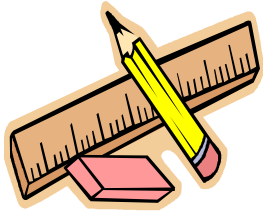


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SEPTEMBER NEWS



SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL
P.O. Box 67 – 301 St. Elizabeth Street
Loretto, PA 15940
Telephone (814) 472-9117



August 31, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

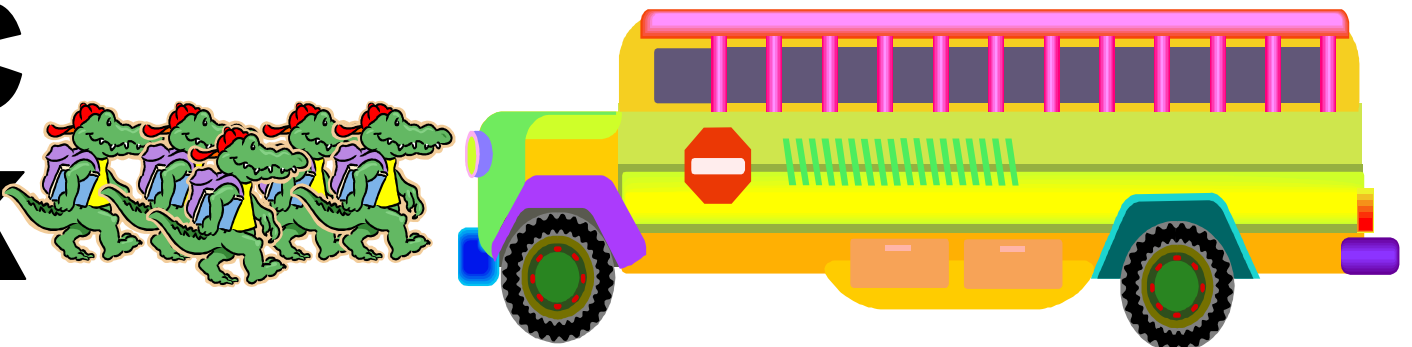
I trust you had a relaxing summer and are ready to meet the new challenges the school year is sure to bring. I hope this school may be a place where everyone – students, teachers, parents and all concerned with the school – may come to find answers, to discuss and share problems, and work together for the ultimate goal of a Catholic education for every child.

The new school year brings eager students and renewed teachers back into freshly cleaned classrooms, colorfully decorated to highlight the learning that will take place there. The faculty and I are proud of the academic achievements of our students and are grateful for your trust and confidence as we begin, again, to work together to instill Christian values and a life-long love of learning.

We thank the many members of our school family who helped in updating, cleaning and beautifying our school over the past few weeks. We are thrilled with the appearance and the changes that have occurred and are anxious to begin, again, working together in educating your child(ren).

2009-2010 FACULTY/STAFF

I am happy to announce our faculty and staff for the 2009-2010 school year:
Mrs. Renee Phister (Kindergarten), Mrs. June Riner (Grade 1), Miss Sarah Neff (Grade 2), Mrs. Susan Stevens (Grade 3), Mrs. Melissa Grata (Grade 4), Miss Kelly McKee (Grade 5), Mrs. Kristy Farabaugh (Grade 6), Mrs. Carol Stoltz (Grade 7), Mrs. Kathleen Maurer (Grade 8), Ms. Christine Driskel (Computer), Mrs. Viki Krug (Phys. Ed.), and Mrs. Linda Kirsch (school secretary). We are looking forward to an exciting, successful year!



WELCOME!

I wish to welcome back those families who have been with us and extend a warm welcome to our new families: Kenneth & Peggy Anderson, Michael & April Cocho, Chris & Kristen Corcoran, Robert & Theresa Domicca, Matthew & Amy Farabaugh, Shannon & Jennifer Greene, Joe & Sherri Haigh, Andrew & June Hutsky, Paul & Mary Letizia, Stephen & Brandi Sherbine, Santina Sprouse, Sarah Stoltz and Dave & Lee Ann Weslager. We are happy you have chosen to be a part of our school family and are eager to work with you as partners in your child(ren)'s Catholic education.

SCHOOL GOALS

The faculty and I have spent time together this month preparing for the school year and discussing ways we can continue to foster a Christ-centered environment that focuses on Christian values. We have formulated five goals for this school year that I would like to share with you.

