

Darienite

News for Darien

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First Day of School: Annual Royle Procession, Principals' Messages to Students, Parents

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Darien's first day of school started Thursday, including the traditional "Parade of Learners" at Royle School.

Also, the principals of Darien High School and Middlesex Middle School gave parents and students a preview of the 2018-2019 school year at their schools.

Here's a look at what Royle's "Parade of Learners" looked like this morning, from the Royle Publicity Committee:

See also:

- [Superintendent: All Darien Schools Ready for First Day, Even Fitch Academy](#) (Aug. 29)

- [Greenwich Assistant Principal Takes Darien Special Ed Teaching Job at Tokeneke School](#) (Aug. 25)
- [Interim Superintendent Announces Guidance Dept Personnel Changes for Grades 6 to 12](#) (Aug. 24)
- [Hindley Principal DJ Collela Goes On Leave — No Reason Given to Parents](#) (Aug. 23)

What's New at the High School and Middle School

At Darien High School

DHS Principal Ellen Dunn has emailed parents of high school students to welcome back students and let families know about some of the changes this year. Here are excerpts:

Staff

Our Assistant Principal Kate Dimoulas is expecting her first child shortly and will be on maternity leave for part of the first semester. Mike Sullivan will be stepping back into this role during her leave while members of our math department will assume his teaching responsibilities in order to make this transition possible and seamless for our school and students.

Cafeteria

Our new cafeteria is open and ready to welcome our school community! The transformation is remarkable and this space will be even more comfortable for our students when the addition is complete this fall. [...]

When completed later this fall, we will have a beautiful space in which our students may work collaboratively and comfortably during the school day and in which they may enjoy their lunch break with friends in a welcoming and relaxing space.

New Safety Measures, Entry Policy

The safety of our students is our highest priority, and we have made several significant changes to increase security at DHS. On Opening Day, students will receive an ID that will serve many purposes. All doors at DHS will be locked; students will have access to the building by swiping their IDs at the [designated] entrances [...]

[S]tudents will be able to enter most doors until school begins at 7:40, and after 7:40, [they] must enter through the main entrance. The doors surrounding the courtyard will be locked during the day but accessible to students with their ID during school hours in order to allow for movement between classes.

Recent articles on student safety:

- [How Darien Police Are Working with Schools in Town to Protect Students](#) (July 30)
- [Darien Police Advice to Teens, Parents on Driving to and from School — Safely](#) (Aug. 21)
- [How to Protect Your Children’s Privacy as They Head Back to School](#) (Aug. 20)
- [Police: Loud Teen Party Results in Host Arrested for Providing Alcohol](#) (Aug. 20)

Students arriving late to school will use their ID to swipe into the attendance system, and these IDs will also be used in the cafeteria to purchase food. The K12 Payment Center information can be accessed on the Darien Public School’s Food Service website [here](#).

Students will also be able to print at our new copiers throughout the building using their IDs.

In addition, we have added security cameras around the campus which are accessed by our administration, campus monitors, and school resource [police] officer.

All visitors will be allowed to enter the building at the main entrance after the campus monitor at the Welcome Center reviews a live video feed and buzzes them in. Once in the Welcome Center, visitors will provide a driver’s license and receive a badge indicating that they are approved for access to the school.

Your continued cooperation with our driving and parking rules is much appreciated.

[T]he cafeteria construction will extend into November. As a result, the cafeteria entrance will not be working as a school entrance for students and will serve as an emergency exit only.

In concert with the construction team, we have arranged delivery and removal of materials so that drop off and pick up times are uninterrupted. If you are dropping off your son or daughter in the morning, please attempt to arrive at school by 7:25 a.m. This will help ensure that the backup in the parking lot is minimized and students get to class on time.

New Attendance Policy

Essential to students’ academic success is regular attendance in school. It is our goal to prepare our students for life beyond DHS and to foster their commitment to their own learning and to the learning of others in their school community.

