



ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL
WHERE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE MEET

SUMMER REMINDERS

July 15, 2016

The purpose of this bulletin is to serve as a reminder of some of the important news, policy changes, upcoming events, and activities for the end of the summer and the reopening of school. These are general announcements. If you need more detailed information, please refer to the school website (www.stmcs.net), or the "2016-17 Planning Information" that was emailed to St. Mark families in May, and sent to new families at the time of registration.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2016-17 school year at St. Mark Catholic School. We are blessed to be a part of your lives, and we look forward to kicking off the year with a bang!

This year has been officially designated as the "year of community" to help support an already strong and active group of families. We feel that, as a school, we can always do more to reach out to our amazing community members. In that spirit, we will be adding some new groups and activities this year including a Parent Prayer Group, hopefully a Dad's Club (if we get volunteers to lead it -- hint, hint), a Day of Service, and a few more family events (in addition to continuing with our very successful STEM Fair), just to name a few.

Our gymnasium remodel project is underway thanks to our generous auction donors. Our muralist may not get to our gym until December, but my fingers are crossed that she will fit us in before the start of school. Our playground enhancements have been slightly delayed, but the good news is, all contracts are signed, sealed and delivered. Installation is set for mid-September.

The spring hail storms resulted in our school getting a new roof, which we sorely needed. However, this major project put updates to the inside of the building behind schedule a bit, so we are all running as fast as we can to catch up. Walls have been painted, carpets cleaned, new artwork purchased, new outdoor statues have arrived, and the list goes on and on. I am confident that when families are on campus for Back to School Sunday, our new school year kick-off event, the school will look fresh and wonderful!

The teachers and staff have also been very busy gearing up for the new school year. The Early Childhood teachers have been training with the new handwriting program, Handwriting Without Tears, our K-8th grade teachers are training with their new formal essay writing process, and STEM is being ratcheted up a notch to continue our philosophy of constant improvement. The approach to our all-school service projects has been re-tooled in an effort to make it more personal to our students and to help them learn to "give from the heart." Some changes that will excite students are the new gray uniform pants, ice cream for sale in the cafeteria on Fridays (maybe cookies, too), and special themed dress days. There has to be some fun at school while we work hard at learning, right kids?

I am equally excited about all of the changes on the "inside" of our day-to-day school operations. As you know, some of our longtime, esteemed staff members have retired and moved on. Add to that our need to increase staff because of increasing enrollment, and it's safe to say that there will be several new faces on campus next year. Between our interview teams and the Holy Spirit, we have acquired the most remarkable new staff members! Each brings a positive energy and a heart for children, plus their own special and unique talents, all of which will serve to enhance our school community in many ways. Here is an update:

Most recently, Joyce Burke, 7th/8th grade English teacher, had to resign due to her fiancée securing a new job in New Mexico. Ms. Burke's sweet nature and ability to make English fun for our middle school students will truly be missed. Rebekah Rodriguez will be stepping into her shoes. She is a longtime teacher who comes to us from St. Bernard of Clairvaux Catholic School in Dallas. She loves writing, and even works for Pearson scoring SAT essays. She is bilingual, and was a gifted/talented teacher while working for the Dallas ISD. She has six children ages 1-26, four of whom will be joining our St. Mark community. The Rodriguez family is dedicated to service, traveling to Mexico to work in an orphanage over the summer.

Christina Flores will become our newest 4th grade teacher. She is the mother of twins, Francesca and Anthony, who are rising 4th graders at St. Mark themselves. She holds a BA from Texas A&M and is coming to us from St. Paul Christian School. Her first teaching job entailed helping to open All Saints Catholic School in Dallas many years ago. She is also an active Girl Scout leader, and loves reading, baking, dancing, and singing.

Bryanna Robinson is the newest addition to our PK3 teaching staff. She comes to us as a lead teacher from The Blue Elephant Learning Center in Frisco. She graduated from Texas Christian University with a BS in Child Development, with an emphasis in Elementary Education. Her interests include traveling, volunteering, singing, running, and cooking.

Our new Early Childhood Education Aides are Julie Furlong and Cynthia Meraz. Mrs. Furlong received her BA from Western Michigan University. She has worked in the Frisco ISD and as a substitute teacher at St. Mark as an Early Childhood Aide. She has also worked as a preschool teacher at Seton's Ark/St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Plano, and as a preschool fitness coach at Stretch-N-Grow. Daughters Mary Anne and Grace both attend St. Mark, and her daughter Katie graduated from St. Mark and currently attends Bishop Lynch High School.

