

# Middlebury–Monterey

L A N G U A G E A C A D E M Y

Dear 2009 MMLA students and families,

Greetings from MMLA, where our staff is working to finalize plans for this year's session. Springtime in Middlebury has brought sunshine and a welcome glimpse of the natural beauty you will enjoy during your summer in Vermont.

I write to give you important information. Please take a look at our [Web page for accepted students](#). This link is accessible from our home page. Here you will find the information you will need as you prepare for the summer. We will continue to post all e-mails we send out, as well as supplemental materials.

On the Web site you will also find a digital copy of the *2009 Student Handbook*, which will be mailed to you in early May. The *Handbook* contains important information about daily life at the MMLA program. I encourage you to read it carefully before you arrive on campus.

Our International Student Services office has updated the information sheet for foreign students attending our program. This is accessible from the accepted student Web site and is also attached to this e-mail; it includes important information international students will need as they prepare their documents to enter the United States.

In addition to these resources, we are including below a note regarding dictionaries as well as information and common questions about the Language Pledge®. The Pledge is a key part of the MMLA program and has been central to the success of the Middlebury Language Schools.

All of the Language Directors and staff are currently preparing your courses, projects, and activities for the summer. They are also scheduling music performances, workshops, and cultural presentations; inviting speakers and scholars; and scheduling field trips. We will not only have a number of language-specific events, but we have also invited professionals who utilize their foreign-language skills daily in their careers, such as foreign service officers and journalists, to share their experiences with you.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 802.443.2900 or by e-mailing [mmla.admission@middlebury.edu](mailto:mmla.admission@middlebury.edu).

Best wishes,

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### **Packing List addition:**

Many of you have inquired about dictionaries. We will have a library of materials students can utilize. However, many students prefer to have their own dictionaries. If you have a dictionary you currently have and prefer, feel free to bring your own. Below is a list of recommendations from our Language Directors:

#### Arabic:

The Language Directors do not recommend you bring an Arabic-English dictionary due to the structure of the Arabic language. Arabic uses a system of roots and forms that make dictionary use a skill you will learn during the program.

#### Chinese:

- For beginners: **Tuttle Learner's Chinese English Dictionary** (Paperback) by Li Dong. ISBN 978-0804835527.

- For intermediate and advanced students: **A Chinese-English Dictionary (Revised Edition)** by Wu Jinrong, Chen Lanfang, Wei Dongya, and Chen Lanhuang. ISBN 978-7560013251.

- Pocket-sized: **Concise English-Chinese / Chinese-English Dictionary (Third Edition)** (Paperback) by Martin H. Manser. ISBN 978-7100039338.

#### French:

**Le Robert Micro Poche Dictionnaire de la Langue Francaise** (Paperback) by Robert. ISBN 978-2849022528.

#### Spanish:

**Collins Spanish Concise Dictionary, Third Edition.** ISBN 978-0060575786.

### **The Language Pledge®**

At the core of the language teaching philosophy of MMLA, as with the Language Schools at Middlebury College, is the Language Pledge. The Pledge is an ideal to aspire to, a spirit of pushing oneself as hard as possible to experience the world through another language, to train the mind to focus with great intention on a singular goal: using the target language as much as possible.

#### **Some common questions regarding the Language Pledge®**

**What is the Language Pledge®?** All MMLA students agree to abide by the Language Pledge, a commitment to speak, listen, read, and write the language of study as the only means of communication for the student. It is the foundation of our intensive immersion program and originated with the Middlebury Language Schools.

**What does the Language Pledge say?** The Language Pledge says: In signing this Language Pledge, I agree to use [language] as my only language of communication while attending the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy.

**Why are students required to take the Pledge?** The Pledge helps students focus their energies on the acquisition of language skills and to internalize the patterns of communication and cultural perspective

associated with the target language. The Language Pledge plays a major role in the success of the program, both as a symbol of commitment and as an essential part of the language learning process. It ensures that the vocabulary and structures gained in group sessions are "put in motion" right away so they are acquired, used, and remembered.

**Are beginning students, who have never studied the language, required to take the Language Pledge?**

Students who are beginning their study of a language take a modified and progressively more rigorous Pledge. The program has built-in times and structures to enable beginners to succeed during the early learning period. All staff at the Academy are bilingual and can speak to students in both the target language and English.

**When is the Language Pledge waived?** Students are not expected to speak in their language of study when they are faced with an emergency, when conversing with a member of the MMLA administrative staff, when speaking with a health care professional, and on those occasions when it is absolutely necessary to use English or another language. In addition, students are not required to speak in their language of study during specific times designated by MMLA faculty. Most important is adherence to the spirit of the Pledge and each student's sincere effort to use the target language as exclusively as possible during the session.

**May I call my parents, family, and friends? Also, my family wants to visit me while I am here; may I go to dinner with them and speak English?** We know that it is important for students to maintain contact with their families and friends. We can't say how much is necessary for each person, so we ask that you keep contacts which are not in your target language to the absolute minimum that you feel you need.

As indicated in this handbook, there are no phones or computers in student rooms and limited time is available for students to phone or email home, generally only before breakfast and before or after dinner – both because of the Language Pledge and to support a successful transition from home. In case of an emergency, students may use the phone or send an e-mail message from the MMLA Site Office.

MMLA discourages students from bringing cellular phones to campus. Students who arrive unaccompanied will be able to call a parent/guardian to confirm their safe arrival.

**May I attend religious services?** MMLA does not arrange for religious services. Students have to be signed out of the program by an individual authorized by the family. Students may speak English during religious services.

**Are there incentives to adhering to the Pledge?** The first and most important incentive is the major progress that students experience if they speak only in the target language throughout the session. Each Academy also has built-in awards for those students who set an example for others.

**What happens if I violate the Language Pledge?** Adhering to the Language Pledge is part of our code of conduct. However, because maintaining the pledge is a challenge for all, students receive verbal warnings for the first few violations. If a student continues to violate the pledge, he or she receives a written warning and a call to his or her family.

**When does the Pledge begin? Is it different for beginners?** The Pledge begins when you sign the Language Pledge at your Academy. If you are not a beginning student of your target language, this will

occur shortly after you take the placement evaluation. If you are a beginning student, you will start off with a modified Pledge. The important thing is that once you have signed it, the Pledge is in effect.

**I have a friend studying another language, and once in a while we have a conversation in that language, which I also speak. Is that allowed at MMLA? After all, I am not speaking English.** If you are able to visit with other language students and speak in their language, that helps them stick with their Pledge, but interferes with your own Pledge. Remember that the Pledge is not simply a rule *against* using English; it's a commitment *for* using your target language.

**May I read the newspaper or weekly magazines in a language other than the target languages? May I listen to music in other languages?** Use of a language includes listening, reading, writing, as well as speaking—so MMLA is going to provide you with lots of interesting things to read, listen to, and watch in your target language! Families are encouraged to send mail in either English or the language their child is studying. (Students are able to receive mail on weekdays.) While letters in English are fine, please refrain from sending English-language magazines, videos, DVDs, etc. Please do not bring reading material in English and music in English for use once the four-week immersion program starts. Reading in English and listening to English will slow your progress in the target language.