



COVID-19 Reopening Task Force

# EARLY OPENING PLAN

Parent Guide

# BLUE RIDGE SCHOOL



We are excited to welcome students back to Blue Ridge School. After having to quickly adapt to distance learning in the spring, we appreciate even more fully the value of in-person, face-to-face learning our all-boarding model has for boys. We believe also that during these uncertain times our all-boarding model may be the safest choice for students. The health and safety of our students and faculty have been the driving factors as we prepared our plan to reopen.

The success of BRS's reopening plan for 2020 hinges on creating and maintaining a "bubble" of healthy students and faculty. Our all-boarding student population, as well as having 80% of our faculty living on campus, allows us to isolate our community from potential infection. Also, wearable technology allows us to continuously monitor the health of our students and faculty, so we can quickly identify and isolate potentially sick individuals.

Based on continued analysis and using research from public health officials and experts, Blue Ridge School is moving forward with an early opening for Fall 2020. In order to accommodate an early opening, a variety of recommendations have been made by BRS's COVID-19 Reopening Task Force. This guide is designed to give parents and students an understanding of the measures BRS is taking to ensure the safety of everyone in our learning community.

The school year will begin with students arriving in two waves, allowing for a manageable quarantine of new arrivals. The first wave, consisting of Seniors, Juniors, and some international students, will live in single rooms, have limited on-campus movement, practice rigorous personal hygiene, and abide social distancing. They all will be tested for COVID-19 when they arrive on campus and prior to the arrival of the second wave of students. This second wave of students (Sophomores and Freshmen) will adhere to the same protocols while keeping a completely separate schedule from the first wave. At the conclusion of four weeks and a clean bill of health for all students, BRS will begin a daily schedule that much more resembles typical life at the school.



## UPDATED ACADEMIC CALENDAR

An updated academic calendar\*, based on the adjustments below, will guide the plan.

**First Day of Classes:** The first day of classes for students in Wave One is August 27. Prior to the beginning of classes, these students will participate in SAT Test Prep courses, athletics, and orientation activities. The first day of classes for students in Wave Two is September 7.

**Closed Weekends:** All weekends within the first month of school will be “closed” meaning that all students are required to remain on campus, with the exception of family or medical emergencies.

**Fall Long Weekend:** Fall Break is cancelled. Students will remain on campus.

**Fall Parent Weekend:** The 2020 Fall Parent Weekend will be a virtual event to include, but not limited to, Zoom Parent/Teacher conferences, online Parent Association events, a Headmaster’s Roundtable, and Zoom parent-to-parent discussions.

**1st Trimester Exams:** 1st trimester exams will be administered across four days from Tuesday, November 10, 2020 through Friday, November 13, 2020.

**Thanksgiving Holiday:** The last day of classes will be held on November 13, 2020, with the holiday break beginning at 12:00 pm.

**Distance Learning:** Distance Learning will begin on Tuesday, December 1, 2020.

**Christmas Holiday:** The last day of classes will be held on December 18, 2020, with the holiday break beginning at 12:00 pm. Students will return to campus no later than January 3, 2021, with classes beginning on January 4, 2021\*.

\*Calendar events in 2021 are subject to change.

Key Dates	2020/21 Schedule (Regular Opening)	Revised Plan 2020/21 Schedule (Early Opening)
Football Camp Registration	Aug. 14	Cancelled
ELL Camp Arrives	Aug. 14	Aug. 17
Wave One Arrives on Campus (11th & 12th grades)	n/a	Aug. 17
Soccer Camp & Senior Leader Registration	Aug. 24	Cancelled
Wave Two Arrives on Campus (9th & 10th grades)	n/a	Sept. 2
Opening Day	Sept. 1	n/a
Convocation	Sept. 6	Sept. 20
Fall Long Weekend	Sept. 25 - 28	Cancelled
Fall Parent Weekend	Oct. 9 - 10	Virtual Event
Alumni Weekend	Oct. 16 - 17	April 9 - 10, 2021
Exams	Nov. 17-20	Nov. 10-13
Thanksgiving Break Starts	Nov. 20	Nov. 13
Thanksgiving Break Ends	Nov. 30	Nov. 30
Distance Learning	n/a	Dec. 1 - 18
Christmas Holiday Break Starts	Dec. 18	Dec. 18
Christmas Holiday Break Ends (Return to campus)	Jan. 3	Jan. 4*

\*The specific details of the return to campus will be determined closer to time based on prevailing state and local guidelines.



