



# Parent & Student Handbook 2020 - 2021



*Teaching the future leaders of The Bahamas*



Dear DCMS Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year at Deep Creek Middle School! The faculty of DCMS are very excited for this school year to begin, and we are confident that it will be challenging, motivating, and engaging for all students. You will recognize several returning faces on staff and will meet new and talented educators that have joined the team as well. Additionally, we welcome our new incoming Grade 7 students, and we look forward to getting to know each of them better as they become an integral part of the DCMS family. We welcome back our Grade 8 and Grade 9 students and are confident that our returning students will provide leadership and friendship to those that are new to campus.

DCMS is a special school, offering students the opportunity to master the objectives of the Bahamian National Curriculum through experiential learning opportunities that focus on the development of the whole child: intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. We are a community of educators, families, and students working together to promote each student's success. We have high expectations for all members of the DCMS community and encourage students to push beyond their comfort zone and grow in all areas. Together, we can flourish and create a vibrant community of learners on a journey to become the future leaders of The Bahamas.

This handbook is intended to increase your knowledge and understanding of the expectations, activities, routines, systems and studies of DCMS. Take your time to carefully read through this handbook and understand its contents. Be sure to ask questions if you are unsure about any of the information. Parents, we ask that you sign the required signature page.

We look forward to learning together and celebrating the potential in each and every student.

With warmest regards,

Katy Walz  
Principal

## DEEP CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY

Ms. Katherine Walz- Principal

Ms. Sophia Smith- Instructional Coach and Special Programs Coordinator

Ms. Rashida Sweeting – Administrative Assistant

Mr. Gary Wynter – Mathematics

Ms. Jennifer Parks – G7-G8 Health, G7 Skills, G8 Religious Knowledge & SCUBA

Ms. Liz Ramnarine – English

Mr Samuel Kossoff- Social Studies Grade 9

Ms. Anya Pforzheimer- Social Studies- Grade 8

Ms. Lauren Gould- Social Studies- Grade 7

Mr. Adam Bernstein- Spanish

Mr. Hadish Street – Science & Health Science

Ms. Sherrelle Knowles – Accounts Manager

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## SCHOOL CALENDAR

### School Calendar

Below is the yearlong calendar for students for the 2020-2021 school year. Any updates to the school calendar will be issued at the beginning of each term. All Bahamian holidays will be observed.

- **Fall Term:** September 7 – December 11, 2020
  - School Without Walls Week 1: October 5-9, 2020
  - Midterm Break: October 23 - 26, 2020
  - Fall Parent/Guardian Conferences: October 21, 2020
  - School Without Walls Week 2
    - Grades 7 & 8 November 9-13, 2020
    - Grade 9 November 23-27, 2020
  - Winter Break: December 14, 2020 – January 3, 2021
- **Winter Term:** January 4 – February 24, 2021
  - School Without Walls Week 3: February 8-12
  - SWW Presentations of Learning (evening): February 11
  - Winter Long Weekend: February 22-23, 2021
- **Spring Term:** February 24 – June 11, 2021
  - Spring Parent/Guardian Conferences 1: March 2, 2021
  - Easter Break: March 29 – April 11, 2021
  - BJC Prep: May 7 – June 10, 2021
  - BJC- TBA
  - Graduation (evening): June 18, 2021

## OUR BELIEFS

### VISION

Our vision is to educate the future leaders of The Bahamas by providing learning experiences, in and out of the classroom, that teach responsible citizenship and leadership and allow students to grow academically.

### MISSION

Our mission is to create a learning environment where students will not only learn the subject matter from The Bahamian national curriculum, but focus on the core values of academic growth, leadership, and responsible citizenship. In order to achieve these core values, students must learn the following skills that are taught through our programs and curriculum:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal/intrapersonal skills

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are the skills that we want all DCMS students to acquire by the time they graduate. Our curriculum and programs are designed to support the acquisition of these skills.

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills: Students will be able to gather and evaluate information to make decisions and innovate solutions.
- Communication skills: Students will be able to understand and synthesize information in order to communicate ideas effectively.
- Interpersonal/intrapersonal skills: Students will be able to recognize and value differences in order to compromise, collaborate and cooperate.

