

School Starts Monday, Aug. 31, High School Freshmen Start Friday

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Darien High School freshmen will have an orientation day on **Friday**, Aug. 28, and the school district says it will be ready for all the rest the town's students when they return to classes on **Monday**, Aug. 31.

After the first five days of school, the Labor Day weekend starts, meaning schools will be closed the following Monday (Sept. 7). Darien schools will also be closed for Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah (Monday, Sept. 14) and Yom Kippur (Wednesday, Sept. 23), according to [the school district calendar](#).

When and where

The district ([and Darienite.com](#)) has published the school bus routes with schedules, and Web pages for the schools have information for students and parents.

Opening and closing times for each school have also been published on the [Darien Public Schools website](#):

- Tokeneke, Hindley, Royle — 8:25 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.

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- Ox Ridge and Holmes — 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Middlesex Middle School — 7:55 a.m. to 2:22 p.m.
- Darien High School — 7:40 a.m. to 2:20 p.m.

Mailings to parents from school principals will contain information on the schedule for opening day and other details.

Monday orientation for kindergarteners and their parents

From the Darien Public Schools [website](#):

"A special one hour kindergarten visit has been scheduled for the first day of school, Monday, August 31st. Parents should plan to provide transportation and participate in the orientation with their children.

"The schedule varies by school and parents will receive written notification from their school principals. Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 1, kindergarteners will be in school for the full day and dismissal will occur at the same time as that of students in Grades 1 through 5.

"Other specific information regarding dismissal of students, e.g. students being picked up at the end of the day, will be sent to parents in mailings from school principals."

Friday orientation for Darien High School freshmen and new students

On Friday, Aug. 28, freshmen and new students at Darien High School will have [an orientation day](#) from 9 a.m. to about 1 p.m. (when parents can pick up their children).

Students and parents are asked to arrive well before a 9 a.m. program in the school auditorium. Parents are invited to seats in the balcony, with students on the main level. On arrival, students get a name tag.

There will be a parent orientation meeting in the lower level of the auditorium at about 9:45 a.m. Darienite.com has been refused permission by high school Principal Ellen Dunn to attend either the student orientation or the parent orientation.

For high school upperclassmen

Dunn posted a message to upperclassmen [on her blog](#). Here's most of it:

"Be sure to look for your schedule in Aspen [a website available for Darien Public Schools students, parents and staff] on Aug. 27, and print it out for our first day on Monday, Aug. 31. As a reminder, we won't have a Homeroom first thing on Monday (that's why you need to print your schedule) but you can view your new homeroom location on Aspen. More on our exciting new Homeroom format soon. See you on Monday, if not before!"

Construction of new fields at the high school

Artificial turf has been laid down for an athletic field in the "Oval" at Darien High School, and the field is ready for play, although work on other fields will be continuing during the initial weeks of the school year. The project is financed by the Darien Athletic Foundation.

"Ball stops" (netting supported by poles) should be up to help keep balls from getting past the fence around the area still being constructed. If a ball does get through, it's forbidden for anyone other than authorized construction personnel to get into the construction site to get it, new Superintendent of Schools Daniel Brenner said.

If anyone from a town sports team goes over the fence, it will result in that team being denied future access to the fields, he said. Daily construction work is expected to stop by the time the sports fields are in use.

The Darien Athletic Foundation, which is paying for this and other projects, [could use some donations](#).

School security

In what's a standard process after the 2012 Newtown school shooting incident, Darien police do school security assessments before the start of school, with school liaison officers for each school in town (including the private Pear Tree Point School), reviewing security matters and walking through the building and campus.

If police find problems with security, Police Chief Duane Lovello recently told the Police Commission, "Mike Lynch, the facilities director with the Board of Ed, has been very responsive in addressing those quickly, as they come along."

Food safety

At the tail end of the last school year (in May and June) Darien Health Department inspectors examined each school cafeteria, looking for the same kinds of state health code violations as they do with other food-serving establishments in town. They gave every school a rating of "good" in the town rating system (the highest rating) and each one received either perfect or close to perfect in the state ratings system.

Construction on the streets: Tokeneke School, beware

The Police Commission, acting in its role as the Legal Traffic Authority, has pushed various agencies to avoid road closures and lane closures on local roads when schools are in session, so work at the Camp Avenue railroad crossing was due to be complete this week, and work near the intersection of Leroy and

West avenues was done earlier.

Near Tokeneke School, however, there is expected to be a major sewer installation project along Locust Hill Road between Old Kings Highway South and Old Farm Road in upcoming weeks and months. Tokeneke School is across Old Farm Road from Locust Hill Road ([this map](#) shows the streets in the area; ignore the location "pin" — a peculiarity of Google Maps).

The new sewer will be connected to the sewer along Tokeneke Road, so at some point expect construction work on that street, as well as on Old Farm Road, in the short stretch (right in front of the school) between Locust Hill Road and Tokeneke Road.

The Police Commission reluctantly approved the project, expected to take nine weeks and which is expected to close parts of Locust Hill Road to traffic (other than traffic from residents there) at some times. The project is not expected to begin immediately and would provide sewer service for several houses in a new subdivision, as well as other residents in the area.

September dates to remember for Darien High School students

According to the Darien High School [calendar](#):

There will be no school on Labor Day, Sept. 7, then school pictures will be taken for three days; then a freshmen/sophomore dance on Friday, Sept. 11; there will be days off for the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah (Monday, Sept. 14) and Yom Kippur (Wednesday, Sept. 23).