments that you should be aware of. The main change is that **we will no longer allow motorized bikes, scooters or skateboards on campus**.

We hope you have a great end to your summer. We look forward to welcoming everyone back to campus. Thank you in advance to the senior class who will help us coordinate a fun and energizing orientation with the new students! Please stay safe and well as you enjoy the last few weeks of summer.

Sincerely,

Kathy Smithwick Swain

Sincerely,

Jason M. Sport