

Wayland Academy

2011 - 2012

Parent Handbook

Wayland's satisfied parents:

1. Are well informed and well read on school handbooks, guides, etc., and always ask questions, clearly communicate reasonable expectations to the Academy, and seek better understanding of the educational process through conversations with mentors, teachers, and administrators.

2. Can reason through difficulties because they know that education, like life, involves problems, have realistic aspirations for their student, and a clear understanding of the impact of external accreditation standards on Wayland's programs.

3. Can visualize their student on Commencement day and on his or her first day in college. They seek to resolve problems that their student encounters on the way to graduation through constructive and positive means.

4. Realize that the extra cost of Wayland means a stronger, more solid educational foundation for their children - a leg up on life. They see and applaud the many enhancements that Wayland consistently provides in their student's education.

5. Are able to see and understand the big picture - the whole person approach that Wayland takes - imparting knowledge and developing character. They appreciate that rules and policies are a means to the end result of developing a Wayland graduate.

6. Consider the relationship with Wayland as a team effort. They know that Wayland has been successful in preparing students for top-tier colleges and universities for 156 years. They recognize that each student's journey is a collaboration with faculty and administrators. They trust the Wayland program, listen to faculty and administrators, and offer constructive advice concerning the Academy's programs.

Important Dates:

**Registration** - Saturday, August 20, 2011.

**New Students Orientation** - Sunday, August 21, 2011.

**Semester 1 First Day of Classes** - Monday, August 22, 2011.

**Class Activities** - To Be Announced.

**Fall Family Weekend** - September 16-18, 2011.

**Fall Long Weekend\*** - Wednesday, October 26 – October 30, 2011.

**Thanksgiving vacation\*\*** - Friday, November 18 – November 27, 2011.

**Semester 1 Assessment Period\*\*\*** Thursday, December 15 and Friday, December 16, 2011. Students are NOT allowed to leave campus for the break until 3:45 PM on December 16.

**Semester 1 break** – 3:45 PM, Friday, December 16, 2011.

**Students return to campus** – by 7:00 PM, Sunday, January 8, 2012.

**Semester 2 First Day of Classes** - Monday, January 9, 2012.

**Spring Break\*** - Saturday, March 3, 2012.

**Students return to campus** – by 7:00 PM on Sunday, March 25, 2012.

**Spring Family Weekend** - April 20-22, 2012.

**Commencement for the Class of 2012** - Sunday, May 20, 2012.

**End of the school for the classes of 2015, 2014, and 2013\*\*\*\*** - Friday, May 25, 2012. Students are NOT allowed to leave campus for the break until 3:45 PM on May 25.

**PLAN , PSAT, SAT, and ACT tests** –

October 1, 2011 - SAT I and SAT II

October 12, 2011 – PSAT, PLAN (Required of all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.)

October 22, 2011 – ACT

November 5, 2011 - SAT I and SAT II

December 3, 2011 - SAT I and SAT II

December 10, 2011 ACT

January 28, 2012 - SAT I and SAT II

February 11, 2012 – ACT

March 10, 2012 – SAT (Not given at Wayland.)

April 14, 2012 – ACT

May 5, 2012 - SAT I and SAT II

May 7 – 18, 2012 – AP Exam Period

During the school year, dates for events can and will change for many reasons. Please check with your child's Mentor, the Dean of Students, the Academic Dean, or the Wayland web page for updates.

\* There are short classes this day. TRAVEL MAY NOT BE ARRANGED UNTIL THE AFTERNOON.

\*\* Students may leave for Thanksgiving break after 3:30 PM on Friday or on Saturday morning. Students will not be permitted to leave early for this break.

\*\*\* The first semester ends at 3:45 PM on December 16. Students may not leave campus until that time. Do not schedule train or airplane tickets that would require a campus departure prior to 3:45 PM. Students will receive incomplete grades for any class that they have not completed due to an early departure. The Academy will provide no transportation before 3:45 PM on December 16. Flights from Madison should be scheduled for Saturday, December 17.

