

**SECONDARY SCHOOL
PLANNING HANDBOOK
2016-2017**



INTRODUCTION: PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Dear Families,

This handbook contains information that Foote School families have found helpful in the secondary school admissions process.

We invite you to enlist us as your active partners in selecting a secondary school for your child. The more we know about your thoughts and plans regarding secondary school, the better we can serve you and your son or daughter throughout the admissions process. Foote School has a successful track record in enrolling students at a variety of schools and our students are well prepared for their secondary school experiences.

As you become actively involved in the admissions process, we encourage students and parents to call us with questions and to keep us informed about the schools in which you are most interested.

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STARTING OFF

I. WHERE TO APPLY?

A STUDENT AND FAMILY DECISION

Some students and their parents may already have identified the schools to which they will apply. Nonetheless, Liam Considine will meet with each eighth and ninth grade family filing applications for secondary school. These meetings are intended to provide a starting point for ongoing discussion about secondary school options and may provide helpful information about those schools or others the family has not yet considered. In most cases it is useful to consider a range of options before finalizing a list.

BOARDING SCHOOLS

There are more than 300 boarding schools in the U.S. Information is available through The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) at www.boardingschools.com. Another valuable resource is *Peterson's Guide to Independent Schools*, available at most bookstores or online. Representatives from boarding schools annually visit Foote School to meet with Mr. Considine and share information. Families interested in looking at boarding schools should discuss this option when they meet with Mr. Considine to discuss secondary school placement.

DAY SCHOOLS

For students within the traditional commuting distance to Foote School, there are a limited number of day schools that prove to be a reasonable commute. When considering the viability of a day school commute, it is also helpful to take into account factors such as the location of a parent's workplace. Information about day schools is available on the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools website, www.caist.org.

BASIC QUESTIONS STUDENTS AND PARENTS SHOULD CONSIDER AS THEY DRAFT THEIR LIST OF SCHOOLS

1. Are you considering boarding at school or will you live at home? If you will live at home, your choices have narrowed to a small group of independent schools in the immediate area, your community's

high school, area magnet schools and local religiously based schools.

2. What size school do you think you might like to attend?
3. Have you considered the possible advantages of a single-sex school?
4. Are there special academic programs, activities or sports you hope to pursue in secondary school?
5. Do you have any special connections to any school through family, friends or location?

Based on the answers to these questions, and with suggestions from the school, parents and students can develop a list of up to half a dozen schools that they are interested in visiting and learning more about.

Most students applying to secondary schools file three to six applications. Some are encouraged to apply to more for various reasons. Few applicants can select a single school, apply and be accepted. In general, this is not a recommended strategy. Because it is not possible to predict with 100 percent certainty which students will be admitted to a particular school, families generally develop a plan which includes at least one application to a school at which they believe their son or daughter is likely to be admitted ("probable accept"), and one to a school that is desirable but where the student's record would make acceptance much less certain ("reach"). The other applications are submitted to schools at which they have a good chance of acceptance.

It is not possible to say in general terms which schools belong in each category; the answer will be different for every applicant. We cannot predict the outcome of a particular application; each year's applicant pool is a bit different at each secondary school. We do, however, have data about previous applicants from Foote School to a broad range of schools. We use this information to help families determine, based on an individual student's academic records and testing, whether a particular application represents a "probable accept" or a "reach."

II. WHAT DO SCHOOLS LOOK FOR IN APPLICANTS ?

Admission directors tell us they rely on the following criteria to determine admission decisions, though they may weigh various elements differently. We find it is critically important to pay careful attention to *all* aspects of the Candidate Admission File, from formal application materials to thank you notes and student tour guide comments.

The following items will be part of each school's consideration:

1. THE TRANSCRIPT

The transcript contains courses taken and grades received.

2. THE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION

The school recommendation, signed by Mr. Considine, is submitted as a cover letter with the school's portion of the application packet. The letter is a profile of the student and discusses the strengths, interests and growth of that student. It reflects a thorough knowledge of the student based on reports from a variety of teachers who have taught the student over the years.

3. ENGLISH AND MATH TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Most schools require a standard recommendation from the student's *current* English and math teachers as part of the admission process. Schools will ask the teachers to comment on the applicant's overall ability in his or her subject area, and also to provide evidence of self-motivation and intellectual curiosity, level of responsibility, work ethic, response to challenge, ability to work with others, creativity, engagement in classroom discussion and leadership.

4. THE APPLICATION — INCLUDING THE ESSAY(S) AND/OR SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

The application should in every respect reflect the applicant's enthusiasm for the school to which he or she is applying, as well as the applicant's careful attention to detail and accuracy. The essay should

represent the applicant's best thought and writing. Students must do their own writing. Mr. Milburn, Ms. Neitlich or Mr. Turner are willing to review essays before they are submitted.

5. THE INTERVIEW

Most independent schools require interviews. They provide an opportunity for students to put a more personal and unique stamp on their candidacy. Students should be sincere and candid during interviews. Practicing interviewing and anticipating questions is worthwhile preparation. Even students who characterize themselves as shy can use the interview setting to advantage if they prepare for it. Foote School students participate regularly in classroom discussion and may have spoken before the school community at assemblies, in drama and in other public situations. These experiences are good preparation for interviewing, and Mr. Considine is able to provide a practice interview experience so that students have a sense of what to expect.

6. EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCES AND INVOLVEMENT

Secondary schools are looking for evidence that a student has interests beyond classroom work, and that he/she has sought opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities at school or in the community. It is important to convey leadership, commitment to particular activities over several years and the learning that has resulted from those activities. This might be communicated during the interview, through an essay or teacher recommendation, or in response to questions about extracurricular activities on the application form.

7. SSAT AND/OR ISEE SCORES

Although schools often downplay the importance of standardized tests, most rely on them to some degree. Parents should discuss standardized testing options with Mr. Considine, especially regarding which test to take, whether to retake tests, where scores should be reported, and to determine if non-standard test administration is warranted.

