



ST. SEBASTIAN SCHOOL

Celebrating Over 100 Years of Catholic Education

September 7, 2016

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Ms. Grams, Principal

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Dear St. Sebastian Families,

Good morning and an official “Welcome” or “Welcome back” to you! It has been a true gift and great joy to finally meet our wonderful children and families after a summer full of preparations. It is one of the highlights of my day to see the smiles bounding in each morning, as well as to visit classrooms and see the great work our teachers, staff, and students are engaged in.

I will apologize in advance for perhaps an overload of information at the beginning of the year, especially since I am adding my own notes to convey to you below. The information I share below has been determined a need or issue that directly relates to student safety and/or maximizing student learning in protecting the learning environment; both clearly important to the functioning of our great school. Please review the notes below in preparation for the weeks and months ahead:

Change in start times: Our start times for ALL St. Sebastian students is now streamlined to be universal in the mornings. Effective Monday of next week the following schedule will be followed:

- **7:35 am** – students may be dropped off as of 7:35am (if not registered for PAL and arriving earlier in the morning). You may not simply drop your child off unattended earlier than that, as we are accountable for your child and need to ensure they are properly supervised. If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact me so we can discuss alternative arrangements or refer you to the PAL program.
- **7:45 am** – First bell rings. Middle School students enter first, followed by K-5 classrooms picked up by a grade level teacher to begin the day. Parents, please do not walk your child to his/her classroom unless making arrangements with the teacher for a particular reason, as we want to build independence and an understanding of routines.
- Students may continue arriving after the 7:45 bell, but must be in their classrooms by 7:55am or are considered tardy.
- **7:55 am** - Students are to be in their classrooms, ready to begin the day at this time. Students arriving after 7:55 am are considered “tardy”. Prayer and announcements now begin morning as a school community and classes promptly begin.

Notes on late arrivals and early pick-ups: Students arriving late or leaving early MUST be signed in or out by a parent, not simply dropped off from the street, as we are accountable for all students and must ensure their safety. Students not signed in will be asked to wait in the front office while we call you to return and sign your child in. As soon as they are signed in, we will ensure they are in the classroom so their learning can begin.

Starting the day on time and ending with their class is critical to maximizing your child's learning, ensuring they hear all information conveyed, respecting classmates who are engaged in learning, and respecting the time it takes for teachers to then catch your child up on what they missed. Late arrivals and early releases, when avoidable, are also extremely taxing on the front office staff and take away from what else we might be doing to further student learning. We understand appointments must be scheduled at unavoidable times, some days presenting understandable reasons for coming late or leaving early, but we must tighten up as a community in this area considering the impact on all parties; most of all your child. Not beginning or ending on schedule can be unnerving to students and sets them up to feel under-prepared or confused when missing information. Picking up children a few minutes early out of convenience for families is challenging for the teachers who are managing a number of other children. After a total of (5) tardies – and/or - early releases have been incurred, families will now receive notification. Once a student incurs a total of (8) tardies or early releases, I will contact families to discuss how we can best support your student(s) being present for the full the school day to maximize their learning and minimize the impact this has on the classroom environment. We all want to work as a team to show your children how important their education is! Thank you for prioritizing working with your family to prioritize this in our partnership together.

Classroom Visits & Signing in to the Front Office: Out of the safety of all within the school community, please ensure you sign in to the Front Office when you visit, using the main doors on 54th Street. We teach the children (and ask the staff) not to open other doors, as that is how intruders can enter the building (which I say speaking from experience at a former school). Also, parents or caregivers wishing to speak with teachers during the school day must either pre-arrange that time or ask in the office if there is a time possible to schedule that.

Supervision Needed for Recess / Cafeteria: In an effort to ensure we have proper supervision on the playground, teachers, staff, and administrators have been added to the playground as the second recess supervisor. Your child's safety is the top priority if you are sensing a theme in my memo! If you are able to help volunteer a couple of hours on a given day of the week in either the cafeteria or the playground (we would ideally like three people out for our larger group of our youngest students) please contact Mrs. Golomski at (lgolomski@saintsebs.org). If you are interested in a part-time hourly paid position where you are present consistently Monday through Friday to help supervise, please let us know that as well. Thank you for considering, as we are in great need here, allowing the teachers the additional time to prepare for their instruction and have a sufficient break each day.

