

Enlightening Minds, Enriching Lives

St. Germaine Family Newsletter

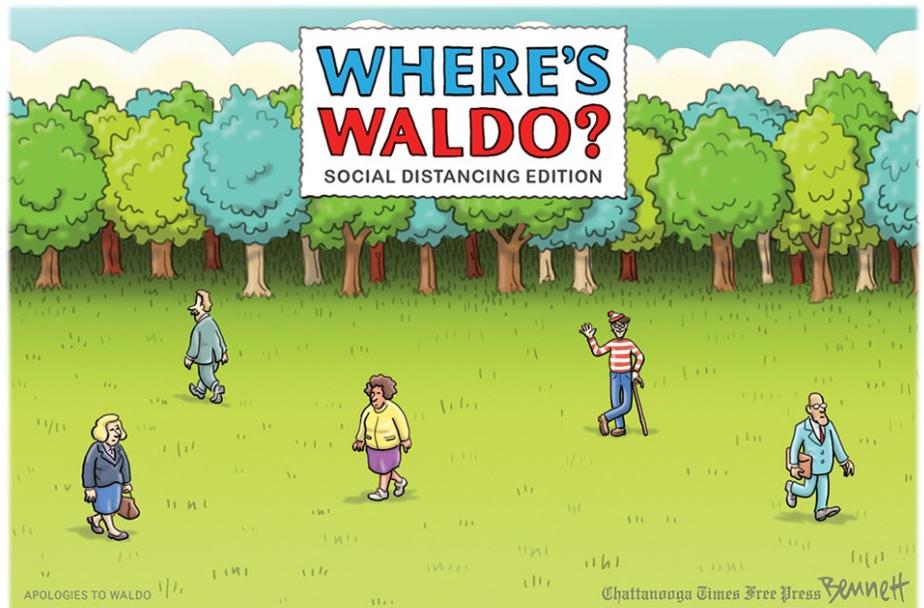
August 28, 2020

Welcome Back Letter/Video from the Office of Catholic Schools

We want to share a link with you for a welcome message from Dr. Rigg, Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

It contains an internal link to a video and some important information about school safety and suggestions for making distance learning work for your child.

https://us1.campaign-archive.com/?e=test_email&u=a09fbf4d2497886d386e21d4b&id=85e383a151



Welcome Back to an Unusual Year!

Thanks for all the positive encouragement and support through the first two weeks of school. We are developing a routine and the students seem to be adapting well. The masks are not proving to be the problem we anticipated. Students are complying well to wearing them during the day. The teachers are finding ways to adapt their classroom settings to accommodate the plastic desk partitions. We feel that the partitions add another layer of protection, but realize that students cannot see some of the classroom activities thru them. (We were faced with a compromise—clear plexiglass partitions were about \$117 per desk and would not be available until mid-September. The partition we chose were within our budget and available before the start of school). We will continue to explore ways to make the partitions workable.

Arrival and Dismissal

The morning arrival is running very smoothly! Thank you for your cooperation and patience with our drive-thru model. Thanks, too, to the volunteers who have been here each morning to do temperature checks and traffic supervision. Their help is making the process easier and more fluid. Several notes that will help to improve the process even more:

- we ask that everyone in the car have a mask on as they approach the temperature stations.
- we ask that the students be ready to exit the car as quickly as possible when reaching the stations.
- wait until your child/ren are “cleared” to enter the building before leaving the parking lot
- the temperature stations in the parking lot will close at 8:00 a.m. If you arrive after 8:00 and no one is available to take temperatures, please drive to the school office door on Kolin Avenue to complete the arrival temperature check.

Guidance from OCS Regarding Students who are ILL

The morning arrival screening is designed to isolate any students presenting with possible COVID symptoms. Any student who shows a temperature of 100.4° will not be admitted to the building. We ask you to be especially vigilant about **NOT SENDING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL** if they present any of the numerous COVID symptoms.

We are awaiting further clarification from OCS and the IDPH regarding handling “typical childhood illnesses.” We have already had **students at the office complaining that they are “not feeling well.”** (Upset stomachs, headache, sore throat). At this point, all of these symptoms are categorized as COVID symptoms and **require that we send home the student and all siblings in the building.** We know that in the past, “avoidance behavior”—not wanting to do Math or simply “be in school” have prompted students to come to the office in the hopes of going home. Please discuss the protocol and its ramifications with your child(ren). We will not be able to send students back to class if they allege COVID-like symptoms. All family members will need to go home.

With that said, our expectation is that you will not send students to school when they are ill. The health of all of us and the ability of our school community to continue in-person learning is at stake!