\*\*\*\* The second semester ends at 3:45 PM on May 25. Students may not leave campus until that time. Do not schedule train or airplane tickets that would require a campus departure prior to 3:45 PM. Students will receive incomplete grades for any class that they have not completed due to an early departure. The Academy will provide no transportation before 3:45 PM on May 25. Flights from Madison should be scheduled for Saturday, May 26.

## I. Introduction

### Why Boarding School?

“...the heart of the boarding school promise is that some adult will become involved in the life of each child, will come to care about the child’s growth and development, and that caring will make a difference in the child’s education.”<sup>1</sup>

The motivation behind a book such as this is to address common issues and concerns that former parents and students have raised over the years. For that reason, this handbook is an evolving, dynamic project. If there is something missing or something you would like addressed, please contact the Dean of Students.

When you first became a parent, perhaps you sought out literature in an attempt to prepare for your new responsibility. Sometimes reading such books causes bafflement and concern as you are advised of the many trials and tribulations ahead. This handbook is filled with similar material but focused on adolescence, a time that is arguably more trying, perplexing, and rewarding than early childhood. While this handbook is filled with information that may not apply to your child, we have attempted to prepare you for any foreseeable occurrence.

While you have had many years of experience in being a parent, entrusting your child to a boarding school is most likely a new experience; Therefore, we hope this handbook better prepares you for the unique education both you and your child will experience.

## II. Summer and Fall

### PREPARING FOR THE BIG DAY

Is your child nervous, excited, apprehensive, or angry about attending boarding school? Perhaps one or all of these may fit your child’s mood at any given moment. What can you do to prepare your child’s attitude for this challenging experience? Attitudes begin at home. For example, take the following two parents who both wish for their child a good experience but are parents who have used two completely different approaches.

Parent A: “Its probably our fault that Johnny hasn’t done well, but maybe boarding school will fix the problem, and we’ll do what we can to make it up to him.”

Parent B: “Boarding school will provide Mary with a great experience both academically and socially, giving her great preparation for college and for living away from home.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Healthy Choices, Healthy Schools* “Connecting with Kids: Boarding Schools Rather than boarding schools”, Bill Poirot and Dusty Richard.

While children do not always share their parents' views, it is our experience that those who are offered opportunities will be at a significant advantage over those who are offered apologies. For this reason, it helps to clarify with your child the rationale for attending boarding school.

## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BOARDING LIFE

As you prepare yourself and your child for the big day, it may help to examine the checklist we have prepared below. Although this is not an all-encompassing list, it covers the major advantages and disadvantages of living in a boarding school community.

### Advantages:

1. An opportunity to experience a total education second to none.
2. An opportunity to live and work in a safe and secure community with clearly defined goals.
3. A chance to become far more independent, responsible, and self sufficient than most adolescents.
4. A chance to forge deep and lasting friendships that result from living and working in the same community.
5. A chance to grow up with adults who are committed to helping inside and outside the classroom.
6. An opportunity to receive thorough, one-on-one guidance in the selection of college or university.
7. Exposure to a talented and diverse student body including different ethnic, racial, and socio-economical students and international students.

### Disadvantages:

1. Missing home.
2. Missing home-cooked food.
3. Less privacy.
4. Leaving special friends.
5. Living with rules that seem to apply to other students but not to you.

## THE RULES

Your family functions according to a set of rules and expectations. At Wayland we must also have rules which guide and shape behavior. Wayland's rules seek to guide rather than restrict and to educate rather than to punish. It is impossible, of course, to sit down with each student and write rules specific to him or her. Take the following example:

Maria is a 17 year old who has a perfect driving record, doesn't have a curfew, and plays loud music in her room while studying. Maria arrives at Wayland only to find out that she is not allowed to have a car, must be in the resident hall at 10:00 P.M., and

that playing loud music during study hours is not allowed. While she may act responsibly without these rules, her friend Jane, an impulsive 17 year old, loves to test the limits and needs rules and consequences to function effectively. Both Maria and Jane must understand that rules cannot be tailored to the individual in a boarding school community, and they should remember this before getting upset or insulted by such rules.

It is our experience that parents expect the Academy to establish rules and be the consistent enforcers of guidelines for responsible behavior. It is very important that both you and your child discuss the rules prior to making the commitment to enroll at Wayland. Your child needs to know that you have agreed that the school will enforce the rules. Discussion of rules during the summer may avoid frustration and anger in the fall.

