

Student Council 2018-2019

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From left to right: Ainsley Ramsey, Bailey Jordan, Maddy Francis, Sam Colt-Simonds.

A Short Introduction

If you've received this guide you've made the decision to become part of our school, and since you're new, you might be feeling a little anxious right now. Don't worry! With around 200 students, we're like a big family. It's common for seventh graders to ask upperclassmen for help with an assignment or for seniors to watch seventh graders perform in the Greek Drama Festival. Our community is based on trust and respect, and we try to focus on one rule: "Know where you are." Student Council officers wrote this booklet to answer some of the questions you may have, a sort of student survival guide. We divided our book into five sections:

- Student Life
- The School Day
- Academics
- After School
- Spare Parts

Remember, your time at FA is what you make of it, so take advantage, stay busy, ask questions, and enjoy your years here!

But first, time for some fun facts about our school!

- FA was founded in 1977.
- The school was originally located in the basement of the Woodbriar Inn in Falmouth.
- Then the school moved to Otis Air Force Base.
- Some faculty members can still tell stories about teaching in Woodbriar and at Otis.
- Finally, in 1989, FA moved to its current campus.
- Lots of people pitched in to make that happen. Students, parents, and faculty built lockers, did landscaping, and generally helped a lot.
- The school is on 34 acres, some of it woods.
- We're pretty proud of our wind turbine and photovoltaic system!
- We've kept working on the campus, adding a new gym, library, science labs, computer lab, a playing field, and art rooms.
- Before the new gym, the school used to have an all-purpose room we called the "Cafegymtorium." Yup, we did everything there.
- In 2015, the school opened its new Meeting Hall. We named it "Morse Hall" after Susan Morse, a trustee and great friend of the school.
- This summer we opened the Simon Center for the Arts, which has a new performance space, music classroom, tech rooms, and green room. This will be the first year students really get to use it!

Student Life

We might be a small school, but we have lots of traditions. Some to look forward to include Marconi Beach Day, when we all go to the beach to build sand sculptures, and Spirit Week, when we compete as grades for points by dressing up and participating in fun contests. At the end of the year, the whole school participates in a huge game of capture the flag. There are a lot of traditions just for Middle School too, like the Greek Drama Festival and Declamation Day. And we're always trying to add new ones. Any ideas? Be sure you tell Student Council!

Student Council—If you want to help make some of the decisions around school, you should think about running for a position on Student Council. The whole group, which meets once a week, is made up of four upper-class officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer), the Honor Society president, and the president and vice president of grades 7-12. In addition to electing representatives, each class elects a treasurer to handle the class funds. Mrs. Clark serves as faculty advisor to Student Council. Student Council organizes a wide range of activities, such as Gala, a fundraiser for a charity chosen by Student Council, and tailgates, where Student Council sells food at sporting events. Student Council also participates in conversations about issues that affect the culture of our community, such as how we can strike a reasonable balance with technology at school.

Class Meetings—If you are on Student Council, you'll have a chance to run class meetings, held, when needed, during one of the breaks during the day. During these meetings, your class advisor sits in while your grade talks about pressing issues, or not-so-pressing issues. Discussions might focus on selling blocks, class dances or trips or Spirit Week ideas. They are also good times to bring up topics you want Student Council to discuss further. (Of course, you can talk to any Student Council officer about anything throughout the year.)

Honor Society—This is another group that works for the good of the school and the greater community. To become a member of the National Honor Society, you need to maintain a B+ average. You must also demonstrate leadership qualities, good citizenship, eagerness to provide service to the community, and strong character.

Dress Code— In general, be neat and presentable. Keep in mind our one rule: know where you are. You're at a place of work.

Specifically, no student may wear athletic wear such as warm-ups, leggings, or sweatpants. Hats and sunglasses should not be worn indoors. Jeans must be neat and may not have any rips, holes, or patches. Students may wear a sweatshirt in cooler weather, but only if it has the name of a college or Falmouth Academy written on it. Sweatshirts of college sports teams are not acceptable. Students may not have any underwear visible. Shoes must be worn at all times in the building. Earbuds may not be worn during school except in a classroom with the explicit permission of a teacher.

Neat pants or jeans are acceptable. Shorts are allowed in September and May. Boys must wear a shirt with a collar or a college/FA sweatshirt and must wear a shirt with buttons when wearing shorts. Skirts and shorts must fall below the fingertips when arms are placed at the sides. Shirts should be appropriate and not reveal midriff, be too low-cut, or reveal underwear. T-shirts, both long- and short-sleeved, are not allowed.

