



St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

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Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 10, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **Return to School Update #2 - Corrected**

First, I would like to assure you that this update is nowhere near the length of the previous one. I have updates to share with you, both of which I consider to be positive news.

- I have finally managed to get all of our K-8 students set up with Freckle Math. If you recall, instead of traditional summer math work we are using the Freckle system to provide summer maintenance practice for all students. My goal was to have this ready as soon as school ended, but we all know how my goals have been working out these days. Nonetheless, I have attached an explanation of how to access your child's Freckle account to this email, and the individual credentials will be arriving at your home via the US Mail in a few days. Each student will have a login card that has a class code and a password. There is also an app for iPads, so the login card also contains a QR code to access your child's account. Remember, the expectation is that each student spends 30 minutes per week during 5 different summer weeks with Freckle Math. The data from this practice will be available to the teachers when school begins. Please see the attachment for more details.
- The following applies ONLY to students in Grade 4 and below:** I want to give you an update on how our process for COVID-19 transmission mitigation in the classrooms is shaping up. In my last communication I outlined the masking expectation that I foresaw at that time. Since I sent that update out, I have been intensely searching (obsessing is probably a better description) for some alternatives for time in the classrooms. What has not changed in terms of the students is that ALL students will be required to mask during arrival and departure, and any time they are in "common" space (hallways, stairwells, restroom). What has changed is that I have been negotiating with a company which has designed clear desk guards for student desks. I do not believe children should be in cubicles, nor should they have their view of the classroom, and more importantly the other human beings in the classroom, reduced. Traditional cardboard desk carrels are not really a viable option in my view. They may offer the desired protection, but they also limit the opportunity to see



that you are actually in a room with other people. After researching various options, I found a very simple product that I think will work well. You can take a look [HERE](#). **While no child will be forced to use one of these shields, those children who do use one on their desk during class time will NOT BE REQUIRED to keep their masks on in class during the time they are using the shield.** Essentially, you will have a choice between a mask or a desk shield for your child during class time. These shields are not cheap, but after explaining that we are a Catholic school, I managed to get the price down to around \$30.00 each. Parents who wish to have their child use a desk shield in place of a mask during class time will be able to reserve one beginning next week via a Formstack link. The current lead time is 6-8 weeks, so they may not be here on the opening day of school, but if not, they should arrive shortly after. I am placing an order for 300, and they will be available on a first come/paid, first served basis once the form is email out.

Those are all the updates for now. Keep an eye out for the Freckly Math login card in the mail, and the Formstack form in your email next week.

Thank you.

Addendum: Rationale for Item #2

The document for the American Academy of Pediatrics states the following with regard to elementary age students, "Children should wear face coverings when harms (eg, increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction)." I have a very real concern about effectively enforcing keeping masks on entire classes all day with children who are 9 and below. To me, it is less of a risk to put a reluctant mask wearer behind a shield than dealing with the constant correction to wear the mask properly and/or the child constantly fussing near their eyes and nose. There is no perfect solution here - it is all about reducing risk. The distancing of the students is the best option of course, and we are setting up the rooms to have an much distance as possible. I know this is not perfect. I am trying to find a balance between what science tells us and what the nature of children has shown us. I realistically have no way to force every child to wear their mask properly all day. So, if I can offer a viable option that will keep the reluctant kids behind a shield, the net effect is a risk reduction. No doubt the science is that space and barriers are the only real protections right now. Running a school full of children means that I have to use every option I have to get them to comply and reduce risk.

Again, shields are options for elementary age students only, Grades 4 and below. Middle school age students, Grades 5 and above, must wear masks (though they can also use a shield in addition to the mask if desired).