- Goal 1: To encourage by word and example friendliness, good manners, common courtesy, and respect for self and others at all times.
- Goal 2: To utilize the designated science lab and the various resources procured through the TEAMS funding.
- Goal 3: To foster healthy eating habits and exercise by encouraging healthy food choices, appropriate portion sizes and the importance of physical activity.
- Goal 4: To enhance the math curriculum by utilizing the newly obtained math series in order to improve math skills and standardized test scores.
- Goal 5: To continue to elicit student participation in the preparation of monthly liturgies, prayer services and special masses.

We are committed to working toward achieving these goals and look forward to working with you and serving you and your family.

COMMUNICATION

We will make every effort to keep you informed of the exciting activities our students will be engaged in throughout the school year through our monthly newsletter, church bulletin, local newspapers and SchoolReach. All families are encouraged to visit the Basilica's website @ www.geocities.com/smsbasilica/ and click on the school link for announcements, school news, monthly menu and other important information. Also, the Cresson Mainliner has been cooperative in publishing pictures and news articles concerning our school, so you may want to consider purchasing a subscription.

SCHOOLREACH

In our effort to improve communication between parents and school, we will be instituting a telephone broadcast system this fall that will enable school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general announcements or reminders. This service is provided by SchoolReach, a company specializing in school-to-parent communications.

When used, the service will simultaneously call all listed phone numbers in our parent contact list and will deliver a recorded message from me or other school personnel. Home numbers and parents' cell phone numbers that were listed at the beginning of the year on your emergency cards will be entered into the system. If you would like any other contact number called, please notify us in writing ASAP.

More information concerning SchoolReach will be forthcoming.

HOME-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home-School Association is in existence to help parents and teachers better understand their roles and responsibilities in the education process and to work cooperatively for the benefit of the students. The Association provides moral and financial support to the school. All parents/guardians of Saint Michael School's students are members of the association and are encouraged to take part in the meetings and activities. The association provides a wonderful way to get to know the parents of your child(ren)'s classmates!

Meetings are usually held on the second Thursday of each month. The first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10th at 6:30 PM in the school hall. Plan to attend!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FORMS

The following information is being sent home today:

- School Calendar
- September Calendar
- School Supply Price List
- Letter regarding lunch program/Applications for Free/Reduced Lunches
- Emergency Procedure Card/SchoolReach
- School Rules
- News/Media Permission Slip
- Student Accident Insurance Forms
- Medication Authorization Information

We would appreciate having the Emergency Procedure Card and the News/Media Permission Slip returned to school by Friday, September 4th.

CAFETERIA

We are pleased to announce that Mrs. Shelly Eckenrode will assume responsibility for our lunch program again this year. A letter and the application for Free/Reduced lunches is being sent home today. Please read the letter carefully as it contains important school lunch information.

PLEASE NOTE: Lunch money is to be paid separately from all other fees.

We are inviting the parents and grandparents of our 4th Grade students to join us for lunch on Wednesday, September 30th. The students enjoy having guests during this special time and we hope as many as possible will be able to attend. The cost of an adult lunch is \$2.80. Students will go to lunch at approximately 11:10 AM.

FAMILY PRAYER DAY

As we pray together as a school family each day, we will be remembering one family and its intentions in our prayers that day. Each family's special day will be listed on the monthly calendar that is sent home at the beginning of the month.

If, at any time during the year, you have particular intentions you would like us to remember, please call or send in a note and we will join our prayers with yours.

SCHOOL RULES

We have attached a copy of specific rules that apply to all the students. Please read them and keep them in a place where they can be used as a handy reference. (Please note that handheld video games, cell phones, Ipods, MP3 players, digital/video cameras, or trading cards of any kind are **NOT** permitted.)

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE FORMS

Student accident insurance forms are being sent home with the students today. Please attend to these quickly if you wish your child(ren) to have this insurance.

READER'S DIGEST MAGAZINE FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

You will receive information on our special Pay-By-Mail Magazine program on Wednesday September 2nd. The money raised is used to obtain needed materials which benefit the students and faculty. This program is hassle-free and requires NO door-to-door selling, NO collection of money and NO delivery of products. We encourage all families to participate. This year's program is scheduled to begin on September 2nd and will end on September 25th.

FEES

A \$10.00 Art Fee **per child** is required to cover, in part, the cost of supplies necessary for art projects.

In addition to the Art Fee, the students owe for the following supplies:

Grade 1: Primary Composition Book -- \$1.00
Primary Writing Tablet -- \$1.00

Grade 2: Homework Book -- \$3.75
Primary Writing Tablet -- \$1.00
3 Primary Composition Books -- \$3.00

Grade 3: Homework Book -- \$3.75
Primary Composition Book -- \$1.00
Primary Writing Tablet -- \$1.00

Grades 4 – 8: Homework Book -- \$3.75

PLEASE attend to these fees as soon as possible. THANK YOU!

