



To: Class of 2021 and Parents
From: Freddy Carley, Odyssey Coordinator
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This Fall your child will go on the 9th grade Odyssey Trip, a “rite of passage” that has been a part of the Seattle Academy curriculum for more than twenty years. This trip is one of the tangible ways we prepare students for college and life, and it is often a defining moment for the 9th graders. In fact, over the years, many graduating seniors and alums cite this trip as one of the most important moments for them as individuals and as a class.

The Odyssey Trip serves several purposes for the 9th grade class. Most importantly, the trip helps students build relationships (both with other students and with faculty) and preview the journey through the upper school that they are embarking upon. In the humanities classes, the English curriculum will focus on stories about the human journey, beginning the year with discussions of *The Odyssey*. Through exercises in critical thinking, students examine the concept of the human journey in history and literature as well as the concept of the individual’s journey in life. This trip serves as an excellent means to experience an extension of the curriculum, as the 9th graders set off on their own “odyssey” on the Olympic Peninsula. In addition to the literature, the experiences from the trip serve as a means for students to engage in critical thinking about both their own individual experiences as well as the group’s experiences. Around the campfire, in class discussions, and in writing assignments, we analyze the ways in which the high school experience is like an odyssey. As a result of this trip, we have seen positive shifts in class dynamics and individual relationships, and this trip often builds upon the student’s sense of confidence and independence.

This year, the dates for the **Odyssey Trip are September 18 – September 20**. All 9th graders are expected to participate in this important experience; therefore, please mark your calendars. Additionally, it is important that **you return the Odyssey Trip permission form (attached) by September 1**. In order for this trip to be successful, we have always relied on the generosity of families who offer backpacking stoves, tents and backpacks for use by their own children and members of their respective groups during the trip. If you have backpacking gear, please consider lending your gear to your child’s group. Your leaders will be reaching out at the end of the summer to ask if you have gear you can lend.

The list of necessary gear is enclosed for your review. We hope by getting you this list early, you can begin to gather these items over the summer. The items on the equipment list are ones we consider necessary, not optional. As much as possible, we will try to help you obtain the equipment through inexpensive means. We ask that you try to borrow as much of this gear as you can. Many of the items can be rented from REI, including backpacks and sleeping bags. Additionally, the school has a limited number of backpacks and sleeping bags to loan. Often we can also network amongst leaders and other students to borrow gear. Please contact me with any questions about the gear list or about the availability of items to borrow. Your group leader will also be available to help with these gear needs.

This year, Odyssey groups will be the same as Advisory groups. Advisories are groups of ten students that are assigned to one advisor who helps students navigate through their freshman year and through the rest of high school. Each advisor will be one of the two leaders for each Odyssey group. Advisories will get finalized this summer, and you and your child can expect an email in August from their Advisor introducing them and giving you more details about this trip.

Important Dates:

- **Friday, September 1: Permission form due**

- **Wednesday, September 6: deadline to notify your group leaders of gear needs (sleeping bags, backpacks, sleeping pads).**

- **Monday, September 11: Parent Info Meeting and Mandatory Gear check for all students and parents 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

- **Wednesday-Friday, September 18 - 20: The Odyssey Trip**
 - **Depart September 18: between 6:30 AM and 8:00 AM depending on your group's location. You will get a specific time before the trip.**
 - **Return September 20: between 3:30 and 5:30 PM to the Temple Lot**

We look forward to working with the 9th grade class on this adventure. The trip is a great way for the class to continue defining itself and for individuals to navigate their high school odyssey.

Best regards,
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