### EXPECTATIONS OF OUR NURTURING COMMUNITY

In order to create the best possible learning environment, the following characteristics of a nurturing community are expected from DCMS students and staff at all times.

1. Honesty
2. Respect
3. Responsibility
4. Self-control
5. Kindness
6. Perseverance

## CURRICULUM

### DCMS School Curriculum

The Deep Creek Middle School's curriculum is based on the Bahamian Ministry of Education national curriculum. Students often progress beyond the existing requirements due to our small class sizes and hands-on approach to learning.

#### Core Classes

English  
Science  
Social Studies  
Mathematics  
Health & Family Life Education  
Art  
Religious Knowledge  
Spanish

#### Additional Classes

Quiet Reading  
Life Skills/Wellness  
SCUBA Diving  
Physical Education  
Community Outreach Clubs  
School Without Walls  
Advisory  
Student Support

## National Examinations (BJCs)

Students in Grade 9 can take the BJCs in Math, English, Science, Art, Health, Social Studies and Spanish. Students in Grade 8 may sit for the Religious Knowledge, Math and English exams at the discretion of the principal and their teachers. Adults in the community are also encouraged to sit exams at DCMS. Registration materials are available in November.

## SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance

In accordance with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's expectations, students are expected to maintain a 90% overall attendance rate and a 90% overall punctuality level in order to graduate.

Students absent from school must do one of the following:

- Have a parent/guardian call the school on the day or days of absence. Please call 334-8414.
- Upon returning to school, present a written note signed by a parent/guardian to the office. This note should be dated and give a specific reason for the absence(s) and the date(s) of the absence(s).

A student who is absent for a duration of three days or longer must provide a doctor's note upon returning to school.

It is important to note that the school administration reserves the right to ask for a doctor's verification for an absence at any time. Students who are absent will be given the same number of days to make up their work as the length of their **excused** absence. Work not made up on time will automatically become an incomplete. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with their teachers to complete all coursework and assignments.

### Closed Campus

Deep Creek Middle School is a closed campus. Students are not permitted to leave unless authorized/picked up by a parent/guardian. Should a parent/guardian be unable to collect their student, permission must be given to DCMS staff indicating specific individuals who are allowed to collect them. All students entering or leaving the school grounds after the start of the school day must sign in or out in the school office.

### Dress Code

Students must stay in uniform while on school grounds from the time they exit the bus or car to the time they are picked up.

- **Shirts** – Students are to wear white button down or polo shirts (must be long enough to tuck into their pants/skirt).
- **Jackets** – A DCMS school sweatshirt or a plain navy blue or gray sweatshirt are the only acceptable jackets.
- **Boys** – Boys must wear navy blue pants or shorts, a belt as needed, white or dark socks, and black shoes (no tennis shoes). Haircuts/styles are to be neat and well-groomed. Hats/hair coverings, earrings and hair picks are not allowed.
- **Girls** – Girls must wear navy blue skirts, jumpers, blue pants or long blue shorts, white or dark blue socks, and black shoes (with a reasonable heel). No weave, extensions, nail polish, hats/hair covering, or hair picks are allowed. Haircuts/styles are to be neat and well-groomed.
- **P.E.** – Students wear a grey DCMS t-shirt and navy blue shorts. Students can either buy the t-shirt from the school or wear a plain, grey, loose-fitting t-shirt. Similarly, students can purchase DCMS PE shorts from the school or wear their own long, plain navy shorts.
- **Swimwear** – Students will be swimming or snorkelling for P.E., fieldtrips and SCUBA (Grade 9). Girls should wear conservative one-piece suits or t-shirts/rash guards and shorts. Boys should wear shorts or swim trunks. T-shirts/rash guards are optional. Boxers are not allowed. Slippers and a towel are also mandatory to bring when swimming. Students will wear their P.E. clothes on top of their swimwear when they are not in the water. **Note:** Students should wear their P.E. kit over their swimwear to school on their assigned swim/fieldtrip/SCUBA days.
- **Jewelry** – Small hoop earrings or studs permitted. One small chain necklace and a single bracelet and/or watch are also permissible for both boys and girls. Large chains are not allowed at DCMS.

