

HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

A National Blue Ribbon School • A California Gold Ribbon School
2019 California School to Watch

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August 5, 2019

Greetings Hall Parents,

We are incredibly excited to welcome your children back onto campus on Wednesday, August 21 at 8:15 am for the first day of a new school year! The purpose of this message is to provide you with critical information and key dates to help prepare your student and family for the start of school, as well as share the foundational ideas and practices of our school culture. Please carefully review this information to ensure a successful beginning to 2019/20!

OUR CULTURE and VALUES:

Cougar Code & Student Expectations

We believe that students learn and grow best in a safe, supportive and caring environment that provides each student the unique opportunity to express themselves within appropriate limits. We create this environment as an entire community, where we **all** strive to model and live by shared values and norms.

Our **Cougar Code** (shown here) is the foundation for our culture of learning, collaboration and mutual respect. Our [Top Student Conduct Expectations](#) document serves to clarify *how* we enact the values stated in the Cougar Code. We ask every student to review and sign this document with their parents the first week of school. For more information about student conduct and the consequences for not meeting these expectations, please review our [Progressive Discipline Chart](#) and our [Student Handbook](#) on the Hall website.



Student Support at Hall

Student connectedness is at the heart of Hall Middle, where **"We Are One."** We want to be sure you are aware of the many ways we support adolescent development academically, emotionally and socially. In addition to our Administrative team, we continue to serve our Hall community with a full time Counselor on staff, Ms. Julie Auslander. Together as a team, we work to deliver Wellness programming, Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Education, Healthy Relationships, and Mindfulness to our student body. We look to be your partner in your child's healthy development and to offer a safe environment in which all students develop healthy coping skills to learn, grow, and make positive connections and contributions.

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Key Back to School Dates

- August 16 - Student Schedules Released via Alma, after 4:00 pm
- August 20 - 6th Grade & New Student WEB Orientation, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, Hall Gym
- August 20 - "Cougar Prep Day", 1:00 - 3:00 pm, Hall Gym
- August 21 - Day One of School, 8:15 am - **All students report to Hall Gym** (parents welcome)
- August 23 - PTA/SPARK Welcome Coffee, 8:15 am, Hall Gym
- **August 29 - Back to School Night, 6:00 - 8:30 pm**
- August 30 - Early Dismissal, 1:30 pm
- September 2 - Labor Day, No School
- September 11 - Parent Volunteer Orientation (The Cove School), 8:30 - 9:30am
- September 13 - Picture Day
- October 4 - Hall PTA Walkathon

Please refer to the Hall Website [here](#) for more information and the full calendar.

Learning, Feedback and Grading at Hall

Middle school is a time of tremendous growth and change: intellectual, physical, emotional and social. Our central goal as a staff is to help every child develop greater self-awareness, confidence, sensitivity, resilience, curiosity and interpersonal skills. We do this by providing timely and nuanced feedback on key academic and social/emotional skills that we know are critical for success in school and life. Along with Redwood High feeder schools Del Mar Middle and Ross School, we report on students' level of proficiency on specific standards using a growth scale: Emerging, Approaching, Proficient. Additionally, we will no longer use points, percentages and A-F grades to measure or report on student learning. Please take a few minutes to watch [this video](#) from Principal Saibel explaining Hall's multi-year journey to transform how we give feedback on learning at Hall. You can learn more about our grading program with [this FAQ](#) as well.

Student Schedules

We are sure everyone is eager to see their class schedules for the 2019-20 school year. Student schedules will be available via our Student Information System, Alma, on the evening of **Friday, August 16** to all students/parents who have:

1. Updated Student Information via [Blupods](#) (Emergency Contact and Medical Information)
2. Proof of TDAP Immunization (7th graders and NEW 8th graders only)

Schedule change requests will be accepted on a limited basis to those who complete the [Schedule Change Request Form](#) within the first week of school. Students who have mistakes in their schedules (e.g. missing classes, classes with the wrong grade level, etc.) will be given immediate priority. We will do our best to reply within 2 business days, but we may not get back to you until after school starts. There is no guarantee that requests can be met. Teacher requests are discouraged and will not be considered until all other schedule requests have been addressed. Please do not contact the school office unless your child is missing a class and/or you have not received a response within 3 business days. All schedule-related questions can be sent to hallsecretary@lcmsschools.org. *No walk-in appointments with the Principal or Assistant Principal will be available the first two weeks of school.*

Student Information System - Alma

Our Student Information System ("SIS") is called Alma. Alma is the repository for student demographic, emergency and academic information. It is also the vehicle for generating report cards and compliance reports to the state. Alma provides students and parents online access to view their student schedules, grades and report cards. All students and parents will have their own Alma accounts. **It is important that you login into Alma and check your child's progress regularly.** You will get an invitation to access Alma shortly if you don't already have one. Note: your username

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will be provided in the email (usually firstname.lastname) and you will create your own password. *Please remember that you must complete your Student Information update prior to accessing your child's schedule (see "Student Information Update" below).*

Student Information Update

Safety is paramount in the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District. We rely on parents to provide annual updates of contact information for their students. To ensure that we have accurate emergency contact information for your children, you should complete this annual update for each child. You should have received a request from the district via email and [BluPods](#) titled "Larkspur-Corte Madera School District Mandatory Student Information Update" within the past two weeks. Given that we will use BluPods across a number of needs (digital signatures, field trips, invitations to school and classroom events), we recommend that you download the app from the app store or use your computer to complete the form. If you prefer to proceed via email, please also check in your "spam" folder, as it is occasionally blocked by email providers. If you cannot download the app or if do not have online access please contact your school office.