8. OTHER FACTORS

There may be elements in a student's profile, including connections or family history, that make him or her a particularly attractive candidate for a given school. In general, these are the last considerations a school will weigh, but they can definitely make a difference. If a family believes that special factors might play a role in an admission decision, it is wise to discuss that information with Mr. Considine. Occasionally a connection or other information assumed to be a positive factor for an applicant becomes a negative one because of the way it is presented.

All this information is considered in the context of the strength of the school's candidate pool in a particular year. This can vary greatly and is beyond the control of both the candidate and Foote School. When a school receives many strong applications, some applicants — who would be successful at the school and who might have been admitted the previous year — will be placed on wait lists or denied admission. This can be frustrating, but is the result of strong competition for limited spaces. Foote School applicants continue to rank very well in competitive pools. Most schools our students apply to have a history with Foote School, not only in terms of applicants but also through their experience with Foote School graduates who have been academically successful and contributed significantly to school life. These former students are our ambassadors in the secondary school admission process.

Secondary school admission directors have assured us that students and parents should not worry about "too many Foote School applicants" to a particular school. There is no cap on admissions from a single school and the admission standard is not changed because a large number of applications are received from one school. An individual applicant will not be disadvantaged simply because many classmates are interested in the same school.

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## III. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Before starting, it is useful for students and parents to identify three to five characteristics that should be conveyed to the admissions committee at each school for them to "know" this particular student. She loves science? He has been active in community service for several years? He has a strong interest in writing? She has particular skill at languages or at a sport? Interest in world issues?

Next consider how each of these characteristics can best be conveyed through the various parts of the admission process. Some may be evident in the school record, or could be communicated in teacher recommendations, the essay, the interview, or in the response to a short-answer question on the application form. If you can't determine a way to communicate one of these important characteristics, talk with Mr. Considine. He can offer suggestions and may be able to communicate or reinforce a particular interest or strength directly in his communication with the school.

The application form affords students and parents an opportunity to provide the school with important background information about the student. Some advice before you begin:

- To allow for brainstorming and organizing ideas, students should prepare a draft of all information requested before they write or type directly on the original application, or enter information on an admissions website.
- Parents can help by proofreading the draft copy, paying attention to spelling and punctuation, as well as omission of important information.
- Students should give attention to special instructions for completion:

PLEASE READ THE DIRECTIONS  
CAREFULLY!

## 1. GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING SECONDARY SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

- Save copies of application materials in order to have a complete draft set, or download an extra copy of the application from the school's website.
- Read all parts of the application thoroughly prior to beginning the application.
- Submit electronic request to appropriate teachers (see instructions below).
- Submit electronic school report to Mr. Considine (lconsidine@footeschool.org) by November 25. Paper copies should be brought to the Registrar's office.
- Complete a *draft* of the application.
- Complete several drafts of your essays.
- Review "advanced drafts" and, later, the final copies of your essays with an adult.
- Complete the actual application, and have it proofread by an adult.
- Print or save all completed applications and essays before submitting electronically, for your records.
- Submit your application well before the deadline for each school to which you are applying.

## 2. THE APPLICATION ESSAY

An application essay should be a sincere and well-crafted representation of a student's best work. A good essay should:

- Clearly address the question or premise of the essay prompt.
- Represent the student's academic and intellectual development.
- Offer insight into the student as an individual. It is vital that the student commit sufficient time to

the process of thinking through the essay topics and to preparing the necessary drafts so that the final essay meets both of the above goals.

The most effective essays are those with the most authentic "voice." Essays should be reflective of a student's best work. Veteran admissions officers have read thousands of essays, and can easily sense when an eighth or ninth grader has written an essay and when an adult has, in effect or actually, written it. Parents may advise their children in the process of writing and editing the essay, particularly with regard to mechanics and grammar. However, the tone and content of the essay must be the student's own.

Mr. Considine, Mr. Turner, Ms. Neitlich and Mr. Milburn are all happy to work with students to fine-tune a draft of their essay. Students may schedule an appointment with any of these faculty and come prepared with an advanced draft. Choosing a topic and developing the ideas of the essay are the responsibility of the student, but we are happy to talk with students about their ideas at any point in the process.

## 3. GRADED WRITING SAMPLES

Many schools require or request a graded writing sample as part of the application. Again, read the instructions carefully. Some schools specifically require an English paper; others accept a sample from another academic subject. Obviously, a paper that has received high marks from the teacher and is an example of the student's best work should be submitted. With advanced notice and a polite request, a teacher may be willing to rewrite his or her comments and notes on a clean copy of the assignment for submission to secondary school.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Most secondary schools require recommendations from the student's current English and math teachers. In some cases, the school will require or allow a supplemental recommendation from a teacher or another adult. Optional teacher recommendations should be requested from a member of the faculty who knows the student well and has taught him or her in a subject of interest or strength, or a

subject in which the student may have struggled, but through perseverance finished well. Optional recommendations may be requested from an adult who knows the student well, such as a coach, music teacher, scout leader or clergy member. Schools seek “common themes” about the student throughout the admission process. Admission officers look for evidence from a variety of sources that fits together to describe the student. For example, if a student is self-described as “devoted and talented in music” it is important that this be reflected in other parts of the application and in the recommendations of adults who know the student well. If a recommendation refers to a student as “hardworking and accomplished” and his or her grades and essays do not support that assessment, it will have little positive impact on the admission committee.

Keep in mind that admission committees look for recommendations that not only praise the inherent capabilities of an applicant, but also speak to examples of the student’s potential for hard work, perseverance and acceptance of challenge. Secondary schools expect students will encounter areas of difficulty in their high school years. One goal of the admissions process is to identify students who will be able to meet and grow from these challenges.

Foote School faculty take the task of writing recommendations seriously, committing a good deal of time and thought to the task. Teachers use their evenings, weekends and vacations to write recommendations on behalf of their students. It is thus customary and fitting to write a brief thank you note when asking a faculty member for a recommendation. Be sure that your note expresses gratitude for their efforts.