## Behaviour Expectations

At DCMS we use a card system to remind students of the expectations of a nurturing community. We believe that it is important for students to monitor their own behaviour, make self-corrections and take responsibility for their actions. All students have a right to feel safe at school and be in a caring and supportive environment in order to maximize their learning.

- **YELLOW CARD:** The purpose of the yellow card is to serve as a redirection and to provide students with an opportunity to self-correct. It is used for minor misbehaviour, such as no homework, being out of uniform, not being prepared for class, disrupting class, chewing gum, consuming candy and/or soda, using electronics during school hours, etc. Parents will be contacted after 2 instances of a yellow card by the student's advisor.
- **ORANGE CARD:** The purpose of the orange card is to maintain the personal, physical and emotional safety of DCMS students and staff. Orange cards are for more serious issues, such as disrespect, cursing, repeated yellow cards for the same behaviour, cheating, plagiarism, mistreating property, etc. Parents will be contacted immediately. Students will meet with the Administrator(s) and will receive consequences fitting the behavioural infraction. They will be responsible for producing a written reflection and will need to schedule a meeting with their advisor within 24 hours to share their reflection and discuss the card.
- **RED CARD:** The purpose of the red card is to maintain the personal, physical and emotional safety of DCMS students and staff. This card is for severe safety violations, such as fighting, inappropriate touching, on-going bullying, serious threats, serious stealing, possession of banned substances, etc. This card requires a parent meeting. Students will meet with Administration and will receive consequences fitting the behavioural infraction, which in very serious cases may include suspension or expulsion from school. They will be responsible for producing a written reflection and will need to schedule a meeting with their advisor within 24 hours to share their reflection and discuss the card.
- **GREEN STAR:** When students demonstrate significant examples of the behaviours that we foster (honesty, responsibility, respect, perseverance, self-control, kindness, academic growth, responsibility citizenship and leadership), they will be recognized with a green star and celebrated during our Monday Morning Circle. Parents will be notified electronically of their child's recognition.
- **CACIQUE:** Students who consistently demonstrate good behaviour, leadership and/or academic growth will be nominated to be Cacique for three weeks. Caciques play several leadership roles in the school and are rewarded with some important responsibilities. It is an honour to be nominated Cacique.

## Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarizing or giving and/or receiving unacknowledged assistance in academic work are unacceptable behaviours at DCMS.

### Cheating

A student who takes the work of another, either on a homework assignment or on a test, and claims it as his or her own is guilty of cheating. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to the following:

- copying and/or offering homework verbally, in writing or by electronic means
- copying and/or offering answers on a test or quiz verbally, in writing or by electronic means
- allowing others to represent your work as their own
- using unauthorized information during class time (tests and quizzes)
- offering or sharing information under circumstances when information is not to be shared

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when students put their name to a piece of work (or part of a piece of work) that is not their own original work, and which is not credited to another source (person, book, article, website, etc) Plagiarism is intellectual theft and therefore, an unethical action. The following are considered to be acts of plagiarism:

- buying material from a research service
- submitting another person's work as your own
- copying material from a source without appropriate documentation
- getting help from another person to the extent that the work is not recognizably that of the student

## Electronics

Personal electronics are not allowed in school **at any time** unless directly indicated by a staff member. Any cell phones, iPods, iPads, Apple watches, or game systems brought out at school will be confiscated and kept for parents to pick-up. School-issued laptops should be brought to school daily. Laptops should always be transported in the provided carrying case and should be brought to school fully charged. Students are expected to comply with the DCMS Laptop User Agreement. Families are required to remit payment of a deposit (\$250) which will be refunded when the device is returned in an acceptable condition.