Note: All address changes require two [proofs of residency](#) and MUST be processed in person at your school office. Please complete the [Proof of Residency Form](#) and turn it in with your paperwork.

School Supplies

Be prepared for the first day of school! Find the teacher requested school supply lists here and on our website, and purchase the requested supplies before the start of school:

- [6th Grade School Supply List](#)
- [7th Grade School Supply List](#)
- [8th Grade School Supply List](#)

6th Grade / New Student WEB Orientation

The WEB ("Where Everyone Belongs") 6th grade and new student orientation and transition program is designed to both welcome and support new students by assigning them an 8th grade WEB Leader as a mentor during this first year. The kickoff event is the Orientation on Tuesday, August 20, from 9am - 12pm, with ongoing activities throughout the year. This WEB Leader is a responsible 8th grader who was hand-selected from a large pool of applicants and has met the qualifications of being a good role model and a positive leader on our campus.

Here is the WEB Orientation schedule:

- **8th Grade WEB Leader Training** - Monday, August 19, 9:00am - 12:00pm Hall Library
- **6th Grade / New Student Orientation** - Tuesday, August 20, 9:00am - 12:00pm in the Gym. Your child will participate in activities with their WEB leaders and get a tour of the school. This event is for students only, so please plan to drop off your child. NOTE: WEB leaders need to arrive by 8:00am on 8/20 to help with set up.

Cougar Prep Day

We hold our "Cougar Prep Day" to help students and families prepare for school. On **Tuesday, August 20, from 1:00-3:00 pm**, staff and volunteers will be available in the Gym to assist students and parents with the following (bring your checkbook!):

- Lockers
- Bus passes
- PE Uniforms (T&B)

HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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First Day of School

The first day of school is **Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at 8:15 am**. “Day One” will be very different from a normal day of school; all students will report directly to the Gym for a Cougar Community Gathering to begin our year of learning and growing. We welcome all parents on campus to join us for this event, which will include welcoming remarks from Hall administration and student leaders, introduction of new staff and a talk by a special guest speaker.

LUNCH on Day One: We are excited to have our fourth annual all-school Day One barbecue lunch, courtesy of our amazing PTA. This is at no charge to the students.

[Here is the schedule](#) for the first week of school; each class meets twice and grade levels will have gatherings each day dedicated to building community and orienting students to the new school year.

Bell Schedule

School starts at 8:15 am and ends at 3:12 pm every day, except Wednesday, which starts at 8:15 am and ends at 2:12 pm. [Here](#) is the bell schedule for the 2019/20 school year.

Campus Map

As you may know, we have some new teachers! The updated campus map will be available on the [Hall website](#) prior to the start of school.

Student Lockers

There are lockers available to Hall students in the 600 building and 300 building corridors. The lockers in the 600 building are larger and must be shared with a classmate of choice. Classrooms will have backpack storage carts, and students will be able to keep their materials in the classroom. We recommend that students NOT leave valuables in backpacks outside of classrooms. Please store valuables, such as phones and wallets, in lockers. Students may request a locker at the “Cougar Prep Day” on Tuesday, August 20, from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the Gym, or before or after school in the office once school starts. Lockers will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Locks will be distributed at the time of request. Students may not use their own locks.

Bus Passes

The Marin Transit Route 117 serves Hall Students. Discounted youth passes will be available for purchase at the Hall Office during “Cougar Prep Day” on Tuesday, August 20, from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the Gym. Passes will be available in the school office thereafter. More bus information is available [here](#). Please contact the Hall Secretary with any questions.

Physical Education (PE) Uniforms

Students must wear uniforms for physical education (PE) classes. Parents are encouraged to purchase Hall uniforms. However, if you do not want to purchase a Hall uniform, students may wear plain light grey T-shirts and long (knee length) navy blue shorts. We do not allow shorts with pockets, hoodies or shirts/shorts with emblems, symbols or other insignia - solid grey shirts and navy shorts only. Hall PE sweatshirts and sweatpants are also available for sale through T&B. We will write the student’s name across the chest and thigh of those dedicated items.

There will be a uniform sale on Tuesday, August 20, from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the Gym. Prices are \$12.50 for T-shirts and \$12.50 for shorts. Cash and checks accepted only.