Being habitually late to class impacts everyone, and we want our students to demonstrate respect for their peers, teachers and school by being on time for the start of the day.

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We require all students who arrive tardy to first period to check in first at the attendance desk in order to receive a tardy slip. Students will swipe into the attendance system with their new IDs, limiting the time spent in line at the attendance desk and allowing them to get to class as soon as possible.

Teachers will send students to the attendance desk if they arrive to a classroom after 7:40 without this slip. Details of the policy can be reviewed by following this [link](#).

We have updated our attendance policy at DHS in concert with state and Board of Education policies. The full policy can be found in the student handbook by following this [link](#).

As credit is earned on a semester basis at DHS, attendance will no longer be quantified by quarter but will accumulate on a semester basis. The antiquated 20 percent rule will no longer be in place.

Any students absent in excess of 10 days during a semester, other than school related absences such as field trips or other school sponsored absences, will lose credit for the semester.

New to the policy is an appeals process in which students may, at the end of each semester, appeal the loss of credit to an Attendance Appeals Committee that will allow students to present extenuating circumstances.

The Committee will consider appeals and provide approved students options for credit recovery.

For Grade 9 Students: iPads on Sept 13

Our IT Department and DHS Technology Committee have been hard at work preparing for phase 2 of the 1:1 iPad initiative. Our ninth grade students will receive their devices on Sept. 13.

At the Middle School

Middlesex Middle School Principal Shelley Somers recently emailed school parents and discussed this year's changes, along with reminders about ongoing policies. Some excerpts from her email:

Commitment Policy

There has been a change to Board Policy 5250. It now states that conduct on and off campus that violates the Darien Code of Conduct can impact a student's participation in extracurricular activities, K-12. Both students and parents need to read and sign off on this policy in Aspen.

Guidance Change

Meghan Emanuelson, a DHS counselor, has been appointed as the Interim Director of Guidance, 6-12. Ms. Emanuelson earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Florida and a master's degree in School Counseling from Fairfield University.

More news for parents of middle school students:

- [Interim Superintendent Announces Guidance Dept Personnel Changes for Grades 6 to 12](#) (Aug. 24)
- [Registration Starts for Cops and Kids Adventures Program — Deadline is Sept 7](#) (Aug. 27)
- [Darien Arts Center's New Middle School Theater Program Now Accepting Students](#) (Aug. 27)
- [Kids of Ages 8 to 15 Invited to Audition for 'Broadway Beat' Variety Show](#) (Aug. 28)

She earned her 6th year in Educational Leadership from Sacred Heart University. Marc Power, our Middlesex counselor, has been appointed to replace Ms. Emanuelson, on an interim basis, as school counselor at DHS. We wish Marc the best of luck in his new position.

New Staff

Please join me in welcoming new additions to MMS:

Guidance

- Rachael Sandler
- Emily Berezecky

Grade 6

- Kevin Jarboe: Reading
- Colby Blake: Writing
- Penelope Papanikolaou: Science

Grade 7

- Andrew Turriago: English
- Maura Elias: Science
- Mary Abrantes: Science

Grade 8

- Tanya Kaplan: Math
- Kelly Baker: Science

Special Areas

- Brenda McGee: Art
- Brandon Babbin; Band

Special Education

- Katlin Tyrol
- Brittani Nuccio
- Megan Bergeron
- Bethany Reade

Author Wendy Mass to Visit MMS

To celebrate reading and kickoff the school year, Wendy Mass, the *New York Times* bestselling author of twenty-four novels for young people, will be coming to MMS to work with our students.

Seventh graders will attend an assembly to celebrate their summer reading of Wendy's book, *Every Soul a Star*, but students in all grades can participate by purchasing an autographed book.

In addition, two students from each team, all grade levels, will be selected to participate in a writing workshop.

We are working with Barrett Bookstore to order the books: Please see the attached order form. A special thanks to the MPA for supporting this exciting opportunity. [Wendy Mass Book Ordering.pdf](#)