We are attaching the latest guidance from the Office of Catholic Schools at the end of this newsletter. Please read it carefully as it will determine the actions our school will take.

BARK

Scare Tactics

We received a copy of a FaceBook posting purportedly from some “unknown, unidentified school” that told the parent that their child was being sent to a COVID testing center, that the school could not release the information about the location of the center and that the police would be called if the parent came to the school to pick up the child. The report is patently fraudulent and should not be given any credence.

We outlined our “isolation procedure” for St. Germaine School when we sent out the “Safely Reopening School” packet earlier in August. To summarize our plan if a student presents with COVID-like symptoms:

- The student will be isolated in the Activity Center Office with adult supervision.
- Parents will be called and arrangements made for the child and his/her siblings to be picked up. Pick up should occur as quickly as possible, but certainly within an hour. In some cases it might be necessary for us to contact one of the emergency numbers you have listed on your emergency card.
- Procedures going forward (as outlined in the attached OCS guidance”) will be followed:

We will report the positive case to the Archdiocese Intake Team using the appropriate form. Notification will be sent to the families of students in the cohort, preserving, of course, privacy of the individuals.

Unlike the phony FaceBook post, we will not send your child to an off-site testing facility or prevent you from picking him/her up.

The only time we would contact outside resources would be if your child was in severe distress and the paramedics were required. In any case we would certainly be in contact with you concerning your instructions.

Eighth Grade Shadow Days

We are anticipating the Catholic High School Recruiting will take a different form this school year. In all likelihood, the High Schools will conduct virtual Open Houses to introduce students to their schools.

In an attempt to minimize the exposure of our student body at this time we will not grant “Shadow Days” for our students to attend one of the local high schools. If the situation changes in the future we will be glad to reinstate them.

Haircuts

We know that many of us got quite used to the barber shops being closed. However, now that they are back in operation, we need to remind you of the Family Handbook regulation about hair length:

Students are expected to be clean and well-groomed at all times, both in and out of uniform. Dress and/or grooming which are not in accord with reasonable standards of health, safety and decency will be considered inappropriate. Hair must be clean and of moderate length. Boys may not wear their hair “over their ears,” nor below their shirt collars. Parents of students deemed by the teacher and principal to be dressed inappropriately may be called so that the student may return home to change clothing.

Please make an appointment if a haircut is necessary to be in compliance with the regulation.

Looking Ahead . . .

Our calendar page is likely to look pretty “sparse” for the foreseeable future since we will probably not be able to gather together in large groups!

- 9/7 Labor Day; no student attendance
- 9/18 Half-Day Faculty Meeting; 11:30 student dismissal. Extended Day as usual
- 9/26 Celebration of First Holy Communion—Our second graders missed out at the end of the year. We’re glad to celebrate with them and their families as third grade

Last year we added a new “safety net” to our existing firewall and internet protections. Bark looks for potentially harmful activities that may indicate on-line predators, adult content, sexting, cyberbullying, drug use, depression, suicidal ideation and more.

When dangerous or questionable searches arise on school-issued accounts. **Bark for Schools** sends us alerts so we can address the situation in a timely manner. The alerts identify the student by name and include a copy of the material they accessed whenever possible. These alerts also give us insight that help promote the wellness of the entire student body.

We recently took several additional actions based on data we received from the BARK filtering. We found that some of the students were accessing entertainment and games sites during the time the teacher provided for on-line class activities. Students would flip from the assigned sites to the entertainment/game sites during class time. It is very difficult for the teachers to monitor this completely during class. For that reason we have blocked game sites and streaming entertainment sites on the school owned devices.

By doing this, we hope to insure that technology use during class time will be focused on the actual assignments given by the teachers.

Germazing Mighty Duck Races

In early June as we faced the pandemic boredom and also the loss of the carnival revenue, a group of parents and teachers organized one of our most successful fundraisers EVER! The Germazing Mighty Duck Races have broken all records for fundraising and Fun raising. Our heartfelt thanks to the DUCKS group: Peg Donnelly, Sergio Medina, Jen Mayo, Missy Moran, Liz Chimino, Anne Czarnecki and our Duck Race MC, Brian Mayo have done a wonderful job. Our deepest thanks.

Funds from the Ducks have already helped with school expenses. They helped defray the cost of our I-Ready licenses, math textbooks and reading workbooks, purchased fans and LCD projectors for classrooms. (Men’s Club donated the screens that go along with the projectors—yeah! And thanks!)

Look for more great things from the Ducks—and keep bidding on those fabulous prizes!

Call the office for more information about the group.



Another link to OCS messages:
[https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F)

