

The Sentinel ~ September 2, 2020

Principal's Message

While the experience of the new school year has been very different for all of us, the first couple of days have gone well with students and staff adjusting to new ways of being together, both in-person and virtually. I am so proud of our students, faculty and staff for their efforts in implementing our many new procedures.

Throughout this year, the health and safety of our community will remain our top priority and we will continue to adapt to circumstances as necessary. In this regard, I wish to thank you for your strong support of our COVID-19 health mitigation strategies. All of our students have been reporting to school each day wearing a mask, a new routine that would not be possible without the guidance and reinforcement you have provided to your children at home.

Recognizing that this practice is new to our students, we will continue to share resources with you that you may find helpful. The following is a link from our counselor, Mrs. Slater, that offers some clever ideas as to how we can help our students to become even more comfortable with the idea of wearing a mask each day.

[Tips on Wearing a Mask](#)

I also want to thank you for all of your efforts in completing the daily health screening with your children. Related to this, please know that there will be greater leniency regarding our attendance policy. During this school year, it is vitally important that any student who displays symptoms listed on the health screening or who is simply not feeling well, remain at home and not report to school. When the student is eligible to return, please be sure that he/she only attends on scheduled days in accordance with their enrollment plan and cohort assignment. When in doubt regarding your child's attendance, I encourage you to always err on the side of caution, knowing that the faculty and staff will be very understanding in this regard and provide assistance with any necessary make-up work.

There are a number of additional important updates and changes that I wish to share with you this week.

Band Program (2020-2021)

Students in grades 4-8 will once again have the opportunity to participate in the band during the new school year. Mr. Ward will be implementing a number of new procedures specifically designed to ensure the health of those participating in the program. For example, students will only rehearse in small groups comprised of peers from their specific classroom. To accomplish this, Mr. Ward will be grouping students by class rather than by the instrument they will be playing. The rehearsals will take place in the Parish Activity Center with small groups of students rotating between two

practices areas that will be sanitized between use. Additionally, Mr. Ward will be providing guidance to students as to how they will actually be able to wear a mask while playing their instruments.

At this time, due to the restrictions that remain in place, there will be no after school Advanced Band practice. It remains to be seen as to whether the students will be able to host a concert later in the year. For more details regarding the program, including start dates, please see the email from Mr. Ward that will be sent to parents this week.

Calendar (2020-2021)

Given the fact that so many of the events traditionally scheduled each year remain in question, we have decided to publish a streamlined calendar that will include holidays, noon dismissals and other information that has been confirmed. We anticipate that print copies of the calendars will be available for parents toward the end of September.

Throughout the year we will also provide a digital “month at a glance” that will include the most current information for the upcoming month.

Scantron Testing

Again this year, students in grades 3-8 will participate in the Scantron *Performance Series* Standardized Test in September, January and May. As an adaptive test, Scantron assesses each child’s learning level in reading, language arts and math, ultimately providing data that our teachers can use for instructional planning and in support of differentiation in the classroom.

An important change for this year is that the diocese is implementing the *Express* version that will require significantly less time to administer while providing comparable data. Students will respond to only twenty-five questions within each test, i.e. math, reading and language arts.

The diocese has also made a decision that, due to the complexity related to remote testing, only in-person learners will complete Scantron testing in September. We remain hopeful that we will be able to include our virtual learners in the second round of testing in January.

In an effort to identify the learning levels of our students as soon as possible, we will administer the Scantron assessment to in-person learners next week. The teachers will be providing additional details related to the schedule and procedures in the week ahead.

Back-to-School Night & PTO Meeting

Parents of students in grades 1-5 are invited to attend Back-to-School Night that will occur via Zoom on Thursday, September 10 beginning at 7:00 p.m. Following a presentation by the principal and PTO, there will be classroom sessions during which

the teachers will highlight their plans for the year ahead.

Gift of Human Sexuality Program

For the past ten years, All Saints Catholic School has implemented a middle school family life curriculum that supports our goal of educating the whole child in the light of the teachings of our Catholic faith. The program has been coordinated by the Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry, Mr. Kevin Bohli, and has been tailored to the specific needs of our school community.

Due to the fact that we have implemented a hybrid learning model and that single-sex grouping is not currently feasible, we have decided to defer this program until the spring at which time we will reassess whether it is possible to offer the program this year.

Prodigy Math Program

Over the summer it came to our attention that Prodigy, an online learning tool, includes some content that is not consistent with our mission as a Catholic school. For this reason, we have made a decision to discontinue using this software application for the 2020-2021 school year.

We are currently researching an alternative learning application that will provide our students with another online tool for practicing and applying their understanding of math concepts. More details will be provided in the weeks ahead once a final decision has been made.

Yearbooks (2019-2020)

Yearbooks are scheduled to arrive on Friday, September 4. Once the shipment has been processed, we will put a plan in place to distribute them to families who placed an order last year.

Virtues in Practice – Year II

Year of Hope (Theme: Study)

Virtue for the Month of September: Hope

Definition: Trusting in God's loving plan.

Saints of the Month: St. Joseph (PK-2), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (Grades 3-5), Blessed Louis & Zelie Marin (Grades 6-8)

School Messenger Emergency Notification System

The Diocese of Arlington uses the *School Messenger* notification service to send important information to families through phone calls, emails, and text messages. In the event of an emergency, All Saints Catholic School will activate the *School Messenger* system. As the system will only be used for this purpose, parents can

anticipate that any communications received via this program are critical and deserve particular attention.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the system, All Saints will conduct a test on Thursday, September 10. A test message will be issued via recorded phone message, text and email to the emergency contacts of all students and staff at approximately 10:30 a.m.