Cynthia Meraz is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin with a BS in Applied Learning and Development, with an endorsement in Bilingual Education. She began her career as a bilingual

educator in Austin and as a K-8 Spanish teacher in Ohio. Mrs. Meraz and her family are active parishioners at St. Gabriel in McKinney.

I hope our families are having fun this summer, making wonderful memories. Of course, the educator in me also hopes our kids are keeping their minds active with learning, perhaps using the materials we sent home at the end of the school year, so that the start of the new year is strong for everyone.

Don't forget Sunday, August 7 -- our big, new kick-off event for the school year. We start with 9:00 AM Mass, followed by a light breakfast, and then volunteer sign-ups, information on organizations such as Boy/Girl Scouts, Drama Kids, etc., school supply pickup, Lion's Den spirit store, and the Used Uniform Sale. It is going to be a great way to start the year, combining "back to school business" with a spirit of fellowship.

And don't forget about the Pop-in Meet & Greet on Friday, August 12. Bring your child to school anytime between 9:00-10:30 AM. Meet the teacher, see the classroom, drop-off school supplies, visit lockers, take a selfie with our mascot, and visit with friends. Be sure to pick-up your back to school gift on your way out!

And finally, the first day of school is Monday, August 15. School doors will open at 7:30 AM (on August 15 only) and you are welcome to escort your student to his/her classroom. Don't forget to stop by the cafeteria for our annual HSA breakfast after you have dropped off all the kiddos.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to our campus soon!

Many blessings,



Patricia Opon
Principal

NEWS AND REMINDERS

Beginning of School Form

The Beginning of School Form can be found [here](#). It must be completed, paid and returned to the school office, or via email to rene.oconnor@stmcs.net, by August 1, 2016.

School Calendars

Visit the [homepage](#) of the school website to access the most up-to-date versions of the 2016-17 school calendars. Printable versions of the Academic and Events calendars (subject to change) are located under the "Quick Links" section. A more detailed online version is located in the center of the homepage. To add calendar dates to your electronic device, click on the red ".ICS" icon located at the bottom of the online calendar.

Handbooks

Please review the following Parent-Student Handbook, Volunteer Handbook, After School Program Handbook, and Athletics Handbook carefully. **The Volunteer Handbook, After School Program Handbook, and Athletics Handbook contain forms that must be signed and returned to the school office.**

Copies of all handbooks are accessible at any time on the school website.

1. Parent-Student Handbook

Each school year, the St. Mark Parent-Student Handbook is updated. Please read the handbook in its entirety. The yellow highlights indicate changes made during the 2015-16 school year. Blue highlights indicate changes made during the summer of 2016.

Please [click here](#) to read the Parent-Student Handbook.

2. St. Mark Volunteer Handbook

A St. Mark Volunteer Handbook has been developed to assist all of our wonderful school volunteers. It provides general volunteer guidelines that we ask everyone to follow. **The last page of this handbook is a "Volunteer Pledge" form that every school volunteer must sign and return to the school office prior to serving. A new pledge form must be signed and submitted each school year.**

Please [click here](#) to read the Volunteer Handbook, then print, sign and return the Volunteer Pledge form before beginning your volunteer service.

3. After School Program Handbook

An After School Program Handbook has been developed as a reference for our families who participate. **If your family will take advantage of this program during the school year, please read the handbook in its entirety, then complete the registration form located on the last pages of the handbook, and return it to the school office.**

Please [click here](#) to read the After School Program Handbook, then print, sign and return the registration form by August 15.

4. Athletics Handbook

An Athletics Handbook has been developed for those 5th-8th grade families who have students participating on school sports teams through the Dallas Parochial League. It provides general guidelines pertaining to St. Mark and DPL athletics. **If this applies to your family, please read the handbook in its entirety, then sign the Parent Code of Conduct Agreement and return it to the school office.**

Please [click here](#) to read the Athletics Handbook, then print, sign and return the Parent Code of Conduct Agreement before the first practice (click the link at the end of the handbook, and scroll down to the "Documents" section to access the agreement).

Back To School Events

St. Mark will host several special Back To School events. For dates, times, and details, see the "Important Dates" section below, or [click here](#) for a printable one-page summary.