## CAMPUS REOPENING

Campus will reopen with two waves of students arriving two weeks apart.

**Wave One**, consisting of Seniors, Juniors, and some international students, arrives on **August 17, 2020**.

**Wave Two**, consisting of Sophomores and Freshmen, arrives on **September 2, 2020**. Students will be COVID-19 tested upon arrival and at the end of their traveler's quarantine period.

Faculty and staff will also be tested twice. During each wave's first two weeks on campus, we will enforce strict adherence to social distancing protocols, including living in single rooms in the dorms. These protocols will impact every aspect of the BRS experience, including academics, co-curricular programs, and residence life.

Once the second wave of students arrives, we will keep them separate from the first wave until their quarantine is complete.

The resumption of approved interscholastic athletics will be delayed until classes resume on September 17, 2020.

## STUDENT MOVE-IN

When families arrive on their designated move-in day, they will report to a staging area. Registration forms (including technology agreements, athletics sign-up, etc) must be completed online prior to arrival on campus.

Limited bus service will be available from airports. Families should bring students to campus if at all possible. Offerings from airports via school buses will be limited. Families are urged to drop off students if at all possible.

Prior to the date of registration, students' families will have been given time slots based on their last name (alphabetically) and asked to register only during those times to minimize congestion.

Arrival to campus will be regulated by security staff to mitigate crowding in the

dorms during the move in process. While parking may be limited, there is no need to distance the parking of vehicles so long as arriving families are distancing appropriately during registration and move-in. Students/Faculty may welcome each other (from a proper distance), but should not assist other students.

Students will be tested for COVID-19 upon their arrival and will be given a health monitoring wristband, similar to a FitBit, that is to be worn at all times.

Only one parent will be allowed to accompany a student as he moves into his dorm room. That parent must wear a mask during the move-in. All students should limit their belongings to the minimum (see Appendix A), as they will be moving to their permanent rooms following the two-week quarantine period.

## LATE STUDENT ARRIVALS

Students unable to return to campus for the early opening due to unavoidable and/or unforeseen circumstances all domestic students should contact Catherine Dickerson, Residence Life Assistant, and all international students contact Krystle Gee, Director of International Admissions, to discuss available options.

## DORMS

In order to achieve the appropriate distance between students, we will make significant changes to our residence life procedures.

**Moving In:** During each wave, every student may have one parent assist with their moving in process. That parent must wear a mask.

**Rooming:** Students will not have a roommate

during their first two weeks on campus in order to ensure adequate distance between students. Students are not allowed to enter another student's room or visit another hall during the first two week quarantine period.

Each wave will be assigned to certain halls and will not be allowed on the halls occupied by students from the other wave.

At the end of each wave's respective 14-day initial quarantine period, they will move into doubles with a roommate. This move is why a minimal packing list is suggested for the beginning of the year, after which point a student is encouraged to have decorative/comfort items sent or purchase them online.

**Communal Space:** All lounges will be closed during the first month.

**Communal Bathrooms:** In Walsh dormitory, we carefully coordinate bathroom occupancy to enable appropriate distancing between students.

**Water Fountains:** Students use water bottles rather than drink directly from water fountains.

**Weekend Leave:** Students will remain on campus until at least September 17, except in case of a family or medical emergency.



## ACADEMICS

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**From August 17-August 26, Wave One students** will participate in orientation activities, which will include SAT preparation, college counseling, sports and outdoor activities, residence life curriculum, and classes on health and wellness.

**On August 27**, classes will begin for Wave One.

**On September 7**, classes will begin for Wave Two.

**Prior to September 17**, students will only attend classes with students from the same wave.

**During the quarantine**, the academic day will be extended and the number of students per class will be reduced so that appropriate physical distancing can be attained.

**Classrooms, laboratories, and workspaces**, are being reconfigured for physical distancing (e.g. placement of desks/tables/chairs six feet apart). Faculty will consider outdoor classes,

to the extent practical.

**Students** are recommended to wear facemasks during classes but not required to, as they will be seated six feet apart. Blue Ridge School will provide masks for use by students, faculty, and staff. It is also recommended in the "Packing List" that students bring a supply of masks with them to campus.