### I'LL CALL MOM AND DAD

Your child needs to understand that the rules are in place to protect and enhance the educational environment of the Wayland community. The student who feels that Mom and Dad may be able to change the rules will be disappointed. Once the student is aware that the rules are the rules, it becomes easier to accept and follow the school standards.

### INDIVIDUAL VERSUS COMMUNITY

The student used to living in a family often finds it difficult to understand his place in a larger community. His actions invariably affect everybody in the community. For example, a student who does not clean his room causes his roommate concerns. The stereo blaring at 7:30 P.M. or at 12:00 A.M. will initiate a quick and immediate response from resident hall supervisors. A twenty minute shower when three other students are waiting will be seen as selfish. The student who learns to place others' needs above his own learns a valuable lesson about leadership and life.

### FOOD

Mom, what's for dinner? For the boarding student those four words will disappear from his vocabulary until vacation time. While menus in the dining hall feature great variety, and Wayland's food service gets very high marks from the community, a student accustomed to food prepared to individual specifications will find eating in the dining hall different. However, when the phone call comes (and it will come) take heart. Your child will not starve at Wayland and certainly does not need an increase in allowance to eat off campus. There are always choices of entrees and desserts at each meal, while soup, sandwiches, and an extensive salad bar are also available.

### ACADEMIC DAY IS OVER

This is a time when a whole new teaching and learning experience begins. While students may often complain about their lives being structured, at Wayland the afternoon and evening activities are seen as just as important as the academic program. Students may feel that this structure is an invasion of their time. After all, at home most had "free

time.” The student who understands that the parent has given (and the school has accepted) a greater responsibility for his overall education will be far more likely to immerse himself in school activities. It is a truism that a busy boarding student is a happier boarding student by far.

## WHAT TO BRING

Under this category we stress that you use caution. Your child will not have the luxury of a single room and therefore must plan accordingly. Rooms can get very crowded if both roommates choose to bring all of their favorite possessions with them. Use common sense when planning what to bring. Don't forget decorations and music, including favorite posters, bedspread, etc. A suggested list of items can be found in the back of this handbook. If you have questions, call the Dean of Students for advice.

Please check the Student Handbook for the dress code. Feel free to call the Dean of Students if you have questions regarding dress. Pack for the season while adding some warmer or cooler clothes depending on the time of year.

## MAIL

Smart parents send the first letter timed to get to the student on the first day of class. Keep the mail pouring in and alert family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters) to do so likewise. Your child will greatly appreciate your attention and know he or she is loved and not forgotten.

## I NEED MONEY!

We would suggest an allowance between \$20 and \$30 a week for movies, snacks, laundry, etc. Please inform the Bookstore of the maximum amount your child may withdraw in any one week. It will be necessary however, to discuss with your child how the money is to be spent. If Amy thinks that her allowance is for strictly recreation or snacks but is told to use it to buy toothpaste and do the laundry, conflicts can occur. Discussion with us and with your child can avoid confusion over the money issue.

## HEALTH CENTER

The Health Center is operated by the Beaver Dam Community Hospital and is staffed by two nurses. The nurses keep medical records for each child and provide or arrange for medical attention should it be needed during the year. The nurses also dispense medications. All medication, including those over the counter, **MUST** be registered with the Health Center. Please return the completed health forms for your child prior to registration in the fall. Students will not be permitted to participate in athletics without up-to-date and complete health forms on file at Wayland.

### III. Registration and Beyond

#### I'M HERE

You've arrived at Wayland full of conflicting emotions. Students and teachers are enthusiastically greeting other students and parents, and as you wander through the hustle and bustle you may ask yourself, "Have I done the right thing?"

The key people to meet who will help reassure you in this area are the President, Academic Dean, Dean of Students, your child's Head Resident, and Mentor. These people will be the pivotal figures in your child's life, and it will be important to meet with as many of these individuals as possible, so you feel you have a personal contact. It is far easier to communicate via the telephone or mail if you have met the person you are talking to.