- Personally and politely ask your teacher for a recommendation well before he or she would receive the electronic recommendation link
- Please request recommendations as soon as you have formulated your final list of schools. Requests for recommendations must reach teachers *before Thanksgiving break*.
- Check to see if any forms require parent or guardian signatures.

## 6. SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION

Foote School sends an enthusiastic letter of advocacy on behalf of each applying eighth and ninth grader to every school to which he or she applies. The letter is a profile of the student, and discusses the strengths, passions and areas of growth of that student. It reflects a thorough knowledge of the student based on reports from a variety of teachers the student has worked with at Foote School. This school recommendation, signed by Mr. Considine, is submitted as a cover letter with the school’s portion of the application.

## 7. THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE PROCESS

The student, of course, is the primary focus and subject of the admission process. However, parents can do a great deal to promote their child’s candidacy:

### Do:

- Arrive on time for appointments.
- Have questions ready for the admissions officer.
- Encourage your child to write a brief thank you note to the admissions officer.
- Submit applications on time.
- Be forthcoming with secondary schools about important information.
- Avoid asking for special favors such as exceptions or extensions of deadlines.
- Be attentive, kind, and express interest to the tour guide. He/she will submit a report about the tour.

### Do Not:

- Be late for any appointments.
- Insist on an interview with the Director of Admissions.
- Grill a student tour guide about a particular



school.

- Disparage the school you are visiting, Foote School or any other school.
- Submit anything after the deadline.
- Withhold important information about your child's academic or social needs.
- Request multiple letters of recommendation from family friends or "connections."
- Send videotapes, recordings, or a portfolio to the school unless requested.
- Send gifts to admissions officers or coaches.
- Stop by an admissions office without an appointment (except during open houses).
- Remain on the wait list at a school after you have returned a signed contract and enrollment deposit to another school.

## 8. THE ADMISSIONS PACKAGE

### **Foote School's Responsibility:**

- School Recommendation Letter
- Transcript
- English Teacher Recommendation
- Math Teacher Recommendation

### **Student/Family Responsibility:**

- Application Form and Fee
- Taking required standardized tests, and arranging for the scores to be sent to each school
- Essay
- Graded Writing Sample (if requested)
- Portfolio (if requested)
- Updated Psychological-Educational Testing (if requested)
- Application for Financial Aid and supporting information (if applying for aid)

## COMMON APPLICATION FORM

Many schools accept the common application form as a convenience to students who are applying to several schools. (See the online version of this guide for a link to the common application.)

Please check with individual admissions offices about whether they accept the common application form. If a school uses the common application, the staff has agreed that common applications will be treated the same as the school's own application form. When in doubt, check with Mr. Considine.

Most schools now prefer the **online application option. Most of these schools' applications are available through "standard application online" or "Gateway to Prep Schools."** See [www.ssat.org](http://www.ssat.org) and [www.gatewaytoprepschools.com](http://www.gatewaytoprepschools.com). **Choate Rosemary Hall's application may be found through their website, [www.choate.edu](http://www.choate.edu).**

## APPLICATION ADVICE

1. Read all the directions carefully.
2. Submit recommendation forms and *signed* requests for transcript releases in a timely manner. Unsigned documents will cause a delay in processing.
3. Make copies, download or save:
  - a) application forms prior to writing on them
  - b) completed applications for your records – this can be a huge help if application forms are lost in the mail or at the school.
4. Edit and review all materials for typos, spelling, accuracy and completeness of information.

## IV. FINANCIAL AID

**Timeliness is critical in the financial aid process.**

Financial aid is limited at most schools and is distributed first to those admitted applicants whose forms are received on time.

Parents who seek financial assistance should request information directly from each school to which

their child is applying. **Keep in mind that each independent school has its own specific financial aid policies.**

Most NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) schools subscribe to the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey, for processing of financial assistance information. Schools subscribing to SSS will provide a copy of the Parents' Financial Statement (PFS), which parents should complete and send to SSS along with a fee. The PFS can also be completed online, (again, please note that the online version of this guide has direct links to all these sites and more) and the fee submitted by credit card. Most schools allow this option; some require it. Parents must request that an official report from SSS be sent directly to each school at which you are applying for financial aid. Most schools also request a copy of the SSS application and a copy of your most recent completed and signed tax return.

The SSS process is intended to provide an equitable determination of the amount a family can contribute in a given year toward the costs of their son or daughter's education. The formula takes into account a variety of factors including income, assets, tuition costs for other children, and other family obligations. The SSS report provides a recommended "Family Contribution." Schools use this data to inform their decisions about individual financial aid awards. The Family Contribution is subtracted from the overall cost of attendance for one year at a school. The remainder amount is called "Student Need." Some schools provide financial aid awards which meet 100 percent of the calculated Student Need. Other schools provide financial aid awards which meet a portion (for example, 80%) of the calculated Student Need. These are important distinctions which will determine the actual amount a family will pay.

Most schools offer a variety of payment plans including monthly payments of tuition. Some include loans as part of the financial aid package.

Schools usually determine a student's financial need based on the principle that both parents are responsible for the support and educational expenses of their children to the extent that they are financially

able to assume responsibility. *If a child's parents reside in separate households*, each parent should complete the PFS for his/her household. In our experience, schools will not consider an application for assistance without financial statements and tax returns from both parents.

Although the financial aid process can be complicated, it can open doors to a terrific secondary school experience for some students. If you have questions about the financial aid application process, please contact Mr. Considine early in the process. Kelly Small, Foote School's Financial Aid Director, may also be a resource to help families with general questions about financial aid applications, SSS forms, or comparing financial aid awards received from two or more schools.

#### **NEED-BLIND VS NEED-BASED ADMISSIONS**

In a *need-blind* admissions process, applicants for admission are evaluated without regard to their ability to pay. After admission decisions are made, applicants who have applied for financial assistance receive a separate letter from the school financial aid office outlining how much financial assistance, if any, is offered. In this process some admitted students will receive a financial aid award calculated on the basis of family need. Other admitted students, however, may receive a letter indicating that no financial aid is available. Schools elect to use this process because they seek to separate the admission and financial aid processes and wish to communicate to candidates that their record has earned them a place at the school, even if the school's financial aid budget cannot fulfill their financial need.