If you're in doubt about a piece of clothing, it's probably not appropriate for school. On field trips to places such as museums or the theater, students should dress up rather than down. Students in violation of the Dress Code will not be allowed to attend classes until they are properly dressed. They will be asked to change clothes or to have appropriate clothes brought from home. (Revised June 2018)

Technology—We're glad you're here, and we really want you to interact with us, not your screens. Finding the right balance can be tricky, so faculty and students created guidelines about appropriate use of electronic devices. (Again, see The Student and Family Handbook for specifics.) Helpful tip: keep your phone stashed in your backpack so you're not tempted to use it during the day. Of course, for academic work, the school has computers available in the computer room and the library, or you can use a laptop and Wi-Fi. (Don't worry. Not every student owns a laptop!) At the beginning of the year, everyone is given an account for the school's network. You create a password and then may save documents on your account, which can be really handy.

Lockers—For many students, the locker area is one of the best parts of our school. Lockers were built by students, parents, and faculty. Our lockers have no doors because we trust each other enough to leave them open. Each locker, shared by two students, has space for bags, coats, lunches, and books. If you have something you are worried about leaving in your locker, you can always tuck it in Mr. Earley's office for safekeeping, but in general it's a good idea to leave valuables at home. To keep confusion down to a minimum, put your name on the outside of all your books, binders, and pencil boxes, and in your clothing. And back to that trust idea—don't borrow someone else's stuff without asking, okay?

Honor Code—We put a copy of this on the last page of this guide because we want you to be able to refer to it easily. Students wrote the Honor Code so that the FA community could rely on a system of trust. We want things like open lockers to work, and we all have an obligation to make them possible. Teachers often say that at FA we don't have lots of rules, only expectations. We have found that anyone who respects the school and the members of the community doesn't have to worry about specific rules.

Of course, part of acting honorably involves not bullying. Keeping Falmouth Academy a safe, trusting, and accepting place is really important to us, so bullying is not tolerated at Falmouth Academy in any form—physical, spoken, written, or cyber. Remember, you're part of the FA family, and there are a lot of people you can talk to—teachers, advisors, Student Council big siblings, peer ambassadors—if you need help with this.

The School Day

We have seven periods each day. When you look at your schedule, you might notice that one of these things is not like the others. Fourth Period is a double period, when you'll have a science lab, an extended study hall, or an elective. Which brings us to...

Electives—Most electives meet once a week during Fourth Period. When you pick your courses, you may choose from a long list of electives such as photography, music ensemble, drama, painting, volunteering, Latin, and more. We take at least one elective each year, in addition to our academic courses, but really, you'll want to take more, not just because the subjects are interesting. Electives can also be a great way to relax and get to know older and younger students. Sometimes seniors even lead a course. Past senior-taught electives have included creative writing, flag football, Italian, crafting, and strategic games. Start thinking about an elective you might want to teach!

Study Halls—When you're not in a class or elective, you're in a study hall. You'll usually have one, occasionally two, study halls a day. Use them! They're gold. Sure, you might need to spend a few minutes spacing out or doodling, but recognize that study halls are great times to get an early start on homework, go to the computer room, or read a book or newspaper in the library. You might also be able to meet with a teacher or advisor during a study, or sometimes work with friends. Older students can be really good at helping younger students during studies if you need help.

Breaks—Seven periods a day means things can feel pretty busy. Never fear! Falmouth Academy has two breaks a day, and during one of these, we gather together in Morse Hall for "All-School Meeting." This is a lot of people's favorite time of the day because we get to see everyone face-to-face, eat a snack, and find out what's going on. Classes often sell some sort of food, students announce birthdays and drama productions and sports scores, and groups perform skits. Sometimes festive and funny, sometimes serious, All-School Meeting really helps us shape the culture of the school and remind ourselves who we are and what we care about.

The second break of the day is for lunch. During this time, you can pick up pre-purchased meals four days a week in Morse Hall. (Some of us really love the mac and cheese....) Mrs. Campbell will announce how to order the food ahead of time. On Fridays, Student Council sells pizza. (Since this isn't pre-ordered, it's a good idea to bring other lunch on Fridays too in case we run out.)

What is that? A yogurt container on the ground? Responsibility is a key word at FA, and in this spirit, we pick up after ourselves, particularly at the end of each break. But no one's perfect. For sweeping crumbs and picking up what is left behind (accidentally!) by students, each week a six-student team, chosen by the vice president of Student Council, stays behind after All-School Meeting to quickly clean up. Sometimes we take pictures of Team Work Crew because they're so awesome.