BOOKS/BOOK BAGS

ALL books must be covered at ALL times. The student's name and subject should be clearly written on the front cover. Reminder: book socks are not permitted because of the damage they have caused to our books.

Each student must have a book bag to protect his/her books while carrying them to and from school. A student is required to pay for any book that is damaged or lost.

DRESS CODE

The students in grades 1 through 8 wear uniforms. The purpose of a school uniform is to eliminate competition among students. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS PARENTS TO SEE THAT YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN ADHERE(S) TO THE SCHOOL POLICY CONCERNING THE DRESS CODE. Please review the following:

From now until the end of September (or later, depending on the weather), all students (grades 1-8) may wear navy or khaki dress shorts, white or light blue dress shirts or blouses, or white or light blue knit shirts with a collar.

From October 1st – April 30th, girls may choose from the following options:

Green plaid jumper / white or light blue blouse

Green plaid skirt or culottes/ navy vest / white or light blue blouse

Navy slacks / white or light blue knit shirt or blouse / navy vest

PLEASE NOTE: Girls do not need to wear a vest with shorts. However, a vest must be worn with the skirt and slacks.

From October 1st – April 30th, boys have a choice of the following:

Navy dress slacks / white or light blue dress shirt or knit shirt

Khaki dress slacks / white or light blue dress shirt or knit shirt

Dress shirts, knit shirts and blouses are light blue or white ONLY. Navy sweaters (without hoods) may be worn for warmth during the winter months. SOCKS (crew socks or knee-high) are to be worn at all times. They are to be white or navy (**NO LOW CUT ATHLETIC SOCKS MAY BE WORN**). Girls may wear NAVY tights for warmth during cooler months.

For safety reasons, open-toed and open-backed sandals, shoes, clogs or boots of any kind are not permitted. Solid, dark colored shoes or sneakers that are practical and safe for the school environment must be worn. This includes days in which students may be out of uniform (dress down days, picture days, etc.)

Kindergarten students do not wear uniforms. However, they are expected to adhere to the following:

No tank tops or muscle shirts are permitted.

Shorts may be worn from the first day of school until the end of September and from the first of May through the end of the school year.

Our school policy regarding shoes (see above).

Our dress code is intended to promote a sense of belonging and to foster an environment conducive to learning. Students learn the importance of following established policies and are expected to be appropriately attired for specific places and occasions.

Any student found to be in violation of the dress code (for example: an untucked shirt, low-cut socks, skirt/uniform that is too short, cargo pants, etc.) will be written up and given a DRESS CODE VIOLATION FORM to be taken home for his/her parent's signature. The first form serves as a warning.

If a child is written up a second time, parents will be called to correct the situation AND the student receives a school detention.

LOCKERS

It is recommended that all students in grades 3 – 8 be responsible for keeping a lock on their book lockers over weekends and holiday vacations. Locks with two keys or a combination lock can be purchased. One key OR the combination to the lock, along with the student's name, must be turned into the office.

VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers are vital to our school program! Each year we need help in the following areas: cafeteria workers, library aides, recess monitors and field trip chaperones. In order to volunteer in the school setting, parents are required to attend the "Protecting God's Children" training and must obtain Pennsylvania Child Abuse and Criminal Record Clearances. In order to run a criminal background check a fee of \$12.00 is required.

A training session will be held in the School Cafeteria on Saturday, September 19th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. There is a fair amount of paper work to complete so it is recommended that you arrive fifteen to twenty minutes early. Please bring your Social Security number and names, addresses and phone numbers of three personal references. If you would like to complete the session materials prior to the session, they are available at the Diocesan website

<http://www.ajdiocese.org/cms/name/Children+and+Youth+Protection>.

For those parents interested in attending this training session or to find a listing of currently scheduled Virtus Training Sessions online, follow these directions.

Go to <http://www.virtus.org>. Do not log in. Click on "Help" (under "Registration"). It will take you to a list of topics. The first is: "View a list of upcoming Protecting God's Children classes in your area – a quick view of the classes being held within your organization. You may view the class schedules and locations here before going through the registration process." Click this. The next window will ask you to select your diocese. Select Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. You will then be taken to a list of all of the current scheduled sessions.

Parents who have already attended the training must remain current by reading the articles on the VIRTUS website once a month. Please go to www.virtus.org and check your status. Thank you!

SCHEDULE

Bus students arrive at school between 8:10 and 8:25 AM.

Walkers/car riders should arrive at school NO EARLIER than 8:10 AM.