In a *need-based* process, ability to pay is considered during the admission process. The admissions committee is authorized to spend a budgeted amount as it admits students to the incoming class. Some applicants requiring financial aid are admitted and financial aid awards are provided to those students. Other strong candidates may be wait-listed or denied admission because the school has expended its budgeted financial aid. During the past decade most schools have moved to a need-based aid policy. They seek to anticipate and control financial aid costs, and believe that it is not helpful to offer admission

without financial aid to students who will require financial aid to attend.

Parents are encouraged to ask admissions officers about the financial aid policies of the schools to which they are applying and to discuss their questions or concerns with Mr. Considine.

In the end, each family must evaluate the feasibility of attending a particular school based upon the overall cost, the financial aid award and their own resources and family situation.

## V. STANDARDIZED TESTING PREPARATION

The fundamental preparation for standardized testing is to read, read, read! Reading is effective preparation for all subtests, even mathematics.

There are many study guides available at local bookstores and online.

Titles include:

- *Kaplan/ SSAT/ ISEE Upper Level*: Johanna Cohem and Darcy L Galane.
- *The Princeton Review: Cracking the SSAT and ISEE*: Elizabeth Silas and Reed Talada.
- *Peterson's SSAT/ISEE Success*: Elaine Bender.

### **SSAT (SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST)**

The SSAT is administered nationally seven times a year at hundreds of sites all over the U.S. The number of registrants allowed at each test administration is limited, so it is wise to register early for the tests.

Visit [www.ssat.org](http://www.ssat.org) for specific testing dates, locations and fees. Students may take the SSAT as often as they wish, even for practice, although we recommend that parents meet with Mr. Considine to discuss the best testing strategy for their child. Be sure to have all test scores sent to Foote School.

### **ISEE (INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM)**

The ISEE is administered by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) and is accepted by many of the schools to which Foote School students apply. The ISEE is similar to the SSAT in format, but parents should discuss with Mr. Considine which test is most appropriate for their child. More information about the ISEE is available through the ERB website, [www.erablearn.org](http://www.erablearn.org).

You may download their annual Student Guide at [www.erablearn.org](http://www.erablearn.org).

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS ON STANDARDIZED TESTS**

Both the SSAT and ISEE provide accommodations for students who qualify. Depending on the specific accommodation, the test organizations may simply require evidence of a history of accommodation, or more formal and specific documentation from a licensed evaluator. If you will be pursuing accommodations, please be sure to study the test organization's requirements carefully well before the registration deadline.

## **ERBs**

Foote School administers the ERB (Educational Records Bureau) test annually to students in grades 5 through 9. We use the results of the test as an internal diagnostic tool and to provide Foote School students with practice taking standardized tests. ERBs include national and independent school norms, and provide useful information about where Foote School students stand in relation to their peer group nationally and at other independent schools. When families meet with Mr. Considine, they review and discuss ERB results for the individual student. ERB scores provide information about specific subtest areas a student may need to study prior to taking the SSAT or ISEE. ERB test scores are not included on the transcript, nor does Foote School send ERB scores to schools, unless they are specifically requested by a school or parent.

## **VI. VISITING SCHOOLS**

Visiting schools can be a rewarding experience for students and their parents. Parents have the primary role in the choice of a secondary school for their child. The process provides an opportunity for parents to teach good decision-making skills their child will use for rest of his or her life. Spending time together visiting, interviewing and evaluating schools can be an exceptional learning experience. For many parents, it is an unusual opportunity to learn more about their child's self-knowledge. For students, it offers a chance to work with parents in a different role, that of partner and advocate.

Many students find it helpful to make brief notes about their impressions of each school, noting features they liked and disliked. This helps later when student and parents sit down to decide on a final list of applications, and is especially useful when families visit schools over several months.

### **Open Houses**

Open houses are scheduled by most day schools and provide an introduction to a school, its programs and values, without actually going through the interview process. Generally held in the evening or on weekends, open houses usually include tours and opportunities to speak with faculty and current students as well as admissions staff.

### **Scheduling Visits**

It is a good practice for students and their parents to cross-reference their school calendars and other planners in order to determine several convenient visiting days. Flexibility is important, since it may not be possible to schedule an appointment on your first choice date.

Once you have compiled a list of available dates, call the schools and ask to schedule a campus visit. When visiting schools, it may be possible to schedule two visits per day, depending on the proximity of schools to one another. It is appropriate to ask the admissions office of one school about the travel time between schools.

## **VII. THE INTERVIEW**

Interviews are an exchange. The admissions officer can learn more about a student and his or her family, and the family has the opportunity to learn more about the school. The typical admissions officer truly enjoys meeting students and getting to know them, and earnestly strives to avoid scaring or embarrassing candidates.

Everyone involved has a stake in doing his/her part to ensure that the time involved in the interview is well spent. The admissions officer has the responsibility to be knowledgeable about the school and interested in the candidate. Many schools allow time for the

applicant to talk with an admissions officer and, afterward, for parents to talk with the admissions officer, either with the student or separately. The student should be prepared to talk about his/her own interests and experiences and should be ready with school-specific questions for the admissions officer. Parents should have questions as well and be prepared to discuss their child.

During the interview students or parents may be asked to list the other schools being considered. It's fine to provide this information, which indicates that you are involved in a thoughtful process. It is not necessary to rank the schools or to swear that one school is your first choice if it isn't or if you haven't determined a first choice. Students and parents can report the schools they plan to visit without ranking them. Even if your feelings about a particular school are undecided or ambivalent at the time of the interview, it is important to project a strong interest in learning about the school. If later in the process this school becomes a top choice, it would be unfortunate if the admissions officer remembered that you seemed uninterested or expressed little enthusiasm during the visit. This advice applies to both parents and students.