Grandparents' Day

The first St. Mark Catholic School Grandparents' Day will be held on Friday, September 16, 2016. More details will follow soon. In the meantime, please be sure we have complete contact information for grandparents or special friends you wish to invite (such as an aunt or uncle), including a mailing address. This information can be updated in the "Grandparent" section of Renweb (see instructions in the Renweb section below).

Summer Reading/Summer Packets/Rising 7th/8th Grade Summer Service Hours

[Click here](#) for grade level summer reading requirements, summer activity packets, rising 7th/8th grade summer service hour requirements, and other important summer information.

Safe Environment Screening & Training

All volunteers (including Prefects) must be Safe Environment screened and trained. We recommend that all Safe Environment training be completed over the summer to insure that volunteers are cleared by the first day of school and can take part in school activities. Even if your training isn't due until later in the year, we encourage you to train over the summer if at all possible. [Click here](#) for details.

Uniform Guidelines

Complete information about school uniforms can be found by [clicking here](#).

In an effort to avoid confusion when school begins, we'd like to stress a couple of points regarding uniform shoe and hair policies:

*For boys, Sperry shoes are **NOT** allowed. Please do not purchase them. They are expensive, and students will not be allowed to wear them to school.

*For all students, hair guidelines will be strictly enforced. Please do not have your child dye or highlight their hair, and then send them to school. We will request you cut it out of their hair. This includes Kool-Aid, highlights, or other blonding agents. For boys, there are no mohawks, or lines shaved into the scalp. Again, we will request it be cut.

If you have questions about the school uniform policy, please contact Pam Steinkirchner, Assistant Principal, at pam.steinkirchner@stmcs.net.

RenWeb Updates Due July 31, 2016

If your contact information (address, phone, cell or emergency pickup) has changed, please update in RenWeb. To review and update your RenWeb information:

Log in to RenWeb by [clicking here](#). From the left hand menu, select "School Information," then "Web Forms" and then click on "Family Demographic Form."

There are six forms that must be reviewed and updated:

- Student Demographic Form
- Student Medical Form
- Custodial Parent Form
- Emergency Contacts
- Transportation Form
- Grandparents Form*

Please do not add a student e-mail, student cell phone number, or automobile information.

*A "Grandparents Day" will take place September 16, 2016. Please complete the contact information for all grandparents or special friends you may wish to invite (such as aunts/uncles) so that we can be sure to invite them, including a complete mailing address. See further details in the "Grandparents Day" section above.

Note: The information in the HSA Family Directory is pulled from RenWeb. If you do not want your information included in the directory, be sure to check the appropriate section.

Please make sure all information is updated by July 31, 2016.

Cafeteria Accounts

A reminder that parents may set-up a school Cafeteria account online where funds can be added and purchase activity can be monitored.

The August cafeteria menu has also been posted on the school website.

[Click here](#) for more information.

After School Program

New registration forms are required for the After School Program each year. **Space is limited and spots are filled on first-come basis.** Registration forms can be found inside the After School Program Handbook above and may be turned in to the school office between August 1-15. The After School Program will be available starting the first day of classes on Monday, August 15. As a reminder, students must be registered for the After School Program **prior to attending**. It is not a program that is designed for drop-ins.

St. Mark Spirit Days!

On the first Monday of each month that we are in school, students will be allowed to wear jeans, slacks, Capri-style pants, the school skirt or the school uniform pants/walking shorts with a St. Mark t-shirt or sweatshirt of their choosing. Students may wear any closed-toe shoe. This is a great opportunity for them to show their LION PRIDE!

Our Lion's Den spirit store sells a variety of shirt styles. [Click here](#) to place an online order. The Lion's Den is also open every Friday morning during the school year from 7:30-8:15 AM. Just check-in at the front desk and shop 'til you drop!

The first St. Mark Spirit Day will be Monday, September 12, 2016. For your reference, Spirit Days for the entire school year have been added to the electronic calendar located on the [homepage](#) of our website.

SAVE THE DATE for the St. Mark Fall Festival & All Souls Remembrance 1K/5K Run

Mark your calendar for October 29, 2016. Be sure to follow the St. Mark Fall Festival and All Souls 1K/5K Run on the [church website](#) and also on their [Facebook page](#). Interested in helping with the event planning? Contact [Claudine Humphries](#) for the Fall Festival, and [Marlene Ehring](#) for the All Souls Run.

