

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome Back!

On September 14, 2020, we will welcome all our returning and new students to our St. Peter Community. We are excited to come together to learn, greet one another, meet our teachers, see old friends and make new ones. As we step forward in faith, we will begin our new year grateful that we are all together and hopeful and positive that our new year will be all we have prayed for. Many of these things, we do each year will remain constant but this year will warrant some changes, due to the precautions and guidance surrounding the COVID 19 pandemic and our resulting “new normal” at least for the time being.

Please read this important information carefully.

Cohorts: Your child’s class will now be known as a cohort. Children will remain in their cohort all day. In most cases the teacher will move from class to class and not the students. We will do our best to minimize their exposure to a larger group. The teachers and I will spend the first couple of days explaining and teaching the children about all the new procedures.

Arrival: Students should arrive at school between 8:30 and 8:50 each day. There is no supervision before 8:30 unless you are attending the Before School Program. If you arrive after 8:50, you are late, so please enter through the front door only.

Buses: The bus routes are published on the website. www.stpetercentralcatholic.com.

Drop off: When driving your child to school, please enter the driveway on Hammond St and take a right into the school yard. Proceed to the lower left corner of the lot. Students in Grades 6,7 and 8 will be directed by a teacher to the door and directly to the classroom. Students in Grades 2,3,4, and 5 will be dropped off in the same location and a teacher will direct them to their classroom as well. If your student is in Kindergarten or Grade 1, you will proceed to the door in the upper left corner where they will be greeted by a teacher and ushered to their classrooms. For clarification, you can visit our website and watch a video of drop off and dismissal.

Preschool students will begin school on September 21, 2020 at 9:15 AM. They will park in the school yard lot and proceed to the gym doors where they will be greeted by a teacher who will bring them to class.

Before School Program: If your child has registered for the Before School Program, you will drive into the Ripley St. parking lot and walk them to the side door near the flag pole. They will be met by a teacher, you will sign in and your child will proceed to the program. Dismissal from the program to your child’s classroom will adhere to social distancing protocol and monitored by the teacher.

After School Program: The procedure for pick up from the program will also look a little different. We ask that you come to the front door and ring the bell on the left side, when you are

recognized by the teacher, they will prepare your child for dismissal. We ask that you go around to the side door to await your child. The children will be taught how to sign out of the program. We are aware that this has added another step for you but please be patient and we will be successful with our new procedures.

Dismissal: All cars will enter the Hammond St. lot and park in the designated spaces. Please do not exit your car. To adhere to COVID 19 guidance we will respect the rules around social distancing, socializing and congregating, until such guidance is relaxed. We are using an App to aid in dismissal. You will receive a tag with a number on it for your rear view mirror. The teachers will forward this tag with the number in your child's welcome letter. Only the youngest sibling in each family will be given the tag. Each number is uniquely assigned, so if you designate someone else to pick up your child it is imperative that they know the number and affix a paper displaying the number on their dashboard. Many hours have been spent organizing this program. It will, we suspect have some glitches but we are hopeful that our new procedure will keep us all safe. Again, thank you for your patience, if we all work together we will be successful.

Important Notes

Masks: Every student and staff member is required to wear a mask! It is suggested that your child wear one to school and keep an extra one in his/her school bag. The school has also purchased 5,000 disposable masks for use in the event that one is needed or accidentally forgotten. Please remember that the masks should be appropriate for our Catholic school. No political statements or masks that reflect anti-Christian beliefs may be worn. Masks must be protective. The CDC has just announced that Gaiters (over the head and neck covering) do not provide sufficient protection, so we will not allow them to be worn as masks. We will have several mask breaks built into our day, so that the children can move about without wearing a mask. These breaks as well will be in accordance with the social distancing guidance. We have purchased lanyards for each student, so that at breaks or lunch they may clip their mask to the lanyard for safe keeping.

Water Bottles: The drinking fountains at school will be shut off, so it is important that your child have a water bottle with a pop up straw or a twist cap, which will enable them to drink with a minimal mask adjustment. They will keep them at their desks. Please send a refill bottle in their lunch bag.

Beach or Bath Towels: Whenever possible or probable the teachers will take their classes outside for class, so that masks can be removed and social distancing standards be met. Please send a beach/bath towel to school with all children in Preschool to Grade 8. They will not share them and can bring them home nightly for a wash.

School Supplies: School supplies will likewise not be shared. Therefore, it is suggested that the supplies you purchase from the recommended list by grade on our website be placed in a large

zip lock baggie labeled with your child's name. They will remain in your child's backpack, which for the time being, will remain with them. Lockers will not be used until safe to do so.

Bathroom Procedures: These procedures will look different as well. Several times a day the entire class will be escorted to the bathroom by the teacher who will monitor the number of students to be admitted to the bathroom safely. For an individual student who needs the rest room at other times a different procedure will take place. Every student will have a bathroom pass, laminated with their name on it. These passes will affix to their desks. Upon leaving their classroom they will take their pass. Outside the doors of the bathrooms, there will be hooks numbered to admit only the safe number of students. When a student sees that all hooks are filled, he/she will wait outside for their turn. After a student uses the toilet they will be expected to wash their hands, exit, use the hand sanitizer machine, take their pass and return to the classroom. Children in Preschool, Kindergarten and first grade will learn but not be expected to follow all the procedures. Their bathrooms are located near their classrooms so there will be more teacher interaction and less responsibility for the little ones.

Cleaning and Sanitizing: Great effort has been made to adhere to all the guidance that we have received from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Schools, the CDC and the local Dept. of Public Health. We have purchased two electronic spray guns which will add additional support to our standard cleaning. Throughout the day "touch" surfaces such as railings, door knobs, and bathroom fixtures will be wiped down with disinfectant and ultra violet hand held wands, will be added to the daily cleaning procedure. Additional deep cleaning will be done on the weekends by an outside company.

Testing: It is our plan to administer MAP testing to all students in Grades 3-8 within the first few weeks of school. We will also administer the DIBELS assessment to students in grades K-2. Our sole purpose for testing is to gather information and establish a baseline to address the academic needs resulting from the COVID and summer slide.

Illness: In the event that someone falls sick, we will follow all the guidelines set forth by the DESE, DPH and CDC. Please take the time to read or re-read the guidance regarding the procedure for testing positive. They are embedded in our website and there are slides of the new guidance provided by the agencies. Please remember to advise the office of a change of phone number, address, contacts. It is of the utmost importance.

The last six months have taught us all so much. In our St. Peter's community we have always greeted children with open arms, shared in their lives, provided solace when they are upset, celebrated their successes, imparted our knowledge and guidance, and then... one day it all changed. We entered into the "Great Pause". So many things changed for all of us. As teachers, we learned that we had little or no control over student learning. We did our best to teach, keep them focused and engaged, but we have learned how to do it much better. We all appreciate life and the human connection a little more, maybe that was in the plan.

I am proud of all the work we did so that when our doors open up, we will all be together again. We have found ways to adapt and protect ourselves. We are eager and prepared for a new beginning, for we are wiser and stronger in spirit. We will walk forward in faith, trusting that God will lovingly guide us through our new reality. We pray that He will watch over us and keep us safe and healthy. A peace comes from knowing we have done our work and placed everything in His hands.

May God bless us all,

Mrs. Meg Kursonis