### **ATTIRE/ MANNERS**

It is helpful to inquire about the dress code of any school you will visit, and students should dress in a manner that is consistent with school policy. If in doubt, students should wear a jacket and tie, or a skirt or slacks and a blouse. If the school does not have a dress code, a polo shirt and khakis, or a blouse with nice slacks or a skirt are good choices.

Good manners make a difference — remember to:

- stand when an adult comes into the room
- offer a firm handshake
- look people directly in the eye
- speak clearly and audibly
- smile unabashedly
- send a thank you note

A small but powerful gesture, a note of thanks to a student tour guide, an admissions officer or a teacher who wrote you a recommendation shines a light on your character and thus your candidacy.

## STUDENT INTERVIEW PREPARATION

1. Prepare three school-specific questions based on careful and thorough research. Don't ask questions that can be answered by reviewing the first few pages of the school's viewbook.

2. Spend some "quality time" thinking about yourself before the interview:

- Who are you?
- How have you grown?
- What have you contributed to Foote School and to your community?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What do you hope to be?

## SOME QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY BE ASKED

- Please describe your favorite teacher. What made him or her so special to you?
- Based upon your visit today, how would you compare our school to Foote School?
- What are you seeking in a secondary school?
- Why are you considering this school?
- Which newspapers and/or magazines do you read?
- What are the last three books you have read? Which one was your favorite? Why?
- What did you do last summer?
- Think of someone you like or dislike and tell me why you feel this way.
- What is the biggest challenge that you have faced in your life so far? How did you work your way through the challenge?
- Describe what you do in your free time.
- What qualities best describe you?
- What are you most proud of?
- What area of your life do you need to work on the most?
- What steps are you taking to improve in those areas?
- How will you contribute to our school?
- What are your future plans?

## SOME QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY WANT TO ASK

- Please tell me about your advisory system.
- Is a student automatically assigned an advisor? How many students does each advisor counsel? How often can I expect to meet with my advisor?
- What kind of access do students have to music/athletic facilities?
- What were the biggest issues on campus last year? This year?
- What is the usual course load for a freshman or sophomore?
- Please describe the college guidance program.
- What is the average class size? Is it different for specific courses and levels?
- Is there a list of college acceptances and matriculations for last year's graduates?
- What do students like most about being here?
- How much choice is given to freshmen and sophomores in terms of course selection?

## PARENT INTERVIEW PREPARATION

### SOME QUESTIONS PARENTS MAY BE ASKED

- How would you describe your child?
- What are his/her strengths or weaknesses?
- Is there a particular strength you hope will be nurtured or developed, or a weakness needing support?
- Please describe the ideal school, real or imagined, for your son or daughter.
- What else would you like us to know about you or your child that we have not asked?

### SOME QUESTIONS PARENTS MAY WANT TO ASK

- Do the students come together as a whole during the week? How often? Where?
- Are students required to attend meals? How often?

- Do students have advisors? How are they chosen? What kind of contact can I expect from him or her?
- Do students have to participate in sports all three seasons? What are the requirements for after school activities?
- What electronic resources will my child need? Will we need to purchase them?
- Are there classes on Saturdays?
- What is the role of parents?
- What can I expect by way of communication?
- If my child needs academic help, how accessible are teachers? Will they find my child or will my child have to find the teachers?
- When and how can I expect to be informed of any academic difficulty and by whom?
- How would you describe the level of *en loco parentis* at the school?
- What are the academic requirements for the ninth and tenth grades?
- Will my child have the opportunity to take elective courses, like art or music?
- Will my child have the opportunity to participate in sports if he or she is not a varsity athlete?
- How would you describe disciplinary procedures and philosophy?
- If you could change one thing about this school what would it be?
- What would you say is the most common complaint/praise from students about the school?
- How would most students describe this school?
- Describe the typical student who enters as a

ninth or tenth grader.

- What are the hardest adjustments for new students here?
- How might this school be able to accommodate my child's special interest or needs such as swimming, violin, advanced math or waiving a graduation requirement?

#### BOARDING SCHOOL QUESTIONS

- Are there structured study halls in the evening? Where do they take place? Who monitors them?
- How many students is a dorm parent responsible for?
- What are their other duties?
- What time is lights out?
- How many meals are students required to eat in the dining hall each week?
- Are meals served family-style or cafeteria-style?
- Are there Saturday classes?
- Are sports required every term?
- How can a student be involved in sports and drama? Or sports and community service?
- How are weekends structured? How many students typically remain on campus?
- What activities are offered on weekends?
- How many students enter in the tenth grade?
- Are students assigned work jobs around school?

## **VIII. ACCEPT/DENY/WAIT LIST**

### **TO ACCEPT AN OFFER OF ENROLLMENT**

When a student has been offered a place in any school, the response should be prompt and polite. Sign the enrollment contract and return it with the deposit as soon as possible. If you need additional information in order to make a decision, call to get that information or make plans for a second visit soon after receiving your acceptance letter.

### **TO DECLINE AN OFFER OF ENROLLMENT**

When a student is accepted at a school and chooses to go elsewhere, it is polite to send a prompt and brief note of thanks to the Director of Admission. The note should thank the school for the offer, and inform them of the decision to go elsewhere. Most schools appreciate hearing where you plan to enroll. Promptly declining an offer of admission may make room for a student on the wait list.

### **WAIT LIST**

Wait lists are perhaps the most unpredictable part of the admissions process. Each year admissions from the wait list vary greatly from one school to another, and the number of students admitted from wait lists varies greatly from year to year. There really is no way of predicting wait list outcomes.

Students who are placed on a wait list should follow the instructions of that school regarding the wait list procedure (i.e., return a response card indicating whether or not the student will remain on the wait list). It is also appropriate to write a brief note to the Director of Admissions to express the desire either to remain on the wait list or to be removed.

If a family elects to remain on a wait list, they should communicate that decision immediately to Mr. Considine. He is likely to talk with admissions officers about the status of the wait list and may be asked about your level of interest. Our experience with the various schools can be helpful to families trying to understand their options. Thus, close communication between the student, parents and Mr. Considine will be especially important for

students who accept a place on a wait list.

