



ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL
WHERE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE MEET

SUMMER REMINDERS

July 12, 2019

The purpose of this bulletin is to serve as a reminder of some of the important news, 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 at www.stmcs.net.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year at St. Mark Catholic School. It's going to be an exciting one for so many reasons!

First, as we continue to be at the forefront of technology and innovative curriculum, we are proud to introduce Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality to our students this year. Through the use of special computerized goggles integrated with curriculum, students will be able to visit new places and interact with the world around them without ever leaving the classroom. Imagine feeling like you are actually standing inside the Sistine Chapel looking up at the overwhelming beauty of Michelangelo's ceiling, or watching a dinosaur literally pop off the page of a book, or taking an up-close look at the surface of the moon. The possibilities are endless! VR/AR is at the cutting edge of today's educational tools, and St. Mark is once again ahead of the curve. It promises to take learning to the next level for our students.

In addition, we're bringing coding to our preschool-2nd grade students. The ability to code has been proven to have a direct correlation to increased logical thinking and the earlier it is introduced, the more students can benefit. You may be picturing our little ones staring at a computer screen and inputting HTML, but in fact, it's much more than that, and for our very youngest students, it doesn't even involve screen time. Through the use of manipulatives, preschool students will be asked to order items in a way that results in a desired outcome. By 2nd grade, they will utilize Lego Boost which teaches coding in a fun, interactive way. As students continue to develop this skill through their elementary and middle school years, their logical thinking skills will simultaneously increase, impacting their overall ability to problem-solve.

Students from TK-2nd grade will continue their rotations in the SmartLab, engaging in basic coding exercises and becoming familiar with the technology. 3rd-8th grade students will continue to dive deep into the full SmartLab curriculum, experiencing coding, robotics, graphic design, medical applications, music, circuitry, 3D printing, and so much more. All of this is done with an eye towards preparing them for their futures which are largely unknown, given the pace at which technology is changing daily and professional life. What we do know is that students will need to possess strong problem-solving, creative, communication, collaboration, and presentation skills -- the primary goal of the SmartLab.

"Service from the Heart" remains an important focus as well. This year, our theme is "Let me be your servant," with inspiration from Mother Teresa who said, "God gives us things to share, God doesn't give us things to hold." Stay tuned for more information about our 2019-20 All School Service Projects.

Along with all of this fabulous programming, we want our students to be inspired by their surroundings, so we continue to upgrade and enhance our facilities. As you know, we've undergone some major building improvements over the summer and I'm pleased to update you on our progress:

***New carpet in both buildings** - Consistent carpeting throughout the buildings was one of our goals (after years of patchwork replacement), and now we have beautiful new carpet everywhere.

***New paint in both buildings** - Color, color, color! Our hallway and classroom walls have a bright, fresh, and bold new look.

***Refreshed cabinetry and doors in both buildings** - Cabinets and doors have all been repainted or restained, and look great.

***Covered walkway between the main and ECE buildings, and additional signage along Alma** - We are working with an architect on final plans. Installation is slated to begin in early August. My, there is a lot of paperwork and permits required!

***New gate along Alma** - We've installed a gate along the east side of the main building covering the previously unsightly dumpster area.

***Outdoor classroom and garden** - This project continues to expand. Be sure to stop by and see it when you return in August!

In order to continue this progress, we rely heavily on our largest fundraiser of the year to provide the additional funds needed to bring them to fruition (these facility improvements are NOT covered by your tuition dollars). **The 2020 Auction will take place early next year. February 22 is the tentative date. But, before we can finalize plans, we are in need of a Chairperson (or persons) to plan this annual event.** 2020 funds are already earmarked for a "Rosary Garden" in the school courtyard -- a place where our entire community can pray the rosary or simply reflect and pray in beautiful, spiritual surroundings. We already have some expert landscapers in our school community who have volunteered their time to make the Rosary Garden a reality -- now

we just need someone to lead the charge on the Auction to raise the funds. [Contact me directly](#) if you, or you and a friend, feel called to this important role.

I hope you are all 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.

Mark your calendars: Sunday, August 4 is "Back To School Sunday." We start with 9:00 AM Mass, followed by a light breakfast, and then volunteer sign-ups, information on organizations such as Scouts, Drama Kids, etc., school supply pickup, Lion's Den spirit store, and the Used Uniform Sale. This is also a great opportunity to meet our new teachers! Look for them at the information tables in the gyms. It is going to be a great way to start the year, combining "back to school business" with a spirit of fellowship. **NOTE: If you are unable to attend the Mass and breakfast, please plan to visit the gyms when they open at 11:00 AM.**

And don't forget about the Pop-in Meet & Greet on Friday, August 9. 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 12. School doors will open at 7:30 AM (on August 12 only) and you are welcome to escort your student to his/her classroom and take that "first day of school photo!" Don't forget to stop by the cafeteria for our annual HSA breakfast after you have dropped off all the kiddos. Mingle with old friends and new as we transition into the school year routine.