Volunteering: Just a reminder, if you are able to volunteer your time in any capacity this year, we need your background check and Safeguarding information on file. Please see the Newsletter or Archdiocesan website for upcoming times to register. The children's educational experiences are maximized by the parental support we have in working together to ensure that, while knowing some families have understandable limitations in volunteering during the work day. Your children love to see you when you can assist in various capacities! (Even those middle schoolers, no doubt).

Vacation & Homework: Vacations should ideally be scheduled outside of the school days, as it truly impacts your child's learning. If you are leaving for a vacation, please note that teachers are not required to provide your child with work in advance and will do so upon your return.

Dismissal concerns: Stay tuned for updates on how after-school dismissal will be changed, as tighter safety measures must occur. We have too many vehicles backing up, driving out, children scattering, and principal's blood pressure rising! If you are interested in being part of the team to redefine our dismissal procedures, please contact me this week. All help and support is appreciated.

PAL / Dismissal concerns: There are enough families who are affected by this update that it is worth noting to all. Please ensure your child(ren) are either picked up promptly from school at 3:00pm or are registered – with paperwork completed – in the PAL program. Students will no longer be left outside on the sidewalk to wait for rides, as it is a safety concern for me as their principal to simply leave them. PAL is available, but all children must be properly registered. If payment is a concern, please speak with Frank, the director, to discuss how to best work with your situation. Students not picked up at dismissal nor registered with PAL will come to the front office to make a phone call to a parent or caregiver to promptly pick them up. If you need help strategizing a safe option for your child, we can talk through options to try and help you find alternative arrangements. Thank you for your attention to this.

Birthday Free Dress: Now for the fun part! I have shared with the students that on their birthday (or the day preceding/following a weekend it may be over), they are welcome to have a free dress day. This way, it is easy to recognize who is celebrating their big day, and we can more personally identify and acknowledge them. It also contributes to kiddos feeling extra special that day...as they should! We will celebrate half birthdays for those over summer or at a time you and their teacher discuss, if preferred. We'll make sure we catch up everyone for this year.

I know this is a lot of information to sort through, but I trust it is conveyed how much we value your children's safety as well as the learning environment we cultivate for all students at St. Sebastian Catholic School. This was a great first week and I hope you are feeling the same from your children (minus the heat!). I was affirmed in the decision to come to this wonderful community on day one when meeting the staff, followed eventually in meeting our families, most of all the students! They are well-mannered, hard working, and FUN to be with each day. That, coupled with a top-notch team of educators and committed parents, makes for a wonderful place to be.

As always, you may contact me with any questions you may have at the administrative level, and especially to introduce ourselves if we have yet to do so.

Thank you and God bless you,

Ms. Grams

Principal

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We only have today. Let us begin."

- St. Theresa of Calcutta

MEDICATION POLICY – Please note that our policy for distributing medication to students will be strictly enforced. Medication consent forms created by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee were included in the summer mailing and must be used exclusively. Feel free to make copies for your use throughout the school year. Additional copies are available in the school office. A suggestion is to keep copies in your glove box so that you can have them handy when you have a doctor appointment.

MEDICATION CANNOT BE DISPENSED WITHOUT THESE COMPLETED FORMS. ALL MEDICATIONS, BOTH PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER, MUST BE KEPT IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE. MEDICATION CANNOT BE KEPT IN THE CLASSROOM. (The exception is an Inhaler Release form that the doctor and staff both sign that the student understands how to use their inhaler and will take the responsibility to carry it with them.)

- Medication must be in original container.
- The student and parent assume full responsibility for the student to report to the office at the designated time that medication is to be dispensed.
- If a student needs to take medication during the school day, and we do not have proper written permission, the parent will need to come and dispense the medication. Neither handwritten nor verbal instruction from a parent is acceptable.