But really, Work Crew should have almost nothing to do, right? Particularly since we recycle. Loving and protecting the environment are simply part of the culture of the school. (We've even had composting contests in the past.) When All-School Meeting and lunch are over, we sort the remainder of our food into the recycling and compost bins. Even if you feel like you're holding up the line, take the time to do this. People will help you figure out which bin is which.

Academics

The teachers who founded Falmouth Academy in 1977 believed that a good education is personal and requires a shared intellectual experience. Still following this philosophy, we all take English, math, science, history, and a foreign language. This means, for instance, that you and your classmates will all be reading the same books in English, and that when the eighth graders start talking about *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the locker area, the eleventh graders nearby might chime in because they also have read it. Everyone can join the conversation.

Grades—The school year is divided into three trimesters. Halfway through each trimester, you'll receive a progress report from each of your teachers, and at the end of each trimester, you'll receive a report card. There are some basic differences between progress reports and report cards: for progress reports, teachers write helpful comments about how you're doing, while for grades, teachers give you letters and numbers for achievement and effort. Electives teachers also give you grades. These reports shouldn't be anything to stress about. You will, though, have to show your parents your progress reports and reports cards. Have them sign the envelope before you return it to your advisor.

Head of School's List—If you end up earning at least three A's or A-'s on your trimester report card and nothing lower than a B- for the other two subjects, you will be honored by our head of school, Mr. Wells, by being named to his Head of School's List, and you'll receive a certificate.

Academic Probation—If, on the other hand, you earn two grades below a C- in a trimester, you'll be put on academic probation, and your academic advisor will help you come up with a strategy to get back on track. Don't panic. People at FA really want to help you succeed.

Final Exams—At the end of the year, you'll take two-hour final exams. Don't worry! Here are some tips:

- Make a schedule of study time. Include break times to get a snack, doodle, or whatever else might help you relax.
- Set aside a folder specifically for exam-related materials. Teachers will help you review.
- Grab friends to study with. They can be very helpful and enlightening, or at least keep you laughing.
- Buses run on a modified schedule during exam week, so you'll probably get to sleep in a little.

- And remember, if you pay attention throughout the year, you'll be surprised how quickly the material comes back to you.

After School

At the end of the school day, students have several options. You might decide to play on a team, audition for a play, help drama tech build sets for the next performance, or sign up for after-school photo. The library is open until 4:30, and on some afternoons the computer room is too. Sometimes students arrange meetings with teachers for after school to discuss classwork. The Sports Center up the hill from FA offers further opportunities to be physically active, and sometimes a few students join and work out there before the 4:40 buses leave. Generally, the more involved you are with school groups after school, the happier you'll be.

Sports—Practices are held after school until around 4:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday for Middle School and Monday-Friday for Upper School. Thus, FA buses don't leave until 4:40 p.m., except on Fridays, when they leave right after classes. FA offers three sports for all students to play:

- Fall = Soccer
- Winter = Basketball
- Spring = Lacrosse

Our teams play in the Cape and Islands League and compete against a wide array of local schools, both public and private. FA's teams have been quite successful, but, more importantly, they have a lot of fun and include any student who wants to be involved. There really is no division between "jocks" and non-athletes at our school, and sometimes a middle-schooler might practice and play with upper-schoolers. We encourage everyone to join a team or attend home games.

Drama—Another really good option after school is to try out for the fall and spring plays, or to volunteer for the behind-the-scenes work. Auditions are open to all students. Seventh, eighth and ninth grader students can also audition for the middle school play, which takes place during the winter. Past FA plays have included *Treasure Island*, *The Tempest*, and *Almost Maine*. Everyone in the community comes together for these productions. Students are actors, tech crew, ushers, and audience members, alongside supportive faculty, parents, and friends.

Spare Parts

Missing Items—A lost and found, mostly of forgotten clothing, is tucked into an alcove in the locker area. Small or expensive items are often placed at the reception desk near the front entrance of the

school. If you're missing something, the best person to talk to is your class advisor, who can help you look. Resist the urge to make a "missing" announcement at All-School Meeting and put your name in all of your belongings!

Messages—Anyone needing to contact a student in an emergency should call the office. Please make routine arrangements with your parents before school. (Alert your parents that you might not be able to respond to a text or call until the end of the school day.)