The entire staff is eager to welcome all of you back for an exciting new school year. We can't do what we do without you, and we are so grateful for your continued support of St. Mark. See you in August!

Many blessings,



Patricia Opon
Principal

NEWS AND REMINDERS

School Calendars

[2019-20 Academic Calendar](#)

2019-20 Events Calendar (available August 1, 2019)

Printable versions of these calendars are always available on the [homepage](#) of the school website under the "Quick Links" section.

A more detailed electronic calendar is located in the center of the [homepage](#) of the school website. To add calendar dates to your electronic device, click on the "notepad" icon located at the bottom of the online calendar.

Prefect Duty Sign-Up

All families with students in grades Preschool-5th make a registration commitment to five days of lunch/recess supervision. Prefect duty is not required of families with only a Middle School student.

[Click here](#) to sign up for Prefect days. You must be Safe Environment trained to perform Prefect duty (see details below).

Prefect Monitors are needed. The pay is \$20.00 per day. If you are interested, please contact rene.oconnor@stmcs.net.

Handbooks

Please review the following Volunteer Handbook, After School Program Handbook, and Athletics Handbook carefully (as applicable to your family). **They 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 on the "[Forms/Links](#)" page.

YELLOW highlights indicate a new or revised policy that was present at time of registration in February. **BLUE highlights** indicate new or revised policies added since June 1.

1. 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.

2. 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 and submit the online registration form. The link is located on the last page of the handbook.**

Please [click here](#) to read the After School Program Handbook, then complete and submit the online registration form by August 12.

3. 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 St. Mark Catholic School Grandparents' Day will be held on Friday, September 27, 2019. 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 and an email address. This information can be updated in the "Grandparent" section of Renweb (see instructions in the Renweb section below).

Student Summer Packets

Summer packets were sent to all returning families during the last week of school. New families were provided with the Summer Packet link in their "Welcome Packet" that was distributed at the "Newcomer Welcome Coffee" event held on May 17, or sent directly to those who could not attend.

Please [click here](#) to access the Summer Packet link which includes 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. New volunteers must complete a background check, training session, and an interview.

If you would like to complete new volunteer training over the summer, please contact Safe Environment Coordinator, [Alison Hughes](#). She is available for in-person interviews. In addition, there has been an extra Safe Environment training session added on August 11 to give you an opportunity to complete it before school begins.

Those who have completed the initial training must still update their training online each year.

For complete details and links, please [click here](#).

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 retraining isn't due until later in the year, we encourage you to train over the summer if at all possible.

Uniform Guidelines

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

Please label all uniform pieces with the student's name. Academic Outfitters is able to embroider names inconspicuously on sweaters/vests. In addition, school families have utilized the services of two websites that can create inexpensive iron-on and stick-on name labels:

[Mabel's Labels](#)
[Inch Bug](#)

In an effort to avoid confusion when school begins, we'd like to stress a couple 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, mohawks, lines shaved into the scalp, and extreme difference in hair length are not allowed. 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, 2019

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 27, 2019. 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 and email 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, 2019.

Cafeteria

The August cafeteria menu is now available on the school website. [Click here](#) for more information.

After School Program - The After School Program is offered after school until 6:00 PM, except on some early release days when it is only offered until 3:00 PM (refer to the school calendar for those dates). Space is limited and spots are filled on a first-come basis. Spots do fill quickly. The link to the online registration form is located in the "After School Program" Handbook above. The registration form may be submitted between now and August 12. All students must be registered for the program prior to attending. Students will enjoy fun activities, crafts, homework time, and a snack during after care. Drop-in care is not available and families must register each student that will be using the program. Complete program information is available [here](#).

The After School Program will be available starting the first day of classes on Monday, August 12.

St. Mark Spirit Days!

On the first Monday of each month that school is in session, students will be allowed to wear jeans, slacks, Capri-style pants, the school uniform 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. The Lion's Den will be available during the "Back To School Sunday" event on August 4, and will reopen on campus after school starts. The store will be open every Friday morning during the school year from 7:30-8:15 AM, and online ordering will also be available at <https://stmcs.net/spirit-gear>. Please note that not all store items are available through online ordering.

The first St. Mark Spirit Day will be Monday, September 9, 2019. For your reference, Spirit Days for the entire school year have been added to the electronic calendar located on the [homepage](#) of our website.

*The uniform walking shorts may only be worn during the 1st and 4th quarters.

