



St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

4680 Nottingham Way, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

Voice: 609-587-1131

Fax: 609-587-0322

Web: www.stgregorythegreatacademy.org

Rev. Michael Hall, Pastor

Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

Mrs. Michele L. Rivera, Assistant Principal

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 31, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **Return to School Update #10**

Tonight, the sun will set on August, and tomorrow morning it will rise on September, which will be Day 4 of our new school year. These first few days have unfolded very much like a “soft opening,” with bugs still to be ironed out. Procedures are still in flux, and everyone is still learning the routines that will define this school year. Still, I am very proud of our students for their cooperation with our new procedures and their enthusiasm for being here in school. Below please find some of the latest updates. I have also added a quick summary, as it has recently come to my attention that my explanations can be considered excessive.

51. **Morning Arrival – No Precipitation** – *(no changes this week)* Thank you for your patience as we continue to adjust to make this process as efficient as possible. The lineup in the “corral” area seems to be working much better than the line down the sidewalk, which was unsafe. The screening will move faster as time goes on, and I have discussed streamlining the questions a bit with the staff from Penn Medicine. We had an increased number of screeners today which helped move the lines along; however, we will not be able to maintain this number because of the cost. I am hoping that as the days proceed, and the routine becomes more familiar we will be able to move along. We are going to let the process continue “as is” for the week before making any further adjustments. The extra time is the price we pay for a safe in-person school experience.
52. **Special Note for Preschool** – *(unless your vehicle is 40 feet long and yellow, do not drive to the back of the school)* Please remember that all drop off and pick up is in the front of the school as part of the whole school arrival and dismissal process. The back preschool entrance is not being used at this time.
53. **Morning Arrival – With Precipitation** – *(invest in a quality umbrella and/or raincoat)* If I had a dollar for every time someone asked me today what we are going to do when it rains, I would be able to pay for lunch for a week! Unfortunately, the mornings will not always be as pleasant as they have been these past few days, and the fact is that there is really no ideal way to make our process work



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when it is raining. If we start bringing people into the buildings in a haphazard way or letting them trickle in, we counteract the social distancing and grade level separation that is central to our safety procedures. These are unusual times, and we are going to have to “rough it” at times. If it is drizzling or there are light showers, we will still gather under the tents. **I recommend that everyone invest in a quality raincoat and/or umbrella.** If it is raining hard or there is lightning in the area, we will have to use our “**Precip Procedure.**” The Precip Procedure will have the students remain in their cars until grade levels are called. Bus students will stand under the overhangs/cover walkways Grade levels will be called using a combination of PA announcements and School Messenger text messages. Screening will take place right outside the doorways before the students enter the building. As you might imagine, Precip Procedure is the least desirable option, because it is going to take much longer and is more complicated. So, we will only use it when the morning weather makes using the tents messy or unsafe. I am not going to sugar coat it; we are going to get wet sometimes (besides, if I sugar-coated it the sugar would simply melt when it got wet anyway.) Still, we cannot short-circuit our safety procedures when it rains. If it is precipitating, I will send a message via School Messenger that will let you know it we are using Regular Arrival or Precip Procedure.

54. **Symptom Cheat Sheet** – (*this is when and why we are sending kids home*) I know there are many documents and guidelines for how to handle cases when students do not feel well. The fact is that most of the visits to the school nurse are not black and white, and many fall into the gray (grey for those who prefer the Queen's English) area. We have to try to deal with symptoms that can occur with COVID-19 that can also occur for any number of other reasons. The New Jersey Department of Health has published a document that divides the types of symptoms into two categories, which you can view on Page 17 of [this document](#). This is all very nice, but what happens with my child comes to the school nurse and does not feel well? We have to wade through common symptoms in the middle of a COVID-19 pandemic and try to keep everyone safe. (No pressure, right?) Based on the two categories of symptoms, here is how we will proceed:

Column A includes: Fever, chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion/runny nose.

Column B includes: Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of smell, new loss of taste.

If a child feels ill enough to come to the nurse with ONE symptom in Column A, he or she will be sent home and must remain home for 24 hours. The student may return to school the morning after the 24-hour period has passed if he or she is feeling better. EXCEPTION: If, for some reason, you feel your child is sick enough to go for a COVID-19 test, he or she may not return until the test results come back negative OR 10 calendar days have passed.

If a child feels ill enough to come to the nurse with TWO or more symptoms in Column A, he or she will be sent home and must follow up with the pediatrician. If the pediatrician gives an alternate diagnosis (allergies, food poisoning, migraine, etc.), the student may return to school the morning after a 24-hour period has passed since he or she was sent home if he or she is feeling better. If there is no alternate diagnosis and/or you have your child take a COVID-19 test, he or she may not return until the test results come back negative OR 10 calendar days have passed. **All siblings will also need to go home at the same time and remain home according to the same criteria.**

If a child comes to the nurse with ONE or more symptoms in Column B, he or she will be invited to remain in the isolation room and will be sent home. If there is no alternate diagnosis and/or you have your child take a COVID-19 test, he or she may not return until the test results come back negative OR 14 calendar days have passed, and the symptoms have gone away. All siblings will also need to go home at the same time and remain home according to the same criteria.

As you know, the recommendations change as more is learned about COVID-19. For now, these are the procedures we will follow when a student comes to the nurse. The reality is that it can be very hard to tell if someone is feeling ill because of allergies, a common cold, or COVID-19. We are going to err on the side of caution, which I know will not make everyone happy. My apologies in advance.

Students who are home because they have been sent home from school and are awaiting clearance to return according to these criteria may sign in to remote instruction immediately. No forms are necessary. Please send a message to your child's teachers letting the teachers know that he or she will be joining remotely for this reason.

55. **School Lunch** – *(cold lunch options for September which must be ordered online)* Our first full days of school is Thursday, September 3. Parents may either send lunch to school or arrange for the purchase of school lunch. Attached to the email is information from our cafeteria vendor regarding what is available and the ordering procedure. For the month of September, there will only be cold lunch options. This may change as we move into October, God willing. Ordering MUST take place in advance using the myschoolaccount.com portal. There are instructions on how to set up your account if you have not done so in previous years. (You will need your child's student ID number to set up the account, which can be found by signing into Parent Portal.) At this time, the myschoolaccount.com portal is open for setting up accounts, and as soon as the lunch ordering capability is active I will let you know. **No orders will be taken using paper through school**; however, you may order lunch as late as 8:00 am on the "day of."

56. **Patience** – *(All of this is a pain, but it is still better than not coming to school)* I would like to thank you for your patience as we navigate all of these new procedures. In some ways, it is almost like starting a school from scratch because very little can be done the way that it once was. I know that some of what has been implemented is cumbersome, but this is the cost of doing what we are doing in a safe manner. A full remote opening would have eliminated the need for all of these plans, but I still think that having our students in the buildings with their teachers is worth it!

Current Wish List

Donations toward Penn Medicine arrival screening -OR- [St. Gregory the Great Academy Wish List](#)