## SCHOOL ROUTINES & SYSTEMS

### Daily Schedule

As we are such a small school, we have the ability to be flexible with our schedule and after school opportunities. Morning classes may be longer than afternoon classes and the schedule is periodically rearranged for special events. In the event that DCMS utilizes a virtual learning program, an alternative schedule will be provided. A typical schedule for a school day on the DCMS campus is as follows:

7:45-8:00	Arrival and Daily Health Assessment
8:00 - 8:15	Homeroom
8:20 - 9:10	Period 1
9:15 - 10:05	Period 2
10:10 - 10:25	Snack Break
10:30 - 11:20	Period 3
11:25 – 12:25	Staggered Lunch/Recess/QR
12:30 - 1:20	Period 4
1:25 - 2:15	Period 5
2:20 – 3:10	Period 6
3:15 - 3:30	Homeroom (Planners & Chores)
3:40 - 4:30	After School Activities

Students will be given a grade level class schedule and a detailed bus schedule at the beginning of each term.

### Report Cards & Parent Conferences

Report cards will be delivered or sent home at the end of Fall and Spring Term. A mid-term Progress Report will be generated in October to update parents and students of academic standing and to develop a plan that supports students as they strive to meet their goals. There will also be a March Parent-Teacher Conference where your child's growth during Winter Term will be shared.

### Homework

**Purpose:** The purpose of homework is to reinforce learning in meaningful ways, as well as to increase students' responsibility and time management skills.

**Frequency:** The best way to become a better reader, writer, and critical thinker, as well as to expand vocabulary and build knowledge about the world, is by engaging in high-quality independent reading every day. Therefore, it is an expectation that all students read at home for a **minimum of 30 minutes every day**. Students are encouraged to select a high-interest book at their unique reading level to read at home. Other homework is assigned as appropriate to reinforce learning.

Supporting students at home: We ask parents to help students find a quiet space away from distractions to read quietly each day and to complete other homework assignments. Please check your student's assignment book for homework and sign the book when they have finished their work. This communication is important as we develop student responsibility. Homeroom teachers check assignment books each morning for your signature and initial planners every afternoon. All missed signatures are recorded on the board. Once students reach three missed signatures, they receive a yellow card. Students names will be erased from the board as soon as they accumulate five signatures in a row.

If students do not hand in their homework on the date it is due, they will receive a yellow card. Teachers will work with students to ensure that incomplete homework assignments are turned in by the next class period, as it is important for students to demonstrate learning through their homework assignments. Advisors will notify parents/guardians of any issues related to missing homework.

Other learning opportunities at home: We recognize and value the learning that takes place beyond the classroom environment. Students benefit from spending quality time with family conversing about the day and engaging in extracurricular activities, as well as helping with household responsibilities. They also learn from opportunities to explore the natural environment and participate in physical activities. Thank you for encouraging and supporting all types of learning opportunities for your child!

### Textbooks

In order to support parents and to keep costs low, DCMS provides students with all of the textbooks they will need throughout their course of study. Some textbooks will be given to students as a part of their School Supplies Fee and some textbooks will be loaned. If students lose a textbook that is given to them, it is their responsibility to replace it. If students lose or mistreat a textbook that has been loaned to them, their account will be charged for the cost of the text. The following list indicates which texts students are given and loaned throughout their tenure (some other texts may be added as the year progresses.)

English reading book (approximately 4 books/year)	Loan
Vocabulary Workshop	KEEP
Summer reading book	Keep
SCUBA mask, snorkel & fins (grade 9)	Keep
All of Me	Loan
Diary of Anne Frank	Loan
The Holy Bible	Loan
Exploring Religious Studies	Loan
PADI Open Water Diver	Loan
Social Studies for Bahamian Secondary Schools	Loan
National Geographic World Atlas	Loan
The Bahamian Atlas	Loan
The Making of The Bahamas	Loan
Science For Junior High Textbook	Loan
Health and Social Sciences	Loan
STP Caribbean Mathematics	Loan
Math Geometry Set	Loan



## **Cubbies**

Each student is assigned a cubby in his/her homeroom class. Cubbies are a place for students to store personal items like textbooks, composition books and other school supplies while they transition between classes during the school day. Though cubbies are located in highly visible places in each classroom, they are not equipped with doors or locks, thus students are encouraged to leave valuables at home and not bring them to school.