To sign up for text alerts via *SchoolMessenger*, simply text the word “subscribe” to 68453. To opt out of all text messages from *SchoolMessenger*, go to <http://www.schoolmessenger.com/txtmsg/> or reply STOP to the opt-in message you receive.

The Diocese and the school do not pay for text message charges that may be incurred by the user. Check with your wireless carrier for possible charges.

Parent ~ Student Handbooks

The 2020-2021 Parent-Student Handbook can be accessed electronically via our website and may be found at the following link:

- [Parent-Student Handbook](#)
- [Signature Page](#)

Please take some time to review the policies and procedures of our school and discuss them with your children. Each family is asked to sign and return the acknowledgment form by Friday, September 11.

New Parent Coffee

All new parents are invited to enjoy a virtual “Coffee with the Principal” on Tuesday, September 15 beginning at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Following a brief presentation, there will be time for questions and discussion about our school community and plans for the new year.

Parents in their second year at All Saints are cordially invited to attend this event as well!

Look for a Zoom invite and corresponding link within the next week.

Student In-Service ~ Sexual Harassment, Our Policy & Response (Grades 6-8)

In accordance with diocesan policy, students in grades six through eight will participate in a brief classroom presentation within the next three weeks on the topic of the prevention of sexual harassment. Each of the grade-level lessons will be approximately fifteen minutes in length and include an overview of the diocesan policy as well as an explanation as to how students should respond if they encounter any behaviors of this nature. Should you have any questions about this policy or presentation, please do not hesitate to contact the principal.

Formation in Christian Chastity Program

The safety of your children is always a top priority at All Saints. In accordance with national initiatives and diocesan policy, we have taken additional steps to do our part to ensure that your children are in a safe place when they are participating in a program at All Saints Catholic School. The *Formation in Christian Chastity Program* is one part of our commitment to maintaining a safe environment for our students. As outlined in the online materials, information is provided primarily to parents as a resource to be used in the formation of their children. There is one classroom lesson for students in grades one through four and two lessons for those in grades five through eight.

We will be integrating the objectives of the program into our religion lessons in the weeks ahead beginning on Monday, September 14. The entire curriculum can be accessed through the diocesan website at the following link:

[Formation in Christian Chastity](#)

You are encouraged to spend some time reviewing this information yourself and to then share pertinent aspects with your children. Each of the lessons contains some application to common sense safety tips that you may wish to share with your children. Other parts of the resources apply to some of the decisions that you make as parents for the safety of your children. Our goal is to equip both you and your children with the knowledge that can help to keep them safe.

The essential point is that parents need to be involved with their children. The more you know about the daily events of your child's life, the better you are able to spot any danger signs that may surface. The more regular communication you have with your

children, the freer they are to come to you with their concerns.

Should you have any questions about the *Formation in Christian Chastity Program* or about the classroom lessons, please do not hesitate to let us know. In the event that you would prefer to not have your child participate in the classroom training, please contact the front office to request an opt-out form.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 3

- Kindergarten Noon Dismissal

Friday, September 4

- eLearning Day

Monday, September 7

- Holiday – Labor Day

Tuesday, September 8

- Band Demonstration Lessons
- PTO Executive Committee Meeting (Zoom/7:00 p.m.)

Wednesday, September 9

- Lockdown Drill (9:30 a.m.)
- Diocesan New Teacher Certification Meeting (1:00 p.m.)

Thursday, September 10

- School Messenger Test (10:30 a.m.)
- Back-to-School Night for Grades 1-5 & PTO Meeting (Zoom/7:00 p.m.)

Friday, September 11

- eLearning Day
- Parent-Student Handbook Forms Due
- Room Liaison Forms Due
- Middle School Chromebook Fees Due

Cafeteria Program – Account Balances

Many of our school families currently have a positive balance on their lunch accounts which can be accessed online. We are pleased to provide a refund to all families but also recognize that in many cases the balances are quite small. With this in mind, I ask that you confirm your balance online and determine whether you wish to request a refund or donate the balance to the general operating account of the school.

If you prefer to receive a refund, please send an email to Mrs. Diana Neri at vneri@allsaintsva.org. Should you have any questions about your balance or this process, please do not hesitate to let us know.

School Calendar - Holidays & Noon Dismissals (2020-2021)

Note: This information is subject to change in accordance with the directives and guidance provided by the State of Virginia and the Diocese of Arlington.

August 31

- First Day of School (Noon Dismissal)

September 1

- Second Day of School (Noon Dismissal)

September 7

- Holiday – Labor Day

October 12

- Holiday - Columbus Day

October 30

- Diocesan Professional Development Day

November 12

- Noon Dismissal (Parent/Teacher Conferences)

November 13

- Noon Dismissal (Parent/Teacher Conferences)

November 24

- Noon Dismissal for Thanksgiving Holiday

November 25-27

- Holiday – Thanksgiving

December 21

- Holiday - Christmas

January 4

- Classes Resume

January 18

- Holiday - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 15

- Holiday - Presidents' Day

March 19

- Diocesan Professional Development Day

April 1

- Noon Dismissal (Holy Thursday)

April 2

- Holiday – Good Friday

April 5

- Holiday - Easter Week

April 23

- Holiday - Parish Festival (Tentative)

April 30

- Presentation of DFE Visiting Team Report

May 31

- Holiday - Memorial Day

June 15

- Final Day of School for Grades 1-7 (Tentative)