



# St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

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Rev. Michael Hall, Pastor

Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

Mrs. Michele L. Rivera, Assistant Principal

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 25, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **Operational Update #16**

It is pretty hard to believe, but we will be entering the final week of October next week. I do not know what the next six to eight weeks have in store for us. It seems that the ballyhooed “second wave” is upon us. Cases of COVID-19 are popping up in schools across the state, including some local ones. For these reasons I believe it is important that we stay the course and continue to abide by the protocols that have helped to keep us safe so far this year. There is no question that coronavirus fatigue has set in for many of us. Many of us are tired of the inconveniences both large and small and are tempted to return to old habits. We absolutely MUST continue to follow the procedures that have protected us this far. While they are not fool-proof by any means, no good can come from reducing vigilance. I was very clear with the faculty this week about the importance of this, and I want to be very clear with you. **Do not try slipping into Tent City without a mask. Do not approach the tents at dismissal or try to cut across the island. Do not be less than honest about your travels or COVID-19 type symptoms. Do not violate social distancing protocols. Do not get the idea that the rules are for everyone else aside from you. I also need you to continually enforce proper protocols are home, and most especially at any extracurricular activities you’re your child is participating in.** If some of us begin to relax our practices outside of school, this introduces another vector into school.

If the dance school, the karate dojo, the team, or the league is not following social distancing and sanitation protocols, speak up and tell those in charge that they need to step it up. If they do not, pull your child out. True, I have no empirical evidence to prove that our protocols are the reason that we have remained healthy so far; however, there are plenty of examples in New Jersey right now of schools with many fewer students in the building each day and COVID-19 outbreaks. If we have an outbreak even though we have followed all of our protocols, so be it. If we have an outbreak because someone was careless or defiant of our protocols, or knowingly allowed a child to remain in an extracurricular activity with social distancing and/or sanitization protocols that are less than desirable, this is not acceptable. Period. I realize that I sound like a bit of a jerk in my presentation here, but there really is no way to sugarcoat this. I rather have a bunch of healthy people gossiping about how much of a jerk I am for laying this out in no uncertain terms than be visiting someone



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in a hospital or attending a funeral for someone's loved one and hearing that I am a nice guy. We are in the midst of a twin pandemic of COVID-19 and Fear of COVID-19, with a serious dose of COVID-19 fatigue. Stay the course; #WeAreSGGA!

Now, for some updates:

87. **REMINDER - School Photos** – Picture days will be Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. **Photos will be taken outdoors, and we will move forward unless rain becomes heavy.** If necessary, students will be staged in the tunnel and hallways one class at a time. Further information and the ordering link can be found [HERE](#).

88. **Halloween** – Recognizing that some families may elect not to trick-or-treat this year, I am keenly aware that school may be the only place that some students will experience Halloween fun this year. As mentioned in Update #13, Trunk or Treat and the usual Halloween parties and treats were not possible to conduct safely this year. As a result, and looking to the past for inspiration, our celebration of Halloween this year will be costumes and theme dressing and an old-fashioned Halloween parade. Preschool 3 – Grade 4 will be invited to wear their Halloween costumes to school on October 30<sup>th</sup>, and we will have a Halloween parade that will be broadcast via Facebook Live. Grades 5-8 will have a Halloween Dress down day – each homeroom will be invited to choose a theme and the students will be invited to dress according to that theme. Grades 5-8 will also be the in-person audience for the parade. A few important notes:

- a. As counterintuitive as this is for me to write, parents ARE NOT invited to watch the parade. I say this with as much care and respect as I can; **all are NOT welcome**. I simply cannot invite or otherwise attract a large gathering to our campus. I will broadcast the parade via Facebook Live, which will give you a better view than you would get from outside the barrier anyway. Our ability to resist the urge to defy this instruction will directly impact my future planning. I am working on a plan to celebrate Christmas; however, if people do not respect the directive to stay away and not create a large crowd, any further outdoor observances will not take place. I take no joy in taking this approach, but overall such school celebrations are **about the children**, not the adults.
- b. For the grades who will be wearing costumes, understand that teachers will be unable to assist students in dressing, putting on parts, or fixing costumes. As a result, please make sure that all children come to school with their costume secure for the day. This might mean leaving a delicate part home but understand that staff members cannot break COVID-19 protocols for Halloween.
- c. Also on the topic of costumes, students must be able to safely walk, sit, and see in their costumes. Costume masks are not allowed unless the student can put the mask on when the time comes since students may not wear costume masks all day. If makeup is worn, remember that the children will be wearing the makeup for 4½ hours.
- d. **Remember, Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> is a 12:30 pm dismissal.** Buses will be running as usual.

89. **Preschool** – Preschool 3 and Preschool 4 students who are not usually scheduled for Fridays are invited to come to school on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> for the Halloween parade. These students can either arrive at 9:30 am and leave at 11:00 am for no charge or add the entire day for the fee of

\$35.00. If you would like for your non-Friday preschooler to come on October 30<sup>th</sup> please contact Mrs. O'Neill by Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at noon and let her know which option you would like to choose.

### **Current Wish List**

Outdoor appropriate carpet to cover the muddy areas near tents. Something similar to [THIS](#) would be great, even if it is used and still in good shape.

Donation of time/effort to rake leaves in any portion of our Tent City – anytime between the end of the school day and sunset. (BYOR)

[Donations toward Penn Medicine arrival screening](#)

[St. Gregory the Great Academy Wish List](#)

(updated as needs develop)

### **For Your Information**

[A&M Pie Fundraiser - PTA](#)

[Krispy Kreme PTA Fundraiser](#)