## **Lunch**

Students can buy lunch from an existing "School Lunch Menu" that we arrange with a local vendor or bring a lunch that can be eaten cold or heated quickly in the microwave. There is no soda allowed at DCMS and all DCMS students are asked to have a reusable water bottle labelled with their names at school at all times to use for water. Students must also bring a reusable container (Tupperware) on the first day of school to use when they order out. DCMS is a Green School and we strive to eliminate waste wherever possible. Students may not bring single-use plastic water bottles or snack packaging in their lunches, including Ziploc bags.

## **Bus**

DCMS subsidizes the cost of a bus that travels from Rock Sound to Deep Creek daily; families who choose to use the bus service are expected to pay a monthly fee for transportation. This cost will be added to your school account. Riding the bus is both optional and a privilege. If students do not meet behavioural expectations on the bus, they will not be allowed to ride. The bus picks up at Eleuthera Stationary in Rock Sound at 7:15 a.m. and leaves for Greencastle, Wemyss Bight and Waterford. It also drops off in the afternoon. If there is an afterschool activity such as tutoring or sports, there will be a late bus in the afternoon.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Open lines of communication between school and our families are essential for student success. Parents are expected to attend Parent Information Meetings, Parent-Teacher Conferences, PTA meetings and various school functions throughout the year. As always, please feel free to contact the school, your child's advisor or the Principal with any questions, concerns or feedback you may have.

### **Parent Information Meetings (PIMs)**

PIMs are typically held once a term for the purpose of introducing staff, sharing news with parents and updating families on new school systems or initiatives.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Parent Teacher Conferences are held twice a year, in the fall and spring. These conferences are an opportunity to discuss student progress at school with the advisor. Each conference lasts for approximately 20 minutes. If you feel that you need more time, or need to see a different teacher, please schedule a meeting on another day.

### **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

There is an active PTA at DCMS run by parent leaders. The focus of the PTA is fundraising to help offset the cost incurred by families for student travel. There are many opportunities to travel during the three years at DCMS and all parents are encouraged to be involved in the PTA and fundraising efforts.

## **BILLING AND FINANCIAL AID**

### **Tuition, Billing and Payments**

Though the actual cost of a student's education at DCMS is almost \$10,000/year, the tuition to attend DCMS is \$2,500 for the 2020-2021 academic year. DCMS and Cape Eleuthera Foundation diligently fundraise to make up the additional funds for each child and we count on parents/guardians to keep their commitment for their payments. If payments are repeatedly missed, the school will take action that could include removal from class, withholding official documents, removal from extracurricular activities, not allowing students to sit exams or participate in graduation, or legal action.

## **Financial Aid Awards**

DCMS is committed to finding a way for all students to attend our school, regardless of financial need. Applications are due by a specific date and processed annually. Failure to submit a complete application on time means you will have to wait to apply until the next application window. Each family's situation will be looked at individually by the Financial Aid Committee and decisions will be made based on information and documentation provided by the family. Please contact Ms. Walz or Ms. Sweeting if you have any questions.

## **School Supplies Fee**

Each student is charged an annual "School Supplies Fee". This fee represents a number of different items that are essential for our programming. Due to the fact that the supplies are so varied and crucial for student learning, they cannot be substituted with outside supplies. Some of the basic supplies that students receive as a part of this fee include the following:

- Art supplies
- 7 composition books
- Set of subject dividers
- Schedule sheet protector
- Pencil sharpener
- 2 pencils and 2 pens
- Highlighter
- Texts
- Folder sheet
- Assignment book
- Eco Club water bottle
- SCUBA gear
- Ruler

**Families will need to supply a sturdy 3" three-ring binder (trapper keeper style), extra pens & pencils and extra folder sheet paper.**

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Health Insurance**

DCMS requires that all students have accident insurance that covers them on and off school grounds. The school will bill parent/guardians for this insurance from J.S. Johnson at a cost of \$20. If families have their own insurance, please send proof of this insurance to school by the end of the first week of school so that your account can be credited.

