



Saint Mary School

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January 2017

Dear St. Mary School Families,

We hope you had a most blessed Christmas holiday. On behalf of everyone at SMS, I want to wish you a safe and healthy New Year. Incredibly, 2017 is upon us! We look forward with great anticipation for a successful and exciting year.

I want to thank you for the incredible generosity shown towards all of us here at St. Mary School during the Christmas season. Once again, we were overwhelmed with the outpouring of gifts and kindness. On behalf of the entire faculty and staff – thank you!

Please review the following updates for January:

Pre-K Registration for 2017-2018

We have had a fabulous year so far in our Pre-K program and we expect extremely high interest for the upcoming school year. If you plan to register your child for Pre-K 3 or Pre-K 4, please do not hesitate. To start the registration process, simply email our Enrollment Director, Linda Garvey, at: LGarvey@StMaryBethelCT.org

Kindergarten – 8th Grade Registration

For our current students, we will send home information at the end of January with updated tuition information, registration forms and tuition-assistance information. If you have any questions, please email Linda Garvey.

Tuition Assistance

The Diocese of Bridgeport is committed to making a Catholic education accessible to all students who demonstrate financial need by providing tuition aid. The majority of aid comes from the Bishop's Scholarship Fund (which may receive a new name soon). Applicants will be assessed for all Diocesan aid through the one FACTS application. Aid is given out on a first come, first served basis, with the process opening in February. Many of our own families applied and received assistance last year. We hope to see even more families take advantage of this opportunity for the coming year. More information to come at the end of January.

Pre-K Open House

On Tuesday, January 17, we will host a Pre-School Open House from 9:30am – 11:00am. This is a great opportunity for families to see the classroom "in action". If you know of a family that might be interested, please let them know about this opportunity. As well, if you are able to serve as a Parent Ambassador, please let Linda Garvey know at: LGarvey@StMaryBethelCT.org

Open House Date Change

Do you know someone who may be interested in attending St. Mary School? Please let them know about our upcoming Open House, which has been moved to Tuesday evening, January 24. The event will begin at 6pm and conclude at 8pm. If you are able to serve as a Parent Ambassador, please email Linda Garvey.

"Saint Mary School is a Christ-centered educational community dedicated to fostering Catholic faith and Gospel values, while striving for academic excellence within a nurturing family atmosphere."

Diocese of Bridgeport

Direct from Bishop Caggiano:

“Sixteen months ago, Sister Mary Grace, the former Superintendent of Schools, announced the start of a diocesan wide educational planning process. The process began when all diocesan elementary schools were asked to complete a viability study for the newly created Diocesan Education Commission in 2014. The purpose of the study was to identify areas of challenge faced by each school and to create recommendations to strengthen each school’s long-term financial viability and educational vitality...

...Following that initial study, members of the Commission visited each school for a more personal understanding of its respective strengths and challenges. As a result of those meetings, some schools were asked to identify specific benchmarks designed to strengthen their long-term financial viability. After a great deal of work by local school leaders, some of these schools began the current academic year having made significant progress towards achieving greater financial stability and improvement in their educational programs. A few schools continue to face significant financial challenges.”

As you read above, the Diocese of Bridgeport is facing a critical moment as some schools will close or merge. I am proud to report that St. Mary School is not one of those schools. Bishop Caggiano is very confident in our work here at SMS and feels we have a positive outlook moving forward. I am grateful for Bishop Caggiano’s perspective and I agree with him – we are a strong school with a great future ahead!

I want to thank everyone within the school community for your amazing support of our school. I especially want to thank Father Corey, Erik Apotheker, Eleanor McClellan, and Mike Becher, as they comprised my original planning team last year. To date, this group continues to play a very important role in our success.

Please know that I remain committed to the long-term success of our students and our school.

Sacraments

If you have any questions regarding First Holy Communion or Confirmation, please email Mr. Viceroy at GViceroy@StMaryBethelCT.org

Please note: The 8th Grade Commitment Mass for Confirmation is scheduled for Sunday, January 8 at 5:30pm. Students should arrive by 5:10 to sign in.

First Friday Mass

We will celebrate First Friday Mass on Friday, January 6 at 9am. All are welcome.

Mid-Term Exams

Please note that mid-term exams begin next week for students in Grades 6-8. Please be sure that students are well-rested and prepared for these exams. Please review the exam schedule that was sent home.

Teacher Communication

Communication with teachers is a key component to a successful school experience. Please be sure you are in contact with your child(ren)’s teachers throughout the year.

Weather-related Emergencies

In the event of an Early Dismissal because of poor weather conditions, we will dismiss at 10:50am. As well, please know that there will be NO CLUB on these days. Please plan now for this type of situation, as we are entering the season!

Friday, January 13

On this day, we will have our usual Early Dismissal time of 11:15am.

Please note: The 10:50am dismissal time is only for weather-related emergencies.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

We will observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 16. There will be no school on this day.

Miscellaneous reminders:

Uniforms

Parents, please be sure that your children arrive to school in full and proper uniform. Please refer to our handbook (found on our website: www.StMaryBethelCT.org, under the Parents tab) for uniform regulations.

Dismissal

Our school day ends at 2pm. Any student that has not been picked up by 2:15pm is brought to the afterschool club room. Please be sure to arrive at the appropriate time for pickup in order to not overwhelm the afterschool club service.

Report Cards

Please know the report cards will be distributed on Friday, January 27. Report Card conferences will not be held. If you would like to meet with a teacher, please do so via a private appointment. *Please note:* all financial obligations must be current in order to receive a report card.

Catholic Schools Week

This fun week will officially begin at SMS on Monday, January 30. Please be on the lookout for our full Catholic Schools Week plan, which will be presented next week.

Annual Fund

I continue to be amazed at the show of support from our friends, families and parishioners. The Annual Fund is a very important piece of our financial plan – I want to thank you for your support!

Mrs. Schlemmer

And finally, we are very happy and pleased to announce that Mrs. Schlemmer is back with us! Words cannot express how grateful we were for Mrs. DeFelice, who stepped in when we were in a moment of great need. And now, we are just as grateful, as we have Mrs. Schlemmer back at SMS!

May God continue to protect our children and our families.

Gratefully,



Greg Vicero
Principal