Absences—If you are sick, first of all, get some rest. But also, please remember to have a parent call the office. Otherwise, they might call your house.

Tardiness—So what was it this time? The bus driver drove off with your homework? Be sure to sign in at the front desk of the school when you arrive. Sneaking in a side entrance won't work—you're already on a late list....

Early Departure—If you are sick or have to leave before the day is over, you'll need a note or a phone call from your parents to the reception desk. Remember to sign out at the front desk.

Make-up Work—If you miss classes, it is your responsibility to make up the missed work and have it ready when you return. Of course, you should always feel free to get in touch with your teacher if you need to come up with another plan. Remember, teachers don't mind being called at home. They actually like to know what's going on ahead of time. It can be very helpful to have a "homework buddy," a friend on whom you can depend to get any homework you missed, but you can also call any classmate or the teacher for assignments.

Senior Privileges—By senior year, students have really proven their responsibility and the class can apply for extra privileges. In the past these have included access to a senior patio, use of the locker area during study halls, and eventually the freedom to leave campus during Fourth Period. Seniors are the only ones allowed to leave campus during the school day without a teacher, and even they need parental permission.

Dances—We hold three to four dances during the school year, each one organized by a different group. They are held on Fridays from 7:00 to 9:30, and most often cost \$5. Many times there is a song request list posted the week before the dances, so feel free to jot down your favorite song. All students are welcome. If you would like to bring a friend who doesn't go to FA to the dance, just make sure you sign him or her up with Mr. Earley during the week prior to the dance. (He'll remind us.) We ask that students limit their guests to one each.

Snow Days—We post cancellations, delays, or other weather-related cancellations on the school website and on Facebook. You can also find out about cancellations on the TV and radio.

HELP!—We all need a little help sometimes. So after you’ve done a little therapeutic screaming, if that doesn’t work, there’s always a teacher or fellow student available to talk about your problems. That’s how most of FA’s support occurs—through informal chats. The school also has a counselor, Ms. DiFalco, who is a licensed mental health counselor and is available to help with any problems.

FA pairs each student with an advisor, who is a faculty member, as well. Your advisor is your go-to person, there to talk to you about grades, courses, problems, and questions, and to offer moral support.

Each grade also has a class advisor, who works with your entire grade to run class meetings, plan trips, and deal with grade-wide issues that might arise.

You can also turn to a peer ambassador for advice during the year. And if you are a new seventh-grader, you will have “big siblings.” Assigned by Student Council, big siblings will guide you around on Orientation Day, helping you to feel comfortable right away and then be there for you throughout the rest of the year.

If you need homework help, try calling a classmate. If you can’t find help there, our teachers are happy to help over the phone. A directory with all FA student and teacher phone numbers is handed out at the beginning of the year. Be polite and call before 9:00 p.m. Some teachers don’t mind communicating by email, but it’s best to check first. Of course, if you are working on your homework during a study hall or after school and need extra help, check the faculty room to see if the teacher is around—just remember to knock! You can also look up the teacher schedules in the Admission Office, the Main Office upstairs, or behind Ms. Santamauro and Ms. Reuter’s desk in the library.

College Counseling—Ms. Manchester is FA’s college counselor and works with Mrs. Taylor, who helps coach students on essay writing. They will meet with you, no matter what grade you are in, (even tenth-graders can set up appointments) to explain the application process, including PSAT’s, SAT’s, and SAT II’s. They’re full of really good advice, and will help you stay sane during the whole process!

Further Advice—Organization, organization, organization! We can’t stress enough how important it is to manage your time and materials. Everyone gets a planbook at the beginning of the year, which is the greatest tool ever, if you put it to use. (We’ve even heard of alumni coming back to buy planbooks for college!) Be happily busy, but be honest with yourself and find a system you can stick to. It’s normal for students to fall into little slumps during the year. Ask for help when you need it.

Closing

Well, we’ve probably forgotten a few things, but if you’ve learned anything useful about FA, we have succeeded. Everyone is willing to help you, so please ask questions. FA is a community that likes

conversation! Overall, though, we wrote this guide because we love FA, and we want you to enjoy our school as much as we do.

Falmouth Academy Honor Code

As a student of Falmouth Academy, I have a responsibility to myself and to my peers to ensure that the school remains a creative, productive environment for social and intellectual growth. Our community is based on honesty and trust rather than simply a rulebook, encouraging authority from within rather than above. I understand that it can function only if each of us respects its values and goals.