



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: August 21, 2020

TO: All Parents, Faculty, and Staff

FROM: Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

RE: **Return to School Update #9**

Looking out the window on this Friday afternoon, the red and white tents have me longing for our traditional carnival! Much like almost everything that 2020 has brought us, the tents seem familiar yet out of place. They are a good metaphor for how these next weeks will unfold; events and processes that are familiar yet not what we are used to. After sending out yesterday's update, some new developments have occurred that I would like to make you aware of:

47. **Morning Arrival, Revisited** – After some careful reflection upon the needs of our school and the skills required to conduct COVID-19 screening methodically, there is a change to our morning process. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for the revised details and instructions (even a small addition to my masterpiece map). We will be using the services of staff from Penn Medicine Occupational Health to conduct our arrival screenings for all students and employees until further notice. These non-contact screenings will consist of temperature checks, current CDC questions, and a check that the mask present and on the face correctly. This change of procedure has two main benefits. First, medical professionals will oversee the screening. This makes the teachers available to carefully monitor the students. Second, the recommendation to exclude a person from school due to COVID-19 concerns will be made as a result of data gathered by a person with actual medical training. I will be informed of the need to exclude and affirm the decision, of course. Truly, this is really the “gold standard” of arrival screening that we will have here at SGGA. We are able to put this into place as a result of the generosity of those who have made donations to support COVID-19 enhancements, and we will continue this “gold standard” service as long as we can based on continuing donations and need.

48. **Student Absence** – Of course, the need for students to be absent will occur from time to time. We will need to carefully track not only the absences, but also the reasons for absences. In order to do this efficiently and to capture important data, we will be using [THIS FORM](#) for student absence reporting moving forward. You will see that the form asks you to select a reason for absence from



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one of four categories: non-medical, medical COVID-19 type symptoms, medical non-COVID-19 type symptoms, or self-quarantine. If “medical COVID-19 type symptoms” is selected as a reason, the form will ask you to check off which symptoms are being exhibited. If “self-quarantine” is selected, the form will ask you to list the date that the self-quarantine is over so that you do not need to keep submitting the form each day. The type of absence and any reported symptoms will only be collected for statistical purposes and to protect the health of the Academy. It WILL NOT become part of a student’s record, nor will I personally share it with any other staff member unless a need exists.

49. **Self-quarantine** – As summer winds down, the last few chances for vacation are in process. I hope that everyone has had the chance to have a change of pace at some point during the summer. As I mentioned in the last update, we all know that there are New Jersey guidelines from quarantining that have been published by the New Jersey Department of Health ([CLICK HERE](#)). Specific guidance from the document states “**The self-quarantine is voluntary, but compliance is expected. Travelers and residents returning from impacted states typically will not need to check-in with public health officials, unless otherwise they are involved in contact tracing efforts or required to do so by their employer or any other federal, state or local law or order. It is expected that individuals will follow the recommendation to self-quarantine.**”

Much time, effort, and expense has been put forth to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 at St. Gregory the Great Academy in order to allow in-person instruction to occur as the 2020-2021 school year opens. I think it is safe to say that all who are returning their children to campus for in-person instruction feel that in-person instruction is important. As a result, it is my responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect the students and employees. It is the expectation that all students who come to campus for in-person instruction, along with members of their household, comply with the self-quarantine instructions as a condition for being welcomed for in-person instruction. The Department of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Trenton is also supportive of this screening process. Therefore, it will be REQUIRED that the parents of all students, as well as all employees, complete [THIS CERTIFICATION](#) prior to the first day that they report for in-person instruction and each time they are away from the St. Gregory the Great Academy campus for more than 7 days. No student or employee will be admitted to the buildings if this certification is not completed OR is a necessary 14 day self-quarantine has not taken place.

50. **Procedures for confirmed cases of COVID-19** – The New Jersey Department of Health published “Covid-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K – 12 Schools” on August 12, 2020. [CLICK HERE](#) for the procedures that we will be following if/when a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs in our school.

Items from Updates 1-8

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** – Superseded by Item #22.
5. **Freckle Math** – No changes.
6. **Desk Shields** – No changes.
7. **Remote instruction for individuals** – No changes

8. **Student homerooms, cohorts, and clustering** – No changes.
9. **Bus transportation** – Parent contacting of all students who have been placed on a bus is in progress.
10. **Screening and quarantining** – Superseded in part by Items #26, #27, and #28.
11. **Masks and shields** – Superseded by Item #22.
12. **Uniforms** – No changes.
13. **In-house Class Livestreaming** – No changes.
14. **Full Remote Instruction** – No changes.
15. **Sanitizing Procedures** – No changes.
16. **Ventilation** – Superseded by Item #21.
17. **Desk Shields** – No changes.
18. **Wish List** – No changes.
19. **Elective Remote Instruction** – No changes.
20. **Outdoor Space** – No changes.
21. **Ventilation/Indoor Climate** – Installation in progress.
22. **Masks** – No changes; please see Item #29.
23. **Mornings** – See Item #40 in this update.
24. **Accommodations** – No changes.
25. **Readiness to Open** – The countdown is still on.
26. **COVID-19 Diagnosis in the Building** – Superseded by Item #50.
27. **COVID-19 Diagnosis of a Family Member/Close Contact** – Superseded by new NJ DOH guidance.
28. **COVID-19 Suspicion Based on Symptoms** – Superseded by new NJ DOH guidance.
29. **Exclusion from School** – No changes.
30. **Parents/Visitors/Volunteers** – No changes.
31. **Masks** – No changes.
32. **Water** – No changes.
33. **Opinions** – No changes.
34. **NEW New Jersey Guidelines** – We will be using this framework as outlined.
35. **School Lunch** – The ordering process will be published prior to the first day of lunch.
36. **Freckle Math** – Remember the teachers need this diagnostic information.
37. **Preschool Logistical Notes** – No changes; remember Preschool 3 Welcome Day is 8/31/2020 9:00 am-10:00 am and Preschool 4 Welcome Day is 9/1/2020 9:00 am-10:00 am.
38. **K-8 Logistical Notes** – No changes; remember 8/27/2020 is for Grades 5-8 ONLY and 8/28/2020 is for Grades K-4 ONLY. August 27-September 2 are all 12:30 dismissal days with NO BUSES.
39. **Public School Remote Opening** – No updates.
40. **Morning Arrival** – Modified by Item #47 in this update.
41. **Afternoon Dismissal** – No changes.
42. **Extended Day Program (EDP)** – No changes.
43. **Screening and Quarantining** – Expanded by Item #49 in this update.
44. **School Nurse** – No concrete changes; discussions continue with the HTSD
45. **Parent Portal/Genesis** – Final homeroom lists will be sent on Monday morning.
46. **Already?** – Pumpkin Spice is still awful

Current Wish List

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