#### TIME FOR PARENTS TO LEAVE

You will be anxious to insure that your child moves in and gets settled. We advise that following the orientation meeting with the administration you say your farewells expeditiously and let your child begin the process of assimilation into the Wayland community. You also will have a transition to get through and the ride home may not be easy. Now is not the time to second guess your decision. Be upbeat from now on no matter how difficult this may be. Continue to be supportive of your child's future.

#### ADJUSTMENT

1. Overwork the mailman and under utilize the telephone. Letters, newspaper articles, and care packages from home go a long way to brighten up a student's day.
2. "Help me!" Don't confuse this plea for a major crisis. Settling in will take time, and there will be bumps along the way. If your child calls with this cry for help, he most likely just wants reassurance that the home front is still there.
3. Welcome your child home. Upon coming home for breaks, plan a family celebration or provide a small gift to mark the occasion.
4. One comment that many students make is that parents call and begin the conversation with "How are your grades?" While not at all an unreasonable question, your child may feel a little defensive. Your child's mentor is far better equipped to provide a realistic overview of progress and would be the better person to ask early on. Regardless of whatever the topic of conversation is, ALWAYS end on a positive note.

#### GRADES

We feel that it is very important that parents understand how their student is progressing in classes and other activities on campus. Each mentor will communicate grades to the parents every other week by phone, letter, or email.

Quarter grades and semester grades will be delivered online through NetClassroom. You will receive complete instructions for accessing report cards using NetClassroom in September.

#### IV. Fall to Thanksgiving

##### MENTORING

The Mentor System at Wayland is intended to assist and encourage Wayland students to become responsible persons and students: motivated, thinking, caring, and independent individuals. Mentors are the primary link to Wayland for students and parents. Mentors will keep parents advised of students' progress with periodic written reports. Parents should feel free to contact the mentor at anytime, and mentors will establish contact with parents at least once every two weeks.

##### STRUCTURE

After the initial flurry of activity and excitement of a new school year, your child may suddenly and painfully realize that she is away from home, bed, friends, etc. This is a normal reaction and may surface following a poor grade or a violation of a school rule. Typically new students ride the crest of a wave during the first month of the academic year and have no time to think of routine or mundane things. As this wave subsides however, and our routine is perceived as difficult, restrictive, or boring, students will move into the next phase of the school year.

##### TESTING

Most children test the limits and it is usually during the early Fall that these forays into the "how far can I go" will occur. Whether for excitement or some other reason, your child may challenge the rules. At this time the phone call home may be unsettling as your child realizes the consequences of his actions. Don't be surprised if the content of these phone calls is usually magnified by a factor of three or four. A minor disagreement with a roommate could sound like a major fight, or a disagreement with a teacher could result in the comment, "None of the teachers care!" Our advice is to listen patiently but try to avoid forming an opinion on the matter until you discover all the facts. Now is the perfect time for a phone call to the mentor. He or she will be able to give you valuable insight into the situation and suggest ways of resolving problems. If you have serious concerns, please call the Dean of Students or the Academic Dean.

##### THE "COME AND GET ME" CALL

"The food is terrible. Everybody hates me. The rules are unfair. There is no privacy. I hate everybody. The nurse says I'm not sick. Please come and get me now, please!"

Wow! What would you do? The first thing you should do is **STAY CALM**. Listen for the real reason your child is calling you. Perhaps she is preparing you for bad

news, asking you not to be angry or perhaps she just wants to vent about a frustrating day. Either way, the next phone call you receive may be full of wonderful, upbeat news. The challenge for you is to learn to read these phone calls and take them at face value. After you get off the phone, call the Head Resident, Mentor, or Dean of Students to find out what the real situation is. The boarding staff is a group of experienced professionals who can quickly distinguish emotional moments from significant problems. If you have any concerns or worries, or your child just hasn't called home in a while, please contact the Head Resident or mentor to talk over some of your concerns.

The key to success is to listen. Be caring but make no hasty decisions or promises. If your child calls home and believes that you may come and get her, she will usually make the worst of the situation to ensure your prompt arrival. However, if you make it clear that she will finish the year, it usually results in a dramatic change of attitude.

### SAMPLE TELEPHONE CALLS

Phone calls home may exhibit some common themes. We have listed several of the most common below. If you are aware of them in advance you may be better able to deal with them during the school year.

