

Dear St. Patrick School Parents and Guardians,

The start of the 2023-2024 school year is right around the corner! I hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. I wanted to take a moment prior to the start of school to share with you some important information and a couple of gentle reminders that should get us all off to a great start, So, here we go...

◆ **New School Theme for 2023-2024**

◆ *Gathered As One*

- ◆ As Catholics and followers of Christ, we are all rooted in our Christian heritage. As a Catholic school, we are a community of faith built with our faculty, staff, parents, students, parishioners and benefactors.

◆ **Class Lists:** Class lists will be emailed to parents the week of August 14th

◆ **School Safety:** The safety of our students, faculty and staff are of the utmost priority for St. Patrick School. In addition to the items we have implemented in the past; steel locks for all rooms in the school, cameras outside the building and throughout all hallways and the training of all staff in the procedures for fire, lockdowns or sheltering in place ... we have added another layer this summer.

- ◆ All entrance door windows including side panels and classroom door windows have been protected by a film called Safe Armor. This film stops the glass from breaking for an extended period of time which prevents an intruder from entering our school until we have set in motion our lockdown protocols. ***THANK YOU to our pastor, Father Wojeich for helping us pay for this expensive product.***
- ◆ The entire faculty and staff will receive training on Wednesday, August 16th through the Lake County Sheriff's program, ***Active Threat Response.*** This is in addition to the A.L.I.C.E. protocols of the past.

◆ **Summer Capital Improvements:** I'm excited to share with you the following improvements to our campus over the summer:

- ◆ With the completion of the 4/5 wing installation of new windows and siding, we added this summer a new deck off their exit doors. All the new inside window casings were painted and new blinds installed.
- ◆ The ground of the playground areas were repaired and new rubber chips were added. ***THANK YOU, Parents Association for your financial support of this.***
- ◆ New blinds were installed in Dyer Hall, 4/5 STEM lab, Jr. High STEM Lab, and Staff Lounge. ***THANK YOU again, Parents Association for your partial support this project.*** Please know the fundraisers sponsored by our Parents Association help to cover these kinds of expenses each summer.
- ◆ We installed the new cornerstone at the entrance of the school.
- ◆ Through the federal EANS grant we were able to purchase new desks for every classroom and other needed furniture throughout the school.
- ◆ Also through the EANS grant new gym equipment, teacher laptops and some new Chromebooks were purchased.

◆ **School Calendars:** There are so many exciting and amazing events this year. You don't want to miss any of them. I am attaching the most recent ***SPS Calendar at a Glance*** (it was just recently updated to include sacramental dates) and our ***SPS Events Calendar*** for you to have as quick and easy references. I will also share with you our ***Pizza Day/Out of Uniform Day Calendar, School Mass Calendar and our NO School Calendar.*** Each is meant to be a quick access to dates you will want to know throughout the year.

- ◆ Please know that our all school calendar (a culmination of all calendars) is on our website for quick and easy access on the go. Go to the homepage. You will find it in the top menu bar.

◆ **Chromebooks:** Students must come to school each day with a ***charged*** Chromebook. If a student in grades 4-8 forgets their Chromebook, parents will be called to bring it to school. This is an important tool they need. Our loaner Chromebooks are limited.

- ◆ **Parent Nights:** We will be back in person this year! We begin in the gym and then move to the individual classrooms. *This year's parent nights are:*
  - ◆ K-3 / Sept. 12 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
  - ◆ 4-6 / Sept. 13 - 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. / Sports Meeting for Gr. 5-8 Parents in Dyer Hall - 6:00 p.m.
  
- ◆ **Navigating the Cyber World / Helping Parents for the Protection of Their Child**
  - ◆ September 19 / Boehm Center (gym) / 6:30 p.m.
  - ◆ Join representatives from the Lake County State's Attorney Office on the complex cyber world your children are entering when they begin to use technology on any and all devices.
  - ◆ This presentation is to help parents work with their children to be responsible and **SAFE** when using any technological devices. It is meant to help parents create a technology plan for their family & home.
  
- ◆ **Understanding and Navigating Google Classroom (for Parents in Grades 4-8)**
  - ◆ The teachers in Grades 4-8 would like to present a Parent Class on the use of Google Classroom. This virtual presentation will be on Tuesday, August 29th at 6:30 p.m. A Zoom link will be sent at a later time.
  
- ◆ **Grade Level Ambassadors:** Something new! This year each grade level will have a parent grade level ambassador who will stay in touch with you each month about grade specific information you need to know! They will also be available to answer any questions you may have. You should have received an introduction email already. You can meet your ambassador at our Welcome Back Picnic on August 17th!
  
- ◆ **Water Bottles:** Water fountains are now open again. Students do not need to bring a water bottle to school, but if they choose to please make it a **clear water bottle (of any color)** due to children coming to school with all kinds of drinks not appropriate for school (juice, Red Bull, Gatorade, coffee). The plastic recyclable water bottles are NOT allowed.
  