**Teachers** will wear masks or face shields in their classrooms unless they are seven feet away from students. Teachers and students will wear masks in the hallway of the academic building and while they are transitioning between classes.

**BRS Facilities and the Office of the Registrar** are collaboratively working with academic leaders regarding the revised occupancy for academic spaces and confirmed capacity for individual courses.

**Updated signage** in all classrooms will indicate the new occupancy limit.

## DISTANCE LEARNING

If required by the Governor of Virginia, Blue Ridge School will be prepared to send students home and continue education via distance learning. This summer, teachers have enrolled in professional development programs to build on last Spring's success and to further enhance our ability to offer distance programs successfully.

Domestic students who live within driving distance would be picked up by parents at pre-scheduled times.

We require the parents of international students and domestic students who live beyond driving distance to plan for students to leave within a reasonable time after our announcement.

As we did in March 2020, BRS Faculty would work with families individually to determine the best, safest option should this be necessary.

## CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Assembly and Chapel:** Although gatherings of up to 250 people are allowed by the Commonwealth of Virginia during Phase Three, we will not have all-school gatherings such as assemblies and chapel services during the first month of school. Instead, the largest meetings that we will hold will be by grade-level; 50 or fewer students. We will hold such meetings in large areas such as the chapel, auditorium, or field house in which attendance will not exceed 25% capacity.

**Advising:** Daily meetings remain important, even more than most years. We will continue

to have small group advisory meetings, all of which are fewer than 10 people.

**Athletics and Outdoors:** The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association has not yet published guidance for Phase Three sports. Therefore, for planning purposes the primary reference is the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the Virginia High School League (VHSL). Our activities are categorized by the NFHS as follows:

- **Low Risk:** Cross Country, Golf, Mountain Biking, Outdoors, Outdoorsman, Tennis
- **Moderate Risk:** Soccer, JV Soccer
- **High Risk:** Football, Mixed Martial Arts

During Phase Two, low risk sports may compete and moderate risk sports may practice with modifications. High risk sports will have significant restrictions on their ability to practice beyond the individual skill level.

During Phase Three, low and moderate risk sports may practice and compete. High risk sports may practice with modifications.

We will offer golf and tennis this fall as additional sports option.

**No interscholastic sports competitions will occur prior to September 17th.**

We will adjust our approach to conform to guidance from the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA) as it becomes available.

**Performing Arts:** One of the most difficult aspects of conducting performing arts will be the need to limit vocal performances, both singing and speaking, due to the fact that



COVID-19 spreads primarily through respiratory droplets.

We plan to have one drama production in the winter and one in the spring, in hopes that moving those events forward will provide time to adapt. Happily, meanwhile, instrumental music can operate along similar lines to other classes in terms of square footage requirements.

### **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

To most effectively reduce the chance for infection, distances of a minimum of six feet between individuals should be maintained whenever practical.

Classroom seating and common areas (e.g., dining hall, lounges, office areas, library, and the Fitness Center) have been arranged to facilitate physical distancing.



## CAMPUSWIDE HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

A number of new health and safety measures will be implemented:

- **Broad-scale COVID-19 testing** will be offered at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the Fall.
- **FitBit-style wristbands** will be purchased for all students, faculty and staff. These wristbands provide real-time feedback to the Student Health Center (SHC) regarding important symptoms, including temperature, oxygen levels, and heart rate.
- **BRS Housekeepers** have increased staffing levels and are implementing enhanced disinfecting practices which include reoccurring and thorough sanitizing protocols.
- **Student Health** areas are significantly expanded to allow for specialty COVID-19 assessment spaces.

## STUDENT HEALTH CENTER (SHC)

Significant additions to BRS's normal student health procedures are being made:

- **Initial patient assessment** will occur outside the Student Health Center. No one with COVID-19 related symptoms will enter the SHC. Instead they will go to an isolated COVID-19 evaluation site.
- **The COVID-19 Evaluation Site** includes:
  - Personal Protective Equipment for nurse and patient(s)
  - PCR tests
  - Medical equipment necessary to diagnose and treat symptoms
- **Quarantine Area:** students with COVID-19 symptoms will be observed in a separate area adjacent to the COVID-19 Evaluation Site.
- **Isolation Area:** students who test positive

for COVID-19 will be sent home to isolate whenever possible. Until they are picked up by parents, they will stay in a third, separate space adjacent to the evaluation and quarantine locations.