Food - As stated before, eating in the dining hall cannot compare with home-cooked meals, but there are always plenty of choices. Chef Richard is always accommodating and willing to listen to any student's suggestions about the menu. He always does his best to see that the menu is full of variety each day so that each student has a chance to enjoy some of their personal favorite meals, and he makes sure that each meal offers healthy choices. No one ever needs to go hungry.

Rules - While the rules are designed to educate rather than punish, invariably they are unpopular as students see them as restrictive. Rules designed for community living leave little or no room for individualized application. We have found that students really want clearly defined rules and consistent application of expectations; nevertheless, at some time you will probably get a phone call berating the rules or the way a rule was enforced.

Teachers don't care - Boarding school teachers have committed their lives to the young people in their charge. This commitment often means 18 hour days and this suggests the care residential staff have for your child. Students are sometimes annoyed that the resident hall supervisor is not amused at the failure to have lights out at the appointed time. It is not that the teacher does not care; indeed, our teachers see our students' health and safety as paramount. It is the job of our teachers to instill good work habits as well as consideration for others.

Student body - Dealing with change in the life of an adolescent is never an easy task. Being away from home and living with new people can make the process even more difficult. Your child will meet students from many different states and countries. Making new friends can be difficult, but with time strong bonds steadily develop. The

staff and senior students quickly assist students who appear to be having difficulty making friends. Wayland Academy has a strong reputation as a caring school.

Location - Beaver Dam, Wisconsin certainly cannot be compared to cities such as Chicago or New York. Adjustment to a small town in the Midwest takes time for some students. In comparison to some boarding schools that are miles from the nearest town, Beaver Dam begins to look ideal.

Those bad kids - In a boarding school nothing remains a secret very long, and - due to the nature of residential living - students become aware of what other students are doing for fun on a Friday or Saturday night. In any school, the behavior of students will vary from good-natured activities to activities that are not considered appropriate by the school. At boarding school, your child will be aware of this activity and may possibly call home to tell you "horror stories" about "the bad kids." What you should know is that Wayland faculty and staff are very aggressive and proactive in confronting behavior, which is detrimental to the student and school.

Facilities - Like food, living conditions are rarely going to measure up to your home. But this comparison is fair only if your child compares the living conditions at school to comparable boarding schools. We believe that Wayland measures up.

Roommate - While the Head Resident attempts to match up students, sometimes it appears that roommates were just not meant for each other. Before changing roommates; however, every attempt is made to work out and solve differences causing friction. Our Head Residents realize that what might be causing a problem today may well disappear two days from now; therefore, we are not hasty in making such moves. Before starting the complicated and involved process (made even more difficult by telephone extensions that need to be transferred) of moving students, a thorough process involving conflict resolution is attempted. Although some students may believe that the school is "dragging its feet," experience has taught us this is the prudent way to operate. If a decision is made to change roommates, you will be included in the decision. For example, an international student's parents may not want their child to leave an English speaking roommate because they want their child to learn more English. In this case, they may not approve of the room change and further discussion results.

Theft - Unfortunately some pilferage and "borrowing" of personal articles is inevitable. However, a common sense approach can avoid problems. Do not allow your child to bring unnecessary valuables to school. Expensive watches and jewelry or precious family keepsakes should remain at home. Clearly mark all personal property and clothing and caution your child against leaving large sums of money in the room. The Head Residents advise students to take money out of the bank in small sums and only as they need to use it. On weekends, the resident hall supervisor can hold money that is used for trips.

## DISCIPLINE

There are two things to keep in mind if you receive a telephone call from your child or the school related to a disciplinary situation:

1) Students new to boarding school may test the limits. Experience has shown us that the child who tests the limits at home will certainly continue this behavior at school. A family meeting with the Dean of Students may be a necessary part of settling in for your child after he has violated the rules.

2) It may appear to Mom and Dad that the school has overreacted on a penalty or that their child was treated unfairly. Certainly the student may have an interest in promoting this interpretation. It is difficult to understand, out of context, the seriousness of certain behavior. What could be a minor incident at home may be major when nearly two hundred other teenagers might be tempted to try it. Punishments are geared to how a behavior impacts the well being of the community. Often this approach may be hard to understand from the outside looking in. It is imperative however, that the parents support the school on matters of discipline if their student is to continue enrollment.