All students are expected to enter and exit the building via the side door closest to the new building.

Dismissal of walkers – approximately 2:45 PM. (front door)

Dismissal of bus students – 2:50 – 3:05 PM.

Parents who pick up their children are asked to park in the parking lot across from the Basilica and the school on Saint Elizabeth Street. It is not necessary to come into the building. Your child/ren will be escorted out. We will attempt to dismiss walkers at 2:45 PM.

The school doors will not be unlocked in the mornings until 8:00 AM. If it is necessary for a student to come earlier than 8:00 AM, prior arrangements must be made in the school office.

We ask parents who come to school during the day to park in the parking lot across from the Basilica and school. We use the blacktop area for the children during the lunch recess and physical education times.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents and visitors who come to school during the day are asked to use the front door (across from the Basilica). Please RING THE BUZZER located to the right of the door for admittance to the building. **THEN REPORT TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE TO SIGN IN.**

EARLY DISMISSAL

Because school attendance is important, we discourage parents from requesting early dismissal of children. ***If*** an early dismissal is necessary, please observe the following procedure:

1. The student must present a note to the teacher indicating the time and REASON for early dismissal.
2. The parent or guardian must come to the School Office for the child. ALL visitors must sign in and out of the building. PLEASE DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM.
3. If the parent or guardian is unable to come, the person in whose custody the child is to be released must be made known to the principal.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

We trust that you, as parents, are interested in the success of your child in school and are, therefore, aware that regular attendance is absolutely essential to successful schoolwork.

A child's absence is excused in cases of illness, death in the family, or other grave reasons.

If your child will not be in school on a particular day, please observe the following:

1. Please notify the School Office (472-9117) by 8:30 AM when your child is absent. Failure to do so necessitates the school calling home to verify the absence.
2. Upon returning to school, students must present a dated excuse that states the dates absent, reason for absence, and the signature of the parent/guardian. Failure to present said excuse constitutes an illegal absence. Excuses must be kept on file for one year.
3. If your child is absent, missed assignments and homework may be sent home with a sibling or can be picked up in the office between 2:40 and 3:30 PM only. (Please call ahead and let us know if you intend to pick up the child's work so it can be in the office when you arrive.)

SCRIP

Information concerning the SCRIP Program will be sent home later this week. The SCRIP program has the potential to raise a hefty profit. Please plan to participate in this major fundraiser.

MONTHLY CALENDAR

Please keep the monthly calendar in a place where you can refer to it throughout the month. This will serve as a reminder and will ensure your presence at school activities and aid you in adhering to school deadlines.

FACULTY INSERVICES

The dates for faculty meetings and Diocesan Teacher In-services have been placed on the yearly calendar and will also be listed on the monthly calendars. Bus transportation will be provided on half-day sessions.

WALK-A-THON

Our sixth annual Walk-a-thon will take place for all Saint Michael School and Religious Education students on Saturday, September 26th, from 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM. As you know, Our Lady of Loretto Community Hall was a huge undertaking and fundraising efforts must continue in order to pay for this facility. We are hoping that last year's total of \$4,168.00 will be surpassed and that 100% of our students will participate. Mark your calendars today and start collecting pledges now.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Each student in every grade is expected to have a pair of tennis shoes specifically for use in the gym (the shoes do not need to be new). Students will change their shoes upon entering the facility. Please make sure your child has an extra pair of shoes as soon as possible (no later than Tuesday, September 8th). If this poses a hardship for you, please call me.

NO BULLYING PROGRAM

We know that you want the school environment to be safe and free of violence. Our *No Bullying Program* deals with the problem of bully violence.

Bullying can be a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents or comments or a single interaction that makes the victim feel uncomfortable. There are physical bullies who hit or kick a victim or damage the victim's property. There are verbal bullies who use words to hurt or humiliate another person through name-calling, teasing or insults.

Whether it's a look, a comment, exclusion or physical action, if it makes another person feel uncomfortable, it's bullying.

Your child(ren) will be involved in a series of lessons designed to help him/her define and understand what is and what is not bullying. As a school, we have a policy regarding bullying. Under that policy, bullying will not be tolerated.

BOOK FAIR

Our annual Book Fair will be held September 14 – 17. Information about the books available for purchase will be sent home with the students the week before the fair.

If you have any questions about any of the above, or if questions or difficulties arise throughout the school year, please feel free to contact me at any time.

We are grateful for your trust and confidence and hope to see all families at our annual Open House on Monday, September 14th!

Let us pray each day for God's blessings on all our efforts this year.

Sincerely,

Judy Noel
Principal