



St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

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Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

Mrs. Michele L. Rivera, Assistant Principal

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 21, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **Return to School Update #4**

I hope that you are staying cool during these extra hot days. The air conditioning is definitely working overtime, but of course, it is the middle of July, so I suppose this is to be expected. As the last several days have progressed, I would like to share the following points and updates with you. Remember, everything in these updates is subject to change based on conditions and how the virus progresses. The items below reflect my current thinking:

12-Uniforms – I would like to be as practical as possible in terms of uniforms as we plan our return to school. Now we all know how much I like a neat and orderly regular uniform; however, my likes aside I believe it is prudent to take the following steps for the opening of school. **All grades K-8 will wear the physical education uniform every day at least until we switch to winter uniform.** There are several reasons that I feel that this is a prudent step:

- a. The PE uniform is much easier to size when using online ordering. Many students need to try on jumpers, skorts, and pants, and at this time it makes sense to avoid the need for a trip to the Flynn and O'Hara store.
- b. As mentioned in earlier updates, I plan to take advantage of as much outdoor time as possible for classes and lunch. The PE uniform is much more comfortable to wear in warm outdoor weather.
- c. As much as I do not want to type these words, conditions could change as we head into September and remote learning could make a partial or full return. I do not want families to spend good money on uniform articles that may not get worn.
- d. The PE uniform is very easy to wash, dry, and fold. The shirts can even deal with some bleach in the wash for extra sanitization if desired.

While we usually switch to winter uniform on October 1, for now, plan on summer uniform ending on October 15. I will confirm on September 30th if we will move forward with winter uniform or not.



If you have already purchased winter uniform articles, do not take the tags off until the articles are needed. You have up to one year to return as long as the tags are still attached.

13- In-house Class Livestreaming – As the work to develop the schedules, placements, cohorts, and physical space has unfolded, I have found that there are a few courses in a couple of grades that need to have more students in that class than I believe we can safely have in one room based on the guidance. This affects only a couple of grade levels, and only one course in the affected grade levels. (For example, not an entire student day, just Math class). To address this in a way that is both academically sound and safe in terms of numbers, in these cases the extra-large class will be divided into two groups in rooms across from one another. The teacher will teach in one room and be live-streamed into the "other" room. A monitoring teacher will be present in the "other" room, and the teacher will be able to switch rooms with the monitoring teacher if the need arises during the lesson. The two halves of the class will always be in the same assigned room each day, and the teacher presence and live streaming will alternate each day. This arrangement will be avoided unless necessitated by the number of students who need to be taught a particular course exceeds the capacity of a classroom AND there is not another teacher who can teach the course.

14- Full Remote Instruction – I do not even want to type this section. Of course, in the Star Trek Picard episode entitled *Nepenthe*, Riker admonished Picard with the following words: "I'm just thinking how great it would be if ignorance of danger was all it took to keep it away from the people we love." With that said, nothing is served by ignoring the possibility that we may return to fully remote instruction at some point this year. To prepare for this possibility, we (and by "we" I mean Mrs. Rivera) are (is) working on the remote instruction schedules for all grade levels which will be distributed to you during the last week of August. All grade levels K-8 will have scheduled daily live instruction every day totaling approximately 3-4 hours, segmented as appropriate for each grade level. Preschool will have alternate schedules. This year, remote instruction will be centered more on the "live" contact time and less on independent work. There will still be independent work, of course, but it will be more along the lines of traditional homework. Also, Grades 5-8 will continue to have their one-to-one Chromebooks, which will be permitted to go back and forth from school. Grades 3 and 4 will have one-to-one assigned Chromebooks as well; however, they will remain in school unless we move to full remote instruction. In this case, Grades 3 and 4 will also take their assigned Chromebooks home. Hopefully, these procedures will never need to be put into use, but if they are we will be able to switch to the remote schedules right away and you will know exactly what to expect.

15- Sanitizing Procedures – There are many aspects of cleaning that will need to be adjusted due to the new challenges we face. First, you will notice that all carpets have been removed from classrooms and will remain put away for the duration of the pandemic. It is much easier to properly sanitize the nonporous floor. Second, we will be engaging the services of a daytime porter whose role will be to continually sanitize high-touch surfaces each day, including but not limited to: handrails, door handles, restroom sinks, etc. Third, while classroom toys will put away and not used for Grades 1 and above, it is not developmentally appropriate to conduct Kindergarten and Preschool without blocks and other playthings. All porous items will be put into storage (stuffed animals, play clothes, etc.), however, there will be nonporous toys for use in these classrooms. Teachers will be extra vigilant about hand sanitization after the use of these toys, and we are purchasing three electrostatic sanitizing devices to quickly and effectively sanitize playthings in Kindergarten and below. As the

summer progresses, we will continue to examine areas that will need new attention for sanitization for this school year.