In the event that the school's discipline system is undermined by parents' agreeing with their child that the penalty is unfair, it will be very difficult for the child to finish the year. Before a situation gets to this stage, the parent who feels that the school may have reacted too harshly should immediately contact the Dean of Students before drawing conclusions. The Dean of Students will be able to explain the facts of the rule violation and the consequences of the behavior. It is important to understand that the school must be consistent in the enforcement of school policy. Parents have entrusted their child to the school's care and now must continue to trust that the school is acting in the child's best interest. The parent who actively criticizes school policy has perhaps forgotten the reasons for sending a child to boarding school in the first place. In addition, this criticism unwittingly undermines the child's growth towards responsible adult life.

## THE FIRST DISMISSAL

Unfortunately some students will not only test the rules, they will repeatedly defy them. This may result in a student's dismissal and your child may be upset by the loss of a friend. Typically, students will want to rally to the support of the dismissed student. You might hear things such as: "They always picked on him.", "This place is too strict.", or "Two other students did the same thing and they are still here." It is difficult to gauge reaction to a traumatic incident and among some students there will be a sense of shock, loss, and for some, the fear that "It could happen to me." We recommend that you be understanding with your child but again realize that the school is acting in the best interests of the entire community. Normalcy usually returns within a week or so of the dismissal. If you are concerned that your child is still upset, please call the mentor or the Dean of Students about the situation.

## THE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Parents should familiarize themselves with the current edition of the Student Handbook. It is the guide by which your child will live, and although it is explained in its entirety when students first arrive, please take some time with your child over the summer to review the Parent edition of the Student Handbook that you received. As with the legal system of the United States, ignorance is no excuse. Parents who send their child to Wayland Academy know that these are the rules that their child will live by. By enrolling their student, they have agreed to help uphold these rules.

### VI. Boarding School Classics

The issues central to your child's life will generally center on certain predictable themes. If you hear them in advance or have already heard them, the following comments may help you field questions or at least keep questions in perspective.

**Food** is always an issue raised by boarding school students. The food is bound to be different from home due to the nature of different tastes and different ways of preparing meals. It is a compliment to you that your cooking cannot be replaced. A suggestion box is located in the dining hall for students' comments and nutritional information will be available for all meals. The dining hall staff wants to hear from students and parents and welcomes suggestions regarding the food service.

**Rules** are rarely popular with students as they are restrictive. In a community such as Wayland, rules are less popular as there is little room for individualized treatment. As a result, each individual will at times feel there is a cause for complaint regarding a rule or the way a rule was not enforced.

**Insufficient free time** is a complaint given often by students. Boarding school is a very structured environment and during the week it is rare for students to have more than 45 minutes unplanned during the day.

Adolescents often include the complaint about not having enough time while on the same list also complain "there is nothing to do." Every day at Wayland, students are required to participate in the afternoon athletic or activities program. Weekends offer the student a broad selection of on campus and off campus activities as well as day and overnight trips. It is true that some weekends are more exciting than others, but individual tastes and a willingness to search out or plan an activity is key to adolescent development. The activity program's effectiveness also depends upon the willingness of the students to sign up for an activity even if their friends are not interested. The Student Government has a key role in proposing and implementing activities. If you have any comments or suggestions for the activity program, please contact the Director of Student Activities.

**Roommates** are just not meant for each other sometimes, despite the best effort of the Head Resident. Before a final conclusion is drawn, students will be given the

opportunity to work out their differences. Part of the maturational process at boarding school is learning to live with others and making an honest attempt to do so before giving up. What one may consider being an insurmountable problem between roommates may well be solved by the end of the week.

It is also true that whenever a roommate change is made the effect is felt by more than just two people. If for example, Tom wants to move out of Derek's room and move in with Peter, where does Peter's current roommate move and what happens if a short time later, Tom and Peter have a falling out?

Roommate changes are not made quickly and the Head Resident will investigate the reason for the roommate change; however, if parents feel that a severe compatibility problem is developing they should contact the Head Resident, Mentor, or Dean of Students.