After those first few days, all new orders will need to be purchased through T&B Sports in San Rafael, our uniform supplier. Additional information and ordering instructions will be provided in the Hall Bulletin.

HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Cell phones

Students are not permitted to use cell phones at any time during the school day. Cell phones should be off and stored securely in backpacks or lockers until school is out. We recommend that students do NOT leave valuables in backpacks outside of classrooms. Any cell phones found in hand, in pockets, or ringing/beeping in class will be confiscated by school staff and held in the office. Consequences for cell phone violations are listed on the [Progressive Discipline Chart](#).

School Attendance

Consistent school attendance is vital to student success and school funding. *We strongly encourage you to schedule all appointments and vacations outside of school hours.* If your child is absent or late for any reason, please contact us by 8:30 a.m. on the morning of the absence in one of the following ways: email hallabsentee@lcmchs.org, call (415) 927-6956 or select "Contact Us" (category "Absentee Reporting") on the LMCSD App. Students who need to leave school early must bring a signed and dated note from a parent to the office before school on the day they are leaving early. The student will receive an "Early Dismissal Slip" to give to their teacher during the period they are to be released. For more information about attendance, tardies, early dismissal and Independent Study, see the Hall website [here](#).

Dress Guidelines

Extremes in dress and grooming are not appropriate, especially if they distract from our primary purpose of learning. Students are expected to dress in a neat and appropriate manner, according to Hall's [Dress Guidelines](#). Consequences for dress violations are listed on the [Progressive Discipline Chart](#).

Hot Lunch

- **Hot Lunch:** The District has contracted with TheLunchMaster to provide a full service lunch program. Parents/guardians will need to register an account for each student, and then must order lunches for each day at least 24 hours in advance. Menus are available online for ordering up to four weeks in advance. We have limited emergency lunches for students who forget to order or bring a lunch, so we cannot guarantee a lunch to those students. For more information, see the Hall website [here](#).
- **National School Lunch Program (Free/Reduced Lunch):** If you would like to apply for Free/Reduced Lunch status through the National School Lunch (NSL) program, please go to the Larkspur Corte Madera School District Office at 230 Doherty Drive and complete an application. Even if you qualified for Free/Reduced Lunch status last school year, you will still need to complete a new application to see if you qualify for free/reduced lunch this school year. For more information and to apply for free/reduced lunch, please [Apply for NSL Here](#).

Tips On Packing Zero Waste Lunches

LCMSD is committed to green practices - a team effort shared by students, staff and parents! [Here are](#) some useful tips from Zero Waste Marin on packing zero waste lunches for your child.

Be A Part of Hall – Join the Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Over the years, the Hall PTA has provided vital funds for classroom supplies, field trips, speakers, assemblies and upgraded playground equipment. The PTA has also helped make school beautification, Chalk Festivals and Career Days possible. Those funds come from parents, grandparents and neighbors like you. Please join the Hall PTA today, by one of the following methods:

- **Online:** [Click "Join"](#) and pay via PayPal.

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- **At the school office:** Make your check payable to Hall PTA (\$30 Family, \$15 Teacher/Staff) and give it to one of the Hall office administrative assistants.
- **By mail:** Send your check to Hal Middle School, [200 Doherty Drive, Larkspur, CA 94939](https://www.google.com/maps/place/200+Doherty+Drive,+Larkspur,+CA+94939). Please be sure to write "Hall PTA Membership" in the notes section of your check!

Hall PTA-SPARK Welcome Coffee, Friday, August 23: Please join us by the Gym entrance after morning drop off at 8:15 am. Meet the Principals, learn what's happening at Hall, sign up to volunteer, and connect with other parents.

School Site Council

Our School Site Council (SSC) is a representative body made up of staff, students and parents whose purpose is to support our continual improvement by gathering feedback and data on student learning, school culture, climate and safety. We have four parent seats on our SSC, which meets once every six weeks. If you are interested in being a candidate for the SSC, please fill out [this interest form](#). If we have more candidates than available seats we will hold a community election. The form is due by August 31.

Parent Volunteers

All parents that are interested in volunteering at Hall this school year should attend the required Parent Volunteer Orientation. The orientation will take place Wednesday, September 11, 8:30 am - 9:30 am, at The Cove School. All visitors to the school must check-in at the office prior to entering campus.

New Staff Members

We are thrilled to welcome the following new staff members to our team. We will feature their bios in upcoming weekly newsletters. We are also excited to welcome back Ms. Katherine Tobes (Math) after a year-long leave, as well as Ms. Jennifer Fry (Art) and Ms. Gigi Davis (PE) from maternity leaves:

- Samantha Nickel - Chorus
- Julia McKee - Studio Art
- Michael Song (as a part of his new role as Teacher on Special Assignment) - Game Design

We look forward to an amazing year of learning and growing for all of our students and for continued partnership with our parent community.

Sincerely,

Eric Saibel, Principal
Dr. Toni Brown, Assistant Principal
Karmela Cleary, Administrative Assistant
Simone Davis, Administrative Assistant