- **Contact Tracing** is a vital aspect of our mitigation plan. This process will be facilitated by wristband technology and supervised by the Director of Campus Safety.

## TECHNOLOGY

While preventing COVID-19 from getting on to campus is our priority, we also have plans in place to appropriately respond if a student or adult contracts the virus.

A major component of our ability to respond is to identify symptoms as soon as possible. As mentioned earlier, we plan to purchase wristbands for all students, faculty and staff. These wristbands provide real-time feedback to the Student Health Center regarding important symptoms, including temperature, oxygen levels, and heart rate. These wristbands will also provide contact tracing about other community members with whom a symptomatic person has been in direct contact. This information will allow earlier isolation and treatment, which is a key component to stopping the spread of the virus. Finally, this device will be paired with users' phones, providing an integrated questionnaire that allows for initial self-screening prior to arrival on campus.



## FACE COVERINGS & HAND HYGIENE

- Students will be encouraged to wear face coverings while in class, conducting business on campus, and in shared/common spaces. Coverings will not be required as long as there is six feet between people.
- Faculty will wear a face covering unless they are seven feet from students.
- Employees in common areas and shared/meeting spaces will be required to wear face coverings.
- Face coverings will not be required outside; however, they will be required anywhere that appropriate physical distancing is not possible.
- Students are asked to exercise social responsibility, as well as kindness, with respect to each student's individual face covering decisions.
- Students and employees should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible. This is especially important after using the restroom, blowing your nose, and interacting with spaces that include frequently touched items such as door handles and desktops. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% isopropyl alcohol may be substituted.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed around campus to encourage increased frequency of hand cleaning.



## DINING HALL

In accordance with best practices per the CDC and the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS), we will make the following changes:

**Extended time for meals:** We will not have meal times in which the entire community gathers during a single hour-long period. Rather, each wave will eat at separate times.

**Physical Distance:** When waiting for food, students and adults will maintain at least six feet of distance from one another. This distance will be marked visually.

**No self-service:** All meals will be served by dining hall staff.

**Meals to go:** Students and staff will pick up individually plated food "to go" during an assigned time period. In keeping with CDC and VAIS guidance, students will eat either in their dorm rooms or outdoors. Likewise, Faculty and Staff will eat in office spaces or outdoors. Plates and utensils will be disposable in order to reduce contact.

**Dining Hall team** members will adhere to the same COVID-19 testing and symptom monitoring procedures as other BRS staff. They will wear N95 masks and food service gloves whenever contact with or close proximity to students or food is possible.

## GUESTS

Guests will not be allowed on campus except for emergencies from August 17-September 17, 2020. After September 17, 2020, new precautions will minimize the likelihood of an off-campus guest bringing COVID-19 onto campus.

### **Key changes to our guests policy include:**

- All guests (whether visiting employees or students) must complete a health screening survey. Prospective guests will be informed of our safety protocols.
- Guests of students will remain outside the dorms in a designated area. Social distancing must be observed throughout a visit.
- Guests must report to a temperature check station immediately upon arrival.
- During the first month, admissions tours will begin outside the gates; driving tours of campus will be conducted using a hand-held radio to communicate, and guests will not exit their vehicles.
- Vendors and delivery persons must pass through a temperature check station and wear a mask prior to entering any building.

## CAMPUS ACCESS

Although we can never fully “bubble” our campus—a small number of staff and family members will continue to come and go—we will take steps to minimize traffic on and off campus.

- In addition to daily reporting and screening of symptoms, staff and family who come on and off campus will be tested more frequently.
- As the Fall Term begins on September 17, student travel off campus will be limited in respect to health and safety guidelines and to allow students to settle into the daily rhythms of life on campus.