FROM THE ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

Sports Physical Form Reminder:

Fall athletes who will participate in DPL sports (5th-8th grades) who have not turned in a current Sports Physical Form to the Athletic Director, Marlene Ehring, for the 2019-20 school year, must do so immediately in order to be cleared to participate in practices. [Click here](#) and scroll to the "Documents" section to find the Sports Physical Form.

2019-20 Athletic Fees:

The payment procedure for DPL athletic fees has changed. Payment is no longer due upon registration. Once rosters are submitted, the Business Office will automatically charge your account in Renweb.

The fees for fall sports are as follows:

Football - \$140
Volleyball - \$140
Cross Country - \$70

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

SAVE THE DATE for the 6th Annual St. Mark All Souls Remembrance 1K/5K Run:

Mark your calendar for November 2, 2019. Run in memory of a loved one while raising money for the St. Mark Athletics Department. Interested in helping with the event planning? Contact [Marlene Ehring](#).

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION NEWS

2019-20 Officers

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions about HSA or upcoming volunteer opportunities:

Angela Coulter - President (angelakcoulter@icloud.com - 972-310-7545)
Natalie Laurent - Vice President (bnlaurent@hotmail.com - 972-977-0409)
Maria Bargellini - Secretary (maria@dallascurbappeal.com - 347-538-4806)
Allison Opon - Treasurer (alliecatzk@hotmail.com - 214-236-0526)

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.](#)

Available hours:

*August 3 - 3:00-4:30 PM (set-up), Lion's Lair Gym
*August 4 - 10:45 AM - 1:45 PM, Lion's Lair Gym

To volunteer at the Used Uniform Sale, [click here](#).

Used Uniform Donations

Used uniforms in good, gently used condition, will be accepted in the school office from August 1-2. Reminder: St. Mark no longer accepts donations of green pants, green shorts, or items with the old logo.

HSA Volunteers Needed

There are still many opportunities to volunteer during the 2019-20 school year, so please [click here](#) to sign-up.

WATCH D.O.G.S.

Calling all "Dads of Great Students!" WE NEED YOU to be a [Watch D.O.G.S.](#) volunteer! Half days and full days are available. Spend time in your child's classes, lunch and recess, assist the staff, and help reinforce campus security. Want to learn more? Join us at the annual "Pizza Night" on Wednesday, September 11 from 7:00-9:00 PM in the Cafetorium.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 1: The school office reopens. Hours from August 1-9 are Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM. The office is closed from 12:00-1:00 PM for lunch. Please call ahead to verify office hours during staff development sessions between August 1-9.

August 1-2: Used uniform donations accepted in the school office.

August 4: 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 and a Principal welcome. At 11:00 AM, the gyms will open for the school supply pick-up, used uniform sale, class lists, spirit store, general school information, information on clubs/organizations, and volunteer sign-ups. **Note: If you are unable to attend the 9:00 AM Mass and 10:00 AM breakfast, please plan to enter the gyms when they open at 11:00 AM.**

August 5-9: 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. The office will close for lunch from 12:00-1:00 PM for lunch each day this week. Faculty will not be available for appointments during the staff development week.

August 9: 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, receive your carpool sign and "First Week Survival Guide," and everyone receives a "welcome back to school" gift.

6th grade and new 7th/8th grade families will pick-up purchased Chromebooks in the Library. Please note the following regarding Chromebook pick-up:

1. Parents who bought a Chromebook from the school should come by the library between 9:00 and 10:30 AM to pick it up and sign for it.

2. Parents who bought their own Chromebook (6th grade) or replacement Chromebook (7th or 8th grade) should bring it to the library between 8:00-9:00 AM or 10:30-11:30 AM so it can be enrolled in the school's domain.

If you are unable to make those times, please contact Technology Coordinator, Anne Hollenbeck, at anne.hollenbeck@stmcs.net the week of August 5 to set up an alternate time.

August 12: 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.

The After School Program will be available until 6:00 PM beginning August 12.

August 16: Early Dismissal - 12:00 NOON

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

August 21: Parent Information Night for parents of students in Middle School, grades 6-8, at 6:30 PM in the Cafetorium, followed by classroom visits. This is a parents-only event, and is typically finished by 8:00 PM.

August 22: Parent Information Night for parents of students in Preschool - 5th grade, at 6:30 PM in the Cafetorium, followed by classroom visits. This is a parents-only event, and is typically finished by 8:00 PM.

September 11:

Individual School Pictures

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

Watch D.O.G.S. Pizza Night

Learn more about the St. Mark Watch D.O.G.S. program while enjoying a pizza dinner.

**ENJOY THE REMAINING DAYS OF SUMMER!
WE WILL SEE EVERYONE AT
"BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY" ON AUGUST 4.**

St. Mark Catholic School, 1201 Alma Drive, Plano, TX 75075

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