Even if you hope to be admitted from a wait list at one school, it is necessary to send a deposit holding your place at another school before the April 10 response deadline. Here again, the timing of the decision to accept admission to another school may benefit from communication between the family and Mr. Considine.

## A. SECONDARY SCHOOL DIRECTORY

| NAME OF SCHOOL/<br>ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR               | LOCATION<br>PHONE #              | TYPE              | SIZE | WEBSITE                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>15-30 MINUTES FROM FOOTE SCHOOL:</b>              |                                  |                   |      |                                                                          |
| Lauralton Hall<br>Kathleen Shine                     | Milford<br>203-877-2786, x125    | D-Girls<br>9-12   | 450  | <a href="http://www.laureltonhall.org">www.laureltonhall.org</a>         |
| Cheshire Academy<br>Scott Pottbecker                 | Cheshire<br>203-439-7247         | B,D-Coed<br>8-PG  | 400  | <a href="http://www.cheshireacademy.org">www.cheshireacademy.org</a>     |
| Choate Rosemary Hall<br>Amin Abdul-Malik Gonzalez    | Wallingford<br>203-697-2000      | B,D-Coed<br>9-PG  | 865  | <a href="http://www.choate.edu">www.choate.edu</a>                       |
| Fairfield College Preparatory<br>Gregory H. Marshall | Fairfield<br>203-254-4210        | D-Boys<br>9-12    | 901  | <a href="http://www.fairfieldprep.org">www.fairfieldprep.org</a>         |
| Hamden Hall<br>Janet Izzo                            | Hamden<br>203-752-2602           | D-Coed<br>PreK-12 | 565  | <a href="http://www.hamdenhall.org">www.hamdenhall.org</a>               |
| Hopkins School<br>Pamela R. McKenna                  | New Haven<br>203-397-1001 x213   | D-Coed<br>7-12    | 711  | <a href="http://www.hopkins.edu">www.hopkins.edu</a>                     |
| Notre Dame High School<br>Pasquale Izzo              | West Haven<br>203-933-1673, x242 | D-Boys<br>9-12    | 625  | <a href="http://www.notredamehs.com">www.notredamehs.com</a>             |
| Sacred Heart Academy<br>Elaine Lambolely             | Hamden<br>203-288-2309           | D-Girls<br>9-12   | 507  | <a href="http://www.sacredhearthamden.org">www.sacredhearthamden.org</a> |
| <b>30-45 MINUTES FROM FOOTE SCHOOL:</b>              |                                  |                   |      |                                                                          |
| Greens Farms Academy<br>Ann Miller                   | Westport<br>203-256-7525         | D-Coed<br>PreK-12 | 695  | <a href="http://www.gfacademy.org">www.gfacademy.org</a>                 |
| King Low Heywood Thomas<br>Nina Newman               | Stamford<br>203-322-3496<br>x352 | D-Coed<br>PreK-12 | 702  | <a href="http://www.klht.org">www.klht.org</a>                           |
| Kingswood Oxford School<br>Rebecca Benavides         | West Hartford<br>860-727-5001    | D-Coed<br>6-12    | 516  | <a href="http://www.kingswoodoxford.org">www.kingswoodoxford.org</a>     |
| Loomis Chaffee<br>Erby Mitchell                      | Windsor<br>860-687-6070          | B,D-Coed<br>9-PG  | 650  | <a href="http://www.loomischaffee.org">www.loomischaffee.org</a>         |
| Miss Porter's School<br>Elizabeth Schmitt            | Farmington<br>860-409-3614       | B,D-Girls<br>9-12 | 320  | <a href="http://www.porters.org">www.porters.org</a>                     |



**45-90 MINUTES FROM FOOTE SCHOOL:**

|                                             |                                  |                    |     |                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Avon Old Farms School<br>Brendon Welker     | Avon<br>860-404-4243             | B-Boys<br>9-PG     | 408 | <a href="http://www.avonoldfarms.com">www.avonoldfarms.com</a><br>(online applications only) |
| Canterbury School<br>Matt Mulhern           | New Milford<br>860-210-3832      | B,D-Coed<br>9-PG   | 350 | <a href="http://www.cbury.org">www.cbury.org</a>                                             |
| Chase Collegiate School<br>Ruth Teague      | Waterbury<br>203-236-9561        | D-Coed<br>9-12     | 350 | <a href="http://www.chasecollegiate.org">www.chasecollegiate.org</a>                         |
| Ethel Walker School<br>Jennifer Reynolds    | Simsbury<br>860-658-4467         | B,D-Girls<br>6-12  | 258 | <a href="http://www.ethelwalker.org">www.ethelwalker.org</a>                                 |
| The Gunnery<br>Sara Lynn Leavenworth        | Washington<br>860-868-7334       | B,D-Coed<br>9-PG   | 286 | <a href="http://www.gunnery.org">www.gunnery.org</a>                                         |
| The Hotchkiss School<br>Jane Reynolds       | Lakeville<br>860-435-2591        | B,D-Coed<br>9-PG   | 601 | <a href="http://www.hotchkiss.org">www.hotchkiss.org</a>                                     |
| Kent School<br>Sarah Gleason Ross           | Kent<br>860-927-6111             | B,D-Coed<br>9-12   | 570 | <a href="http://www.kent-school.edu">www.kent-school.edu</a>                                 |
| Marvelwood School<br>Katherine Almquist     | Kent<br>860-927-0047             | B,D-Coed<br>9-12   | 170 | <a href="http://www.marvelwood.org">www.marvelwood.org</a>                                   |
| Millbrook School<br>Jonathan Downs          | Millbrook, NY<br>845-677-8261    | B,D - Coed<br>9-12 | 252 | <a href="http://www.millbrook.org">www.millbrook.org</a>                                     |
| Pomfret School<br>Amy Graham                | Pomfret<br>860-963-6100          | B,D-Coed<br>9-PG   | 350 | <a href="http://www.pomfretschool.org">www.pomfretschool.org</a>                             |
| Salisbury<br>Peter Gilbert                  | Salisbury<br>860-435-5700        | B,D-Boys<br>9-12   | 307 | <a href="http://www.salisburyschool.org">www.salisburyschool.org</a>                         |
| South Kent School<br>Gonzalo Garcia-Pedroso | South Kent<br>860-927-3539, x201 | B,D-Boys<br>9-12   | 183 | <a href="http://www.southkentschool.org">www.southkentschool.org</a>                         |
| Suffield Academy<br>Terry F. Breault        | Suffield<br>860-386-4440         | B,D-Coed<br>9-12   | 410 | <a href="http://www.suffieldacademy.org">www.suffieldacademy.org</a>                         |
| Taft School<br>Peter Frew                   | Watertown<br>860-945-7700        | B,D-Coed<br>9-12   | 600 | <a href="http://www.taftschool.org">www.taftschool.org</a>                                   |
| Watkinson School<br>John Crosson            | Hartford<br>860-236-5618         | D-Coed<br>6-12,PG  | 250 | <a href="http://www.watkinson.org">www.watkinson.org</a>                                     |
| Westminster School<br>Jon C. Deveaux        | Simsbury<br>860-408-3060         | B,D-Coed<br>9-12   | 390 | <a href="http://www.westminsterschool.org">www.westminsterschool.org</a>                     |
| Westover School<br>Sara Sykes               | Middlebury<br>203-758-2423       | B,D-Girls<br>9-12  | 200 | <a href="http://www.westoverschool.org">www.westoverschool.org</a>                           |