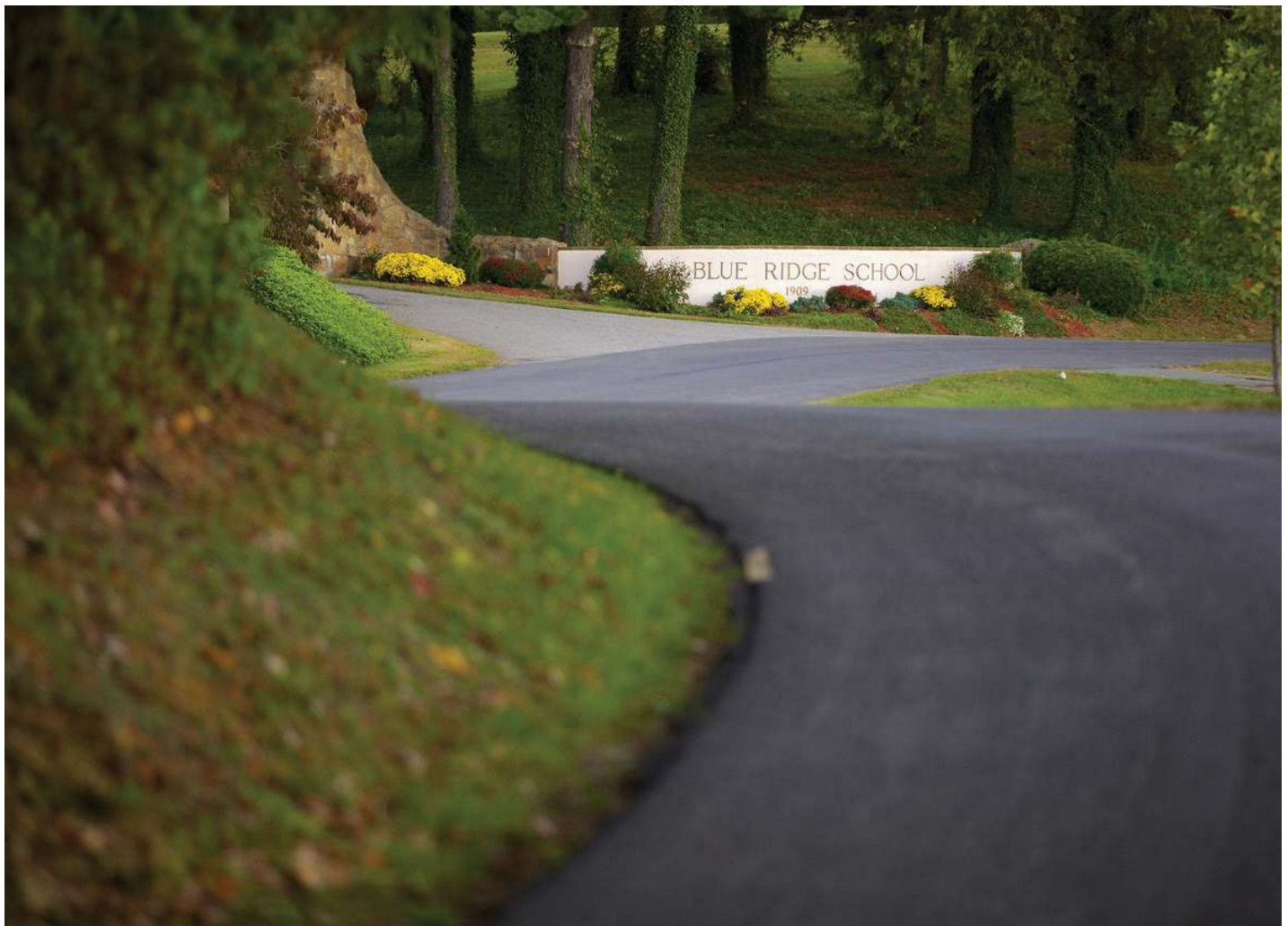
## EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

BRS Events and large gatherings will be altered, postponed and/or canceled to ensure any and all size limitations are followed. Only the Headmaster may approve exceptions and those will follow state and local guidelines.



## **A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM THE COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PLANNING GROUP**

We are indebted to the many individuals who provided guidance and support throughout this planning process. A wide-range of parents, students, faculty and staff engaged in focus groups that provided thoughtful direction and valuable insight. We also extend our appreciation to the faculty, staff and families here on campus for their engagement and flexibility now and in the months to come.