### **Medical Form**

All students, including returning students, must submit a current medical form completed by a doctor indicating any allergies (especially to medications), previous medical conditions and a negative TB test result to start school. If we do not receive this completed form by the end of the first week of school, we will send students home until it has been filled out by a doctor.

### **Medicine**

All medications must be administered by a DCMS staff member. There are some non-prescription medications available at the school for incidental use (acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, antacids, etc.); however, if students need to take any medication on a regular basis, it needs to be provided by the family. If students are required to take prescription medication, they need to hand it in to the office upon arrival to school and Ms. Sweeting, Ms. Walz, or Ms. Smith will distribute it as needed.

## **BULLYING, HARRASSMENT & THREATS**

### **Bullying**

DCMS strives to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. Demonstration of appropriate behaviour, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of all members of the DCMS community. Bullying or other aggressive behaviour toward a student, whether by other

students, staff, parents, guests, or volunteers, is strictly prohibited; this includes written, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats or actions to a student which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation.

These expectations apply to all school activities including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring off school property, at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school related activity or function. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment. Bullying may include, but is not limited to the following:

- threatening or actual physical harm
- unwelcomed physical contact
- threatening or taunting verbal, written or electronic communications
- taking or extorting money or property
- damaging or destroying property
- blocking or impeding student movement.

### **Harassment**

Harassment of students is also strictly prohibited. Harassment is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated or serious enough to negatively impact a student's educational, physical or emotional well-being. This would include harassment based on any of the internationally legally protected characteristics such as sex, race, colour, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, height, weight or disability. Harassment would include such activities as stalking, bullying, name-calling, taunting or other disruptive behaviours. Students will be held accountable if mean-spirited behaviour does harm.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & TRAVEL**

### **Afterschool**

There are many opportunities for students to get involved in new activities, get extra help, or to socialize with their classmates and teachers at DCMS. These include advisory parties, Agriculture Club, Eco-Club, Early Act, Wellness Club, sports teams, Junkanoo, tutoring, and seasonal activities. Students are encouraged to try new things and join in wherever possible.

### **Grade 8 Trip**

DCMS offers the opportunity for travel with the Grade 8 class. The location and curriculum ties of this program change annually depending on exchange partnerships that we nurture with schools in the USA. It is important to remember that participating in this program is a privilege, and students may be asked to sit out if they do not meet the behavioural expectations that demonstrate they can be positive ambassadors for DCMS. Given the particular considerations for travel due to COVID-19, additional information about this trip will be provided as available. As always, our decisions are guided by an adherence to the Bahamian law and a commitment to the health and safety of our students and staff.

### **Camp**

DCMS has a number of partnerships with summer camps in The Bahamas and abroad that provide us with scholarship placements for our students. The number of scholarships varies every year and the application process is very competitive. Based on the application package, a student's behaviour at school and a student's perceived ability to positively represent DCMS, faculty selects the final camp scholarship recipients. Given the particular considerations for travel due to COVID-19, additional information about this opportunity will be provided as available. As always, our decisions are guided by an adherence to the Bahamian law and a commitment to the health and safety of our students and staff.

### **Passports**

There are numerous travel opportunities available to students at DCMS. Please send in your child's passport so that we can make a copy of the information. If your child does not yet have a passport, please spend the time getting one as soon as possible. **All Grade 7 students are required to have a passport by the end of Christmas break.** A visa is not needed.

**Secondary Placement/Boarding School Application Support**

Students who are interested in applying to boarding school (international or national) are required to consistently maintain high academic and behavioural standards. Families of students who are interested in finding out more about the requirements can contact Ms. Nikki Rolle, our secondary placement specialist.

## SIGNATURE PAGE

Please sign and return just this page to your homeroom teacher at Deep Creek Middle School. Keep the handbook at home for reference.

Signing this page acknowledges review of the information contained within the DCMS Student Handbook 2020 – 2021.

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Student's Signature

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Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date