|                                    |                            |                |     |                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Williams School<br>Sharon Gaudreau | New London<br>860-443-5333 | D-Coed<br>7-12 | 250 | <a href="http://www.williamsschool.org">www.williamsschool.org</a> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

**OTHER:**

|                                              |                                   |                    |       |                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deerfield Academy<br>Pam Safford             | Deerfield, MA<br>413-774-1400     | B,D- Coed<br>9-12  | 652   | <a href="http://www.deerfield.edu">www.deerfield.edu</a>         |
| Emma Willard School<br>Jamie Hicks-Furgang   | Troy, NY<br>518-833-1320          | B,D- Girls<br>9-12 | 337   | <a href="http://www.emmawillard.org">www.emmawillard.org</a>     |
| Groton School<br>Ian Gracey                  | Groton, MA<br>978-448-7510        | B,D- Coed<br>8-12  | 369   | <a href="http://www.groton.org">www.groton.org</a>               |
| The Lawrenceville School<br>Tom Sheppard     | Lawrenceville, NJ<br>609-895-2030 | B,D- Coed<br>9-12  | 815   | <a href="http://www.lawrenceville.org">www.lawrenceville.org</a> |
| Phillips Academy, Andover<br>James F. Ventre | Andover, MA<br>978-749-4050       | B,D- Coed<br>9-12  | 1,141 | <a href="http://www.andover.edu">www.andover.edu</a>             |
| Phillips Exeter Academy<br>Michael Gary      | Exeter, NH<br>603-777-3437        | B,D- Coed<br>9-12  | 1,050 | <a href="http://www.exeter.edu">www.exeter.edu</a>               |
| St. Paul's School<br>Scott Bohan             | Concord, NH<br>603-229-4700       | B,Coed<br>9-12     | 545   | <a href="http://www.sps.edu">www.sps.edu</a>                     |

**WEBSITES FOR AREA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS**

Amity Regional High School (Bethany, Woodbridge, Orange)  
[www.amityregion5.org](http://www.amityregion5.org)

Branford High School  
[www.branfordhigh.org](http://www.branfordhigh.org)

Daniel Hand High School (Madison)  
[www.danielhand.org](http://www.danielhand.org)

Hamden High School  
[www.hamden.org](http://www.hamden.org)

Hillhouse High School  
[www.nhps.net/hillhousehigh](http://www.nhps.net/hillhousehigh)

North Haven High School  
[www.north-haven.k12.ct.us](http://www.north-haven.k12.ct.us)

Guilford High School  
[www.guilfordschools.org](http://www.guilfordschools.org)

Wilbur Cross High School  
<http://schools.nhps.net/wcross>

New Haven Charter and Magnet Schools  
[www.newhavenmagnetschools.com](http://www.newhavenmagnetschools.com)

New Haven Promise College Scholarships  
[www.newhavenpromise.org](http://www.newhavenpromise.org)

## B. TIMETABLE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spring/Fall                | Meet with Liam Considine to begin discussion of secondary schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Late Summer/<br>Early Fall | Schedule appointments at schools<br>Arrange for testing at religiously based schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Fall                       | Visit schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| October                    | Take tests for religiously based schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Fall                       | Register for SSAT and/or ISEE<br>SSAT test dates: Oct. 15, Nov. 12, Dec. 10, Jan. 7<br>(see <a href="http://www.ssat.org">www.ssat.org</a> for details)<br>ISEE test dates: (see <a href="http://erblearn.org">erblearn.org</a> for more dates and details)<br>** Registration dates fall well before test dates – be aware of testing deadlines and school deadlines |
| Nov. 23                    | Deadline for recommendation requests to teachers<br>Email Mr. Considine and Registrar Erika Villa with your final list of schools using the header: FinalSchoolList-studentname                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Nov. 25 - Dec. 16          | Begin drafts of application essays                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Nov., Dec., Jan.           | Take SSAT or ISEE if appropriate and have scores sent directly to schools from testing centers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Dec. 2                     | Transcript requests, etc., to Registrar's Office<br>We cannot guarantee meeting school deadlines if forms are not submitted on time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Jan. 15                    | Send completed applications directly to schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Jan.15                     | Foote School sends transcripts, school reports and letters of recommendation to schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Late Jan./<br>Early Feb.   | Determine deadlines for public high school class registration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| March 10                   | Notification from secondary schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| April 10                   | Deadline to inform schools of decision<br>Please inform Mr. Considine of your decision as well!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**C. APPLICANT SELF-ASSESSMENT**

A copy is filled out by the student and kept on file by Mr. Considine as a resource during the application process.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like most about going to school and being part of a community?