## BASIC PACKING LIST

Due to the movement between dorms rooms during the two waves of students arriving on campus, please **ONLY** bring the following with you to campus:

- 2-3 reusable & washable facemasks
- 2 sport coats or blazers
- 3 dress shirts with collars (preferably wrinkle free)
- 4 casual shirts with collars (knits, jerseys, etc.)
- 4 neckties
- 4 pair of dress pants (khakis, etc. cargo pants are not acceptable)
- 2 belts/suspenders
- 2 pair of dress shoes and a pair of athletic shoes
- 10 pair of socks - both athletic and dress
- 10 undergarments
- 1 pair of shower shoes/flip flops
- 1 swim suit
- Casual clothing (shorts should have belt loops to adhere to appropriate dinner dress)
- Athletic wear: shirts, shorts, pants
- 1 toiletries kit to include soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, razor or electric razor
- 1 pillow
- 1 set of sheets (twin, extra long)
- Blanket/Comforter
- 2 bath towels
- 2 washclothes
- Laptop and/or tablet (It is mandatory that desktop computers/towers and monitors are left at home)
- Alarm clock
- Desk lamp
- Backpack
- 10 coat hangers
- Personal sports equipment

## SECONDARY PACKING LIST

The following are suggestions for additional items that can be ordered online or shipped to students **AFTER** September 17, 2020.

- 1 warm coat and gloves (denim jackets, army fatigue coats or camouflage jackets are not acceptable)
- 1 rain coat
- 3 sweaters
- Extra pillows
- Extra blankets
- 2 extra bath towels
- Laundry bags (detergent is optional)
- Extra coat hangers
- Foam or egg crate-style mattress topper
- Flashlight
- Reusable water bottle
- Airtight container to store food items
- 1 or 2 power strips (extension cords are not allowed due to fire codes)
- Tall kitchen trash bags to line waste baskets
- Replacement bulbs for desk lamp
- Hanger-type tie rack
- Paper towels
- First-aid kit - Band-aids, cotton balls, Kleenex, cough drops, etc.
- Lockable storage box for valuables (it is strongly recommended that travel tickets, valuables, passport and excess cash are stored in the Business Office safe)
- Carpets and comfortable furniture
- Extra snacks and food for dorm room
- Dishes - plates, utensils, cups, etc.
- Extra plastic storage bins
- Personal decorative items - such as picture frames, dry erase boards, posters, etc.

## HELPFUL PACKING GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are included to help inform the packing process. Please see the General Residence Hall Regulation section in the Student Handbook for further residence hall guidelines.

Labeling Personal Belongings:

1. Before the student leaves home, a printed name tape should be sewn into every article of clothing. It is suggested that the tapes be located as follows:
  - Inside the collar band of coats and shirts.
  - Inside the back waistband of pants.
  - Inside the top of socks in a vertical position.
2. Students should mark their names in each item with a permanent marker or an engraver. It is highly suggested that students used form entitled "Electronic / High Value Item Identification" to record the serial number of their high value items and place this on file with the Office of Residence Life. Parents can locate this form by logging into FACTS.
3. Luggage should be tagged on the outside and marked inside with the owner's name and address, thereby reducing the chance of loss by luggage handlers. Luggage will be placed in storage once a student arrives on campus.

Please note that due to room size the following limitations are placed on furniture and floor coverings:

- One easy chair per student, or one loveseat not more than five feet in length (not a sleep sofa) for two roommates.
- Small rugs, as long as they are bound and they do not extend under the furniture. Rugs must be vacuumed weekly or taken out and shaken.

Please **DO NOT** bring the following:

Large Stereos: both in size and wattage. Headphones are required in order to listen to music in the evenings and during "quiet time" hours.

Flags and Posters that may be offensive to others or that depict/promote alcohol or drug use.

Hot plates and microwaves are not be allowed. Hot plates with automatic shut off will be permitted.

Televisions & Monitors: Televisions are for Prefects only; no other student will be allowed to have a TV or monitor.

Refrigerators: Refrigerators are for Prefects, Proctors, Honor Council, and Disciplinary Committee members only.

Video Gaming Systems: Video Gaming Systems are for Prefects, Proctors, Honor Council, and Disciplinary Committee members only.

Extension Cords: By order of the fire marshall, only power strips (not traditional extension cords) are acceptable.

Any movies with a rating above PG-13.

Any video games with an ESRB rating above "(T) Teen."