- ◆ **School Uniform:** Everyone should be in full uniform on the first day of school unless a child's uniform is on back order with Dennis Uniforms. All students should be in **solid black shoes (no markings of any kind)** and reasonably colored socks (white, black, blue, gray). Low cut socks are allowed. Jewelry is kept to a minimum (see our handbook.) Jr. High students should be in their school uniform and **NOT** their gym uniform on the first day of school (August 21).
  
- ◆ **St. Patrick School Parent / Student Handbook:** I will be emailing the updated St. Patrick School Parent / Student Handbook during the first week of school. The faculty and I want to review it one more time before publication. Please take some time to review this handbook and share with your child when you receive my email. Once you have, please click on the link that will also be sent. This will send you to the required Archdiocese of Chicago acknowledgement page indicating your family received and read the handbook.
  
- ◆ **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Band, Choir, Altar Servers and after school trimester programs will be represented with flyers at the Welcome-Back-to-School Picnic on August 17. This year we are offering:
  - ◆ Girls & Boys Sports for Grades 5-8—Volleyball, Basketball, Cross Country, Track, Cheerleading
  - ◆ Band for Grades 4-8 / Recorders for Grade 3
  - ◆ Choir is open to Grades 5-8
  - ◆ Altar Serving is available to Grades 5-8
  - ◆ After-School STEM for Grades 1-4
  - ◆ After-School STEM for Grades 5-8
  - ◆ After-School Art for Grades 1-4
  - ◆ After-School Healthy Habits Club for Grades K-5
  - ◆ After-School Chess Scholars for Grades K-8



- ◆ **Mobile Therapy Centers:** We are affiliated with Mobile Therapy Center of America or MTC. This is a private therapy service provider which bring services directly to St. Patrick School. If you think your child might qualify for certain services, please read the [MTC Letter](#) for more information and then fill out the [Onsite Service Permission Form](#). Return to your classroom teacher.
- ◆ **Jog-a-thon:** This fun and memorable day is coming on September 29th. The committee is always looking for volunteers, but in order to volunteer you must have completed the **Virtus Webinar**. All new parents received a packet with instructions to complete this webinar. Please do so as soon as you can. This is necessary for any volunteer opportunities where children are involved throughout the year.
- ◆ **Arrival / Procedures:** Within our handbook, you will find the steps to our Arrival and Dismissal Procedures. Please read them over before the first day of school. Nothing has changed from last year, so here are a couple of reminders...
  - ◆ When driving EAST on Wadsworth Rd., only enter the left turn lane when you approach Chicago Ave. (across from the school's exit) and not before.
  - ◆ Please be on time. Don't forget that our doors close promptly at 7:55 a.m. each morning. The State of IL passed a new law last year that we are required to follow (see our handbook) regarding absenteeism and tardiness.
  - ◆ Remember to share all the procedures with anyone dropping off or picking up your child. We often see grandparents who appear very confused.
  - ◆ All those picking up students must have the SPS yellow identification card.
  - ◆ Slow down as you enter the school grounds. We ask that you do not arrive for dismissal before 2:15 p.m. in the afternoon. In fact, staggering when you come for dismissal means you won't have to wait too long to join the pick-up train.
  - ◆ Cell phones are not allowed when driving on our campus.
  - ◆ Always follow attendants instructions to move forward, etc... Cars are not to stop at individual doors. Students walk to and from your car wherever it is located in the train.
- ◆ **We Welcome New Faculty and Staff:**
  - ◆ New Teachers: Janis Rial in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Lauren Smith in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - ◆ New Aides: Meetu Deora in primary, Colleen Case and Diana Ruiz in intermediate, and Chrissy Bawcum, Kelly Mantas, Sara Lerner in junior high. Aileen Duarte will also be moving to Jr. High and Barbara Urbanik will be part-time primary aide and part-time art teacher.
  - ◆ Becki Chorazy is replacing Molly McGillivray and Bridget McKinnon has now been hired as our Behavioral Interventionist.
  - ◆ Becki Mieczynski will remain teaching both 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA classes and continue as our part-time assistant principal.
  - ◆ Janet Hart is moving to the Jr. High! She will be teaching 6<sup>th</sup> grade math and one class of 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA.
  - ◆ Nick Huffman will be teaching both 7th grade ELA classes and one 6th grade ELA class.

Finally and most importantly, let me thank you once again for entrusting your child's well-being and education into the hands of our St. Patrick School's faculty and staff! We are grateful for this opportunity to be a part of this partnership and wonderful faith community. I want to remind you of our ***Meet and Greet on Thursday, August 17th*** from 4-6 p.m. This time is set aside by our faculty and staff to welcome and meet your children, to allow students to meet their teacher and to drop off students' supplies. This year the school board will be hosting a ***Welcome-Back-to-School Picnic*** in our back parking lot. Join us after visiting your student's classroom! Have a hot dog and some ice cream. There will be much to see, learn and do. Don't forget to bring a chair and something to drink.

I'm looking forward to working with you for another great year at SPS!

In peace and gratitude,

Mrs. Mary Vitulli  
Principal

