



August 2019

Dear Parents,

We begin another school year with open arms ready and willing to embrace, support, challenge and enjoy your special gift to us. We extend a warm welcome to all of our new families and students. Our goal is pure and simple: we want your child to be nurtured in a community that recognizes Christ as its center. Thomas Lickona, a developmental psychologist, poses two questions in his document *A Comprehensive Approach to Character building in Catholic Schools*:

- (1) How can we encourage children and adults to develop a personal, prayerful, sacramental relationship with Jesus that will enable Him to live more fully in them-to give them, His very self, His character?
- (2) How can the Catholic school become a living Incarnation of Christ, a community that enables all its members to experience the transforming power of God's love through the generous, forgiving, yet demanding love of Christians?

These two questions can guide us throughout the year; we can stop periodically and ask where we are in the journey.

Every year, the teachers and the administration set goals in each area that supports three major areas of our Mission: Catholic Identity, Academics, Social Growth and Development. The following are the essential questions that will drive our year:

Catholic Identity: How can we grow in the virtue of Charity, Mercy and Mission?

Academics: How can we use data to improve and inform instruction?

Social Growth and Development: How can mindfulness practices improve executive functioning skills, self-regulation, self-determination and self-realization?

Throughout the year, you will be informed about our growth in each of each one of those areas.

Next, here are several important reminders as we look forward to the start of school:

- School opens on Wednesday Sept. 4, 2019. Morning Prayer will begin at 8:15 for students in grades 1 through 8. We invite you to join us at that time for the 2019 "CLAP IN" for our students.
- Back to School Night is scheduled for Thursday Sept. 5 for Pre k through eighth grade. Specific information about the evening will be sent home closer to the date.

Faculty and Staff Updates: As mentioned in the “Summer Update”, several of our staff and faculty are transitioning to new roles at SMS. We created a third kindergarten class; Mrs. Cloud will be teaching that class. Ms. Arata will be teaching fourth grade Reading and Math; the computer room is the designated space for those classes. Mrs. Rumsey will continue to be the support person for Mrs. O’Rourke’s PreK class as well as teach computer classes. Mrs. Lazur is our new academic support teacher for Kindergarten and first through third grades.

SMS Handbook: Please review the Parent handbook and complete all of the necessary forms. Here are a few reminders to make the transition from summer to the school year easier.

- **Absent or late.** Remember to call the school if your child is going to be late or absent. A note for absenteeism is required and must be submitted to the teacher indicating the reason of his/her absence.
- **Car line.** You will notice a new gate that has been installed in the recess yard. The gate has been constructed to allow the traffic to flow both ways. **Remember** to please post your family name in the **windshield**. It will aid the teachers in moving the line in an efficient manner. Please do not get out of your car. If you have to buckle your child in a car seat pull up to the **left** of the line so traffic can continue to move. We ask that you exercise caution in picking up your child. No cell phones please, and put the car in park when loading or unloading your children.
- **Change in dismissal plans.** Notify the school office by 2:00 if you have any change in dismissal plans. Notify the teacher as well, via email.
- **Contacting a teacher or the principal.** When requesting a meeting with a teacher or the principal please state the reason for the meeting in your email.
- **Electronic Equipment-Student Cell phones.** Electronic devices are **not allowed** to be turned on while in school unless expressly permitted by a teacher or staff member. If your child brings his/her phone to school, it must be turned into the homeroom teacher at the beginning of the day. It will be returned to the student at dismissal. Again, a student may not use his/her phone at any time unless they get permission from their teacher or the administration. This may be a difficult transition for some returning from summer vacation; please discuss this rule with your child/ren before schools begins this fall.
- **Entering the building/New security system. The front of the school will be the only point of entry into the building. All other doors are to be locked.** Please ring the bell at the front door. You will be buzzed through the first set of doors. The second set of doors are electronically controlled.
- **Label.** Please label all clothing, school bags, lunch bags and any personal belongings.
- **Late Drop Offs.** It is your prerogative to walk your child up to the school when arriving late, but any student who is late must report to the office first. Students in grades 2- 8 will be sent to their classrooms. A staff member will bring students in grades pre-k through first grade to their classroom.
- **Visitors and Parents** are **not** permitted to go directly to the classrooms.
- **Lunches.** We ask that you drop off all lunches and place them on the shelf in the lobby.
- **School Starts.** School starts at 8:15 beginning with Morning Prayer. School finishes at 3:00. Any student who is not picked up by 3:20 will be sent to CARES and the standard fee will be charged.

- **Safety Drills.** Various safety will be practiced on a monthly basis. They will include but will not be limited to Fire, Lock Down, and Shelter in Place, Evacuation and Scatter Drills. We teach our child to be safe and smart.
- **Tuition.** We ask that all tuition be paid in a timely manner and on schedule. Please contact Cliff Coombs, the business manager for the parish, or Monsignor Dougherty for any concerns regarding this matter.
- **Uniforms.** Uniform information is available in the parent handbook and from the various communications sent home over the summer.
- **Label.** Please label all clothing, school bags, lunch bags and any personal belongings.
- **Vaccinations.** Each student must have up-to-date vaccinations in order to remain in school. In early September, Lower Merion School District will review our records and they will notify you about compliance.

The school has been polished and painted, and the rooms are getting prepared to welcome back our family. A special thanks to Mrs. D, Donna Dodderidge, Anne Becker and Dolores Lopresti for all their efforts this summer. Mr. D, Mr. Banks and Paris worked tirelessly to make certain that everything is in working order. Our hope is to replace the carpeting in each room with flooring. Grade 4 was the classroom that was chosen for the new decorating idea.

As we look ahead, we have several timely opportunities to relate to you. Please check the enclosures in this envelope for more information regarding:

- Please sign up for the STEM afterschool program. This is on a first come first serve basis, so return your registration as soon as possible.
- Chris Stefanik, a Catholic Christian motivational speaker, will be coming to Archbishop Carroll on October 10 from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm. This program called **REBOOT**, a life changing event, is sponsored by St Margaret parish. All students in grades sixth through eighth are encouraged to attend. It is mandatory for the seventh grade as this will be the Confirmation retreat for those students. Tickets can be purchased after all of the Masses or by ordering them on line.
- Please sign up for our parent volunteer science database.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We will see you in a few short weeks.

God's Peace

Mary Anne Johnston