- 16- **Ventilation** – Guidance suggests that stagnant air presents a greater risk for virus transmission than fresh air and well-ventilated locations. In examining our physical plant, I am concerned about fresh air flow in the hallways in the school building. The school building does not have modern HVAC systems on the second floor that perform air changes. The new split system air conditioning units in the first-floor classrooms, as well as the cafeteria and all parish center spaces, do have fresh air intake systems. Therefore, we have purchased large ventilation fans for the ends of the second-floor hallways that will vent stale air outdoors and pull fresh air into the hallways through the classrooms. These will be installed over the next few weeks.
- 17- **Desk Shields** –All adults, as well as all students Grades 5-8, will be required to wear masks all day except for designated times (eating, recess, PE class, etc.) Students in Grade 4 and below will be required to wear masks at all times in “common” areas, including hallways, stairwells, restrooms, arrival, and dismissal. They will also be required to wear masks when moving about their classrooms. These students will be **allowed to remove their masks ONLY when sitting at their desks and ONLY IF their parents have purchased the desk shield**. Even in this case, if a child demonstrates that they are unable to use the shield properly the school will reserve the right to require mask usage. Please find the details on the order form which you can access [HERE](#). The order form also details the conditions that will govern the use of the desk shields, and by submitting the order a parent is agreeing to the stated conditions. Students in Grades 5-8 may also purchase shields for added protection, but this will not release them from wearing masks. Special note for Grade 2: A family in Grade 2 is very generously covering the cost of a desk shield for every student in Grade 2. Provided that you are comfortable with your child using the desk shield, please complete, sign, and submit this form for purposes of permission. **NO PAYMENT IS REQUIRED FOR GRADE 2 STUDENTS**.
- 18- **Wish List** – For the last item of this update, I want to let you know that I am going to start including a “wish list” with each update. I am not too proud to beg, so to speak, on behalf of our students. I am sure that I do not have to tell you that the loss of the 2020 Carnival, along with the suspension of Bingo, and the endangerment of other fundraisers have been an unanticipated financial pitfall (with no gold or silver bars on the other side of the hole, as in the Atari 2600 game of the same name.) Compounding this reduction of income are the expenses we are incurring to both make the appropriate modifications and enhancements to the buildings to reduce class sizes and to purchase the needed supplies for sanitization and so forth. None of this was a consideration when the tuition amounts were set, and the initial budget was developed back in December and January. As a result, things are “tight.” To be clear, we are not in a place of financial woe at this time which would affect the instructional program, teaching staff, or the viability of the Academy. **Let there be no question that we are in any sort of financial “danger” at this time. We are not.** That said, the decreased income combined with increased expenses are not exactly nourishing to our finances, and our finances affect exactly how far I can continue to research and implement risk reduction strategies. It is not advisable for us to dip into reserves at this time with so much uncertainty on the horizon. So, I am going to start including a wish list of items, big and small. If this offends you, just ignore it. If you are so inclined and able, take a look at it.

Items from Updates 1-3

1. **Class sizes and teachers changing classes instead of students** – No changes.
2. **SGGA school supplies and no backpacks** – No changes.
3. **No transporting of books home** – No changes.
4. **SGGA adopting mask usage** – No changes.
5. **Freckle Math** – I have received a few messages about difficulty beginning Freckle Math work. I have adjusted the settings to simplify the student experience. Once signed in and Math is selected, students will see various areas of Math (domains) that they can practice work in. These are all set to be adaptive for the students, that is, based on the answers to the pretest the system will select the appropriate beginning level for the student. It is very possible that the initial question will be something that your child has no idea how to approach. THIS IS OKAY! Do not spend time trying to solve items that your son or daughter does not know how to solve. Enter a guess, and then proceed. The pretest will continue to adjust the difficulty level based on each correct or incorrect response in order to establish a baseline level in that domain. The pretest will end once the system has established a baseline level – then proceed to practice in that domain.
6. **Desk Shields** – Superseded by Item #17.
7. **Remote instruction for individuals** – This policy is still being developed. The hope is that I will be able to send it out early next week.
8. **Student homerooms, cohorts, and clustering** – No changes
9. **Bus transportation** – East Windsor has notified us that they will NOT be providing transportation to SGGA this school year.
10. **Screening and quarantining** – No changes
11. **Masks and shields** – Superseded by Item #17

Current Wish List

Per Item #18 above, here is our current wish list of items, big and small. Some items list the monetary need since we need to make the purchase; others simply are items. If this offends you, just ignore it. If you are so inclined and able, take a look. Donations for the wish list may be acknowledged or anonymous.

1 – Cost of (3) new hallway ventilation fans - \$239.00 each

2 – Cost of wire and speakers to extend the P.A. system to temporary classrooms - \$225.00

3 – Cost of 4 Gallon case of hand sanitizer - \$112.50 each

4 – Cost of (3) electrostatic sanitizing devices to be used in preschool and kindergarten - \$799.00 each

5 – Cost of monthly 20'x 20' tent rental for setting up outdoor learning and lunch space - \$650.00 per tent

6 – Containers of alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol – any brands/sizes appreciated

7 – Packages of disposable gloves – all sizes appreciated