If you didn't know me well, it might be hard to know this about me:

Since I began at Foote's Middle School, I have grown in many ways, but I have grown the most in:

Eight words that others might use to describe me are:

What activities have you participated in and what positions have you held while at Foote School in the last three years? (Please specify which years for each activity.)

What awards have you won at Foote and elsewhere during the past three years? (Don't worry if you do not have an answer for this.)

What interests do you have outside of school?

Is there anything else I should know about you during the admissions process?

**D. PARENT REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF RECORDS - THE FOOTE SCHOOL**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ Please release the transcript only to the school listed below.  
I will sign a separate Release of Records form for every school.

Name of school \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please release the transcript to all schools to which my child has applied.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name (please print)

## E. SECONDARY SCHOOL MATRICULATIONS 2012-2016

In the past five years, 248 graduates from our eighth and ninth grades have enrolled at 12 independent day schools, 15 public high schools and 27 independent boarding schools.

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (DAY STUDENTS)

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Cheshire Academy                  | 9  |
| Choate Rosemary Hall              | 86 |
| Hamden Hall Country Day School    | 12 |
| Hopkins School                    | 38 |
| Jewish High School of Connecticut | 1  |
| Lauralton Hall                    | 2  |
| Notre Dame High School            | 1  |
| Sacred Heart Academy              | 3  |
| Riverdale Country School          | 1  |
| St. Joseph High School            | 1  |
| Williams School                   | 1  |
| Xavier High School                | 2  |

### PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Amity Regional High School         | 9 |
| Branford High School               | 4 |
| Coop Arts & Humanities High School | 1 |
| Guilford High School               | 1 |
| Hamden High School *               | 6 |
| Daniel Hand High School (Madison)  | 1 |
| Morgan School (Clinton)            | 2 |
| North Branford High School         | 1 |
| North Haven High School            | 3 |
| Oxford High School                 | 1 |
| Sheehan High School (Wallingford)  | 1 |
| Wilbur Cross High School           | 6 |
| Valley Regional High School        | 1 |
| Out of State                       | 4 |

\* Plus Educational Center for the Arts

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (BOARDING STUDENTS)

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Avon Old Farms                 | 1 |
| Bard College at Simon's Rock   | 1 |
| Berkshire School               | 2 |
| Canterbury School              | 1 |
| Cushing Academy                | 1 |
| Deerfield Academy              | 4 |
| Ethel Walker School            | 1 |
| Groton School                  | 1 |
| Hebron Academy                 | 1 |
| Holderness School              | 3 |
| Hotchkiss School               | 3 |
| Kent School                    | 1 |
| Loomis Chaffee School          | 5 |
| Masters School                 | 1 |
| Miss Porter's School           | 2 |
| Northfield Mount Hermon School | 1 |
| Phillips Academy Andover       | 2 |
| Phillips Exeter Academy        | 1 |
| Protcor Academy                | 2 |
| Salisbury School               | 1 |
| Stoneleigh-Burham School       | 1 |
| Taft School                    | 4 |
| The Gunnery                    | 1 |
| The Leelanau School            | 1 |
| Westminster School             | 4 |
| Westover School                | 2 |
| White Mountain School          | 1 |

## F. COLLEGE MATRICULATIONS 2003-2012

Since 2003, Foote School alumni have attended more than 158 different colleges and universities. Three or more have matriculated at the following schools (as reported to the Alumni and Development Office):

|                                       |    |                             |   |
|---------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|---|
| Yale University                       | 31 | Champlain College           | 3 |
| University of Connecticut             | 14 | Colby College               | 3 |
| Wesleyan University                   | 13 | Elon College                | 3 |
| George Washington University          | 12 | Fairfield University        | 3 |
| Georgetown University                 | 9  | Fordham University          | 3 |
| Bowdoin College                       | 8  | Franklin & Marshall College | 3 |
| Brown University                      | 8  | Northwestern University     | 3 |
| Connecticut College                   | 8  | Roger Williams College      | 3 |
| Southern Conn. State University       | 8  | Sacred Heart University     | 3 |
| Middlebury College                    | 7  | University of Michigan      | 3 |
| Harvard University                    | 6  | University of New Haven     | 3 |
| New York University                   | 6  | Vassar College              | 3 |
| Oberlin College                       | 6  | Villanova University        | 3 |
| St. Lawrence University               | 6  | Washington University       | 3 |
| Tufts University                      | 6  |                             |   |
| University of St. Andrews             | 6  |                             |   |
| Williams College                      | 6  |                             |   |
| Amherst College                       | 5  |                             |   |
| Barnard College                       | 5  |                             |   |
| Boston University                     | 5  |                             |   |
| Ithaca College                        | 5  |                             |   |
| Kenyon College                        | 5  |                             |   |
| University of Chicago                 | 5  |                             |   |
| Boston College                        | 4  |                             |   |
| Colgate University                    | 4  |                             |   |
| Dartmouth College                     | 4  |                             |   |
| Dickinson College                     | 4  |                             |   |
| Gettysburg College                    | 4  |                             |   |
| Hamilton College                      | 4  |                             |   |
| Haverford College                     | 4  |                             |   |
| Johns Hopkins University              | 4  |                             |   |
| Massachusetts Institute of Technology | 4  |                             |   |
| Mount Holyoke College                 | 4  |                             |   |
| Princeton University                  | 4  |                             |   |
| Skidmore College                      | 4  |                             |   |
| Stanford University                   | 4  |                             |   |
| Quinnipiac University                 | 4  |                             |   |
| Bates College                         | 3  |                             |   |
| Carnegie Mellon University            | 3  |                             |   |



**The Foote School  
2016-2017**

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**50 Loomis Place  
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[www.footeschool.org](http://www.footeschool.org)**