FROM THE ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

Sports Physical Form Reminder:

Fall athletes who have not turned in a current Sports Physical Form to the Athletic Director, Marlene Ehring, for the 2016-17 school year, must do so immediately in order to be cleared to participate in practices. Find the form in the Athletics Forms section of the school [website](#) (scroll to the "Documents" section to find the Sports Physical Form).

2016-17 Athletic Fees:

Athletic registration fees for fall sports are due August 1. Fees can be paid by check made payable to "St. Mark Catholic School," and sent to the attention of Marlene Ehring, Athletic Director (please remember to include your athlete's name and sport on the memo line), OR they can be paid [online](#). The fees are as follows:

Football - \$115

Volleyball - \$115

Cross Country - \$70 *

Swimming - Registration will open September 1. More details will be sent after school starts.

***Cross Country registration has been extended until September 2, 2016. [Click here](#) for more information and registration.**

For more information about these sports, please [click here](#) and follow the links to the individual sport pages on the school website.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION NEWS

Help Needed - Used Uniform Sale - Service Hours Available

Would you or your student like to volunteer to help with the Used Uniform Sale? Service hours are available. To volunteer at the Used Uniform Sale, [click here](#).

Available hours:

*August 6 - 3:00-5:00 PM (set-up), Lion's Lair Gym

*August 7 - 10:45 AM - 1:45 PM, Lion's Lair Gym

Used Uniform Donations

Used uniforms in good, gently used condition, will be accepted in the school office from August 1-4. Please remember that green pant/walking short donations and shirts/sweaters with the old logo are no longer accepted for the St. Mark Used Uniform Sale.

HSA Committee Chairs Needed

There are still a few HSA committee chair positions available. [Click here](#) for the full job descriptions, and contact HSA President, [Ashley Ternan](#), if you are able to help:

- Early Childhood Education Room Parent Coordinator
- Hospitality
- Memory Book Coordinator
- Scraps Gift Cards

IMPORTANT DATES

August 1: The school office reopens. Hours from August 1-12 are Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Please call ahead to verify office hours during staff development sessions between August 8-12.

August 1-4: Used uniform donations accepted in the school office.

August 7: Back to School Sunday - 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Join us for 9:00 AM Mass. Then, meet in the Cafetorium at 10:00 AM for breakfast, a Principal welcome, school supply pick-up, used uniform sale, class lists, spirit store, general school information, information on clubs/organizations, and volunteer sign-ups.

August 8-12: Staff Development Week

These days are reserved for faculty and staff development sessions. While the main office may be open at select times during these sessions, there may be times that all faculty and staff are not available. If you need to come to the school office on any of these dates, we recommend you call ahead of time to verify if office staff will be available. Faculty will not be available for appointments during the staff development week.

August 12: Pop-In Meet & Greet - 9:00-10:30 AM

Visit the school buildings. Meet the teacher, drop-off school supplies, access lockers, attend a carpool line tutorial, take a selfie with the lion mascot, and receive your carpool sign, "First Week Survival Guide," and a "welcome back to school" gift.

August 15: First Day of School and Back-To-School Breakfast

School doors will open early at 7:30 AM (first day of school only). Parents may escort students to classrooms. Students should be in complete school uniform. School hours are 7:55 AM - 3:30 PM (including Preschool). After morning drop-off, come join other parents in the Cafetorium for a Back-To-School Breakfast hosted by the Home & School Association.

August 19: Early Dismissal - 12:00 NOON

Lunch will not be served. The After School Program will be in operation until 6:00 PM. Please send a lunch with all After School Program students.

August 22: Parent Information Night for parents of students in Middle School, grades 6-8, at 6:45 PM in the Cafetorium, followed by classroom visits. This is a parents-only event, and is typically finished by 8:00 PM.

August 23: Parent Information Night for parents of students in Preschool - 5th grade, at 6:45 PM in the Cafetorium, followed by classroom visits. This is a parents-only event, and is typically finished by 8:00 PM.

August 23: Individual School Pictures

Students should be in complete uniform, including the school sweater.

**ENJOY THE REMAINING DAYS OF SUMMER!
WE WILL SEE EVERYONE AT
"BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY" ON AUGUST 7.**