**The holiday roller coaster**, which is a change in the social climate, results as we conclude the first semester. As Thanksgiving and Christmas vacation loom, there is often an emotional experience as students now realize that the group of people who were strangers in September are now "the family" with whom they talk about vacation plans. There is the closeness of having conquered the trials of homesickness, and school rules, and having passed a particularly difficult test.

It is important to note how your child feels about boarding school. Is there a sign that they have established relationships and have settled in? If not, it may be time to contact the school. Remember however, that students and newspapers have one thing in common: they are more likely to report the bad things as news while glossing over the good things.

**The first vacation** home from boarding school can be difficult in many ways. While Mom and Dad hover anxiously trying to see how Paul has changed, Paul may be ready to just relax and not talk about school. Chances are that Paul will want to sleep more, see his friends, and eat non-stop. If this occurs, don't be alarmed. Paul needs time to re-acclimate himself to home and settle in. The child you left at boarding school in August is now used to being an independent thinker. What may seem like standoffishness, may in fact be a matter of establishing the new, more mature Paul. This is entirely normal so do not be alarmed by this "new" young adult.

**Grade reports** of the official first semester will be available online shortly after your child arrives home and this is always a time of anticipation, excitement, or disappointment. Anytime a child changes schools, grades most likely will reflect the change. This is particularly true of boarding school as the change from the home environment will take a great deal of their time and energy. Making friends, learning social rights and wrongs, and establishing "who I am" will often leave little time for the academic program. This is a common phenomenon and not unexpected for boarding school teachers. It can come as a shock to Mom and Dad. "Jennifer has always been an A/B student and now she is in the C range." The worried parent often presents the following possible reasons:

1. Jennifer is too irresponsible to be at boarding school.

2. The new school is academically tougher than Jennifer's former school.
3. Jennifer is not getting the attention she needs.

Jennifer may have the following reasons:

1. My teachers don't care.
2. I hate living with my roommate.
3. Mrs. Smith just doesn't like me.
4. There is nothing to do on the weekends.

While the above may contain some elements of truth, be aware that a single factor explanation or generalizations should be listened to but not readily accepted. Listen and attempt to read between the lines. What, if anything, seems to be troubling your child? Rather than focusing on the letter grades, read the teacher comments, as they will often give you a much better insight into the student's progress and performance. Fortunately our experience has been that second semester grades generally reflect a much greater comfort level and show marked improvement.

**Back to school** is a time where you may want to review your child's feelings about school. Be prepared as you might hear, "Boarding school is not all that it is cracked up to be." or "I know what I have to do to get my grades up. Can I come home now?" While heart wrenching and difficult, this is the time to reaffirm the commitment to the process that you began in August. At this time it might also be useful to drop a line to or call the Academic Dean, the Dean of Students, and your child's mentor with any insights, hints, tips, and concerns that may have resulted from vacation. The people in charge of your child's care will gain valuable information and any information will be warmly received.

## **VI. What to bring (Reprise)**

Too often students want to bring all of their worldly possessions with them to campus. There is an element of comfort and familiarity with having your favorite things around you. Unfortunately, living in a room with one other person (who also had the idea of bringing everything along!) makes for close quarters. We are not advocating a stark decorating scheme but limits have to be set. For health and safety reasons, as well as just good order, please supervise closely what your student brings to campus. If necessary, the resident hall personnel will ask you to take items home after dropping off your son or daughter.

The following lists may be helpful when the "What to bring?" conversation happens.

The Essentials:

Pillow	Desk Lamp	Pens/Pencils
Paper	Notebooks	Dictionary
Alarm Clock	Shampoo	Deodorant
Pencil Sharpener	Kleenex	Conditioner

Calculator  
Razors  
Comforter

Toothpaste  
Shaving Cream  
Sheets (2 sets)

Toothbrush  
Brush/Comb  
Tylenol

Highly Recommended:

Extension Cord  
Microwave-safe bowl  
Bathroom bag

Hair dryer  
Mug  
Tacks

Posters  
Lock box  
Sports equipment

The Finishing Touch:

Computer/Laptop  
Power strip (computer)

Bicycle  
Speakers (small)

MP3/CD player

07/11/11