LAST CALL - SPIRIT WEAR SALE - Uniform shirts, spirit wear and gear are now available for purchase. Please order online at: <https://stsebastiangear.itemorder.com/>

- **Order deadline: September 9, 2016**
- **Pick up: Friday, September 23, 2016**
- **School Lobby: 2:45-3:30 or through backpack mail carrier**
- **For now, Character Education shirts can be worn on Mondays only.**
- **Questions? Rebecca Desch: deschjr@me.com**

GYM RUNNERS NEEDED – If you have a child participating in the St. Sebastian athletic program, please consider becoming a “gym runner”. Gym running duties are essentially setting up the Seb’s gym on volleyball and basketball game days and cleaning the gym once all games are finished. The time commitment to “run” is similar to that of snack stand duty. And, since all families of Seb’s athletes are required to volunteer, why not give gym running a try...?

For further information, please call or email Hugh O’Neil at 414-607-0189 oneilhd@yahoo.com

CHILDREN’S CHOIR - WELCOME BACK! Children in grades 2-5 are welcome to join (re-join!) the children’s choir which sings approximately every other Wednesday for the all-school mass. The choir will rehearse every **Tuesday** (changed from previous years) in the church from 3:00pm to 3:30pm. Our first rehearsal will be this coming September 20th. There are NO auditions – all are welcome. We sing fun music and learn about church and God and each other! Come and sing with us. Contact Mr. Kamenski 453-1928 / mkamenski@saintsebs.org with questions

NEW SERVER TRAINING - We are asking if there are any existing students, grades 6-8, who would like to serve at mass. Please contact Mr. Kamenski at 453-1928 / mkamenski@saintsebs.org to schedule training.

SCHOOL CANTOR AUDITIONS - Once again we will hold auditions for cantors for the all-school mass. Children in grades 5-8 may audition. The teachers will have the schedule of audition times (during school hours). Last year's cantors also need to re-audition. For questions, please contact Mr. Kamenski.

SAVE PRINGLE CANS - The music room is collecting small Pringles cans with lids from now until the end of October. These are the 2.36 oz. "grab and go" size. Please drop them off in the office.

MORNING SNACK MILK - Daily milk is available for the snack break in grades K4 - 2. The cost for the year is \$37.50. You can choose to pay by semester if you like. \$18.75 would be due in September and \$18.75 is due in January. Checks are payable to St. Sebastian Hot Lunch.

ST. SEBASTIAN SCHOOL THEATRE ANNOUNCES TRY-OUTS - The Peanuts Gang will be joining us for a VERY SPECIAL TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION of the St. Sebastian School Theatre. Try-outs for "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" will be held in the church hall on Wednesday, September 7 from 6:30-8:30p.m. and on Friday, September 9 from 3:00-5:00p.m. This is a 50 person ensemble show so all 3-8th graders from the grade school as well as faith formation are invited to try-out. Since, there are ONLY 6 principle parts, reading scripts of the main characters will be available in the Learning Center for 5th through 8th grade students to preview prior to auditions. Any questions, please contact the directors, David and Kathy Kirkpatrick, (414-774-6963).

Performances will be November 4, 5, and 6. This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the start of the St. Sebastian Theatre. We would like to extend a heart-felt invitation to ALL our THEATRE ALUMNI and their parents to come to see the play and join us after each performance for a reception in YOUR honor. Charlie Brown and his friends sing " And happiness is those who sing with you." Come and "sing" with us as we celebrate this milestone. Let's fill the church hall with ALUMNI STUDENTS AND PARENT VOLUNTEERS.

MAGAZINE AND GIFT SALE - Home and school looks forward to your help for a great magazine sale. The magazine sale generates money for so many of the perks that St. Sebastian's volunteers bring to your children and family - Grandparents day, teacher gifts and smart boards are just to name a few.

The magazine sale kicks off 9/14 and will be covered at the All-Parent meeting that night. Prizes this year include something for kids and the families. We will again have a non-uniform day, root beer float party, VIP coupons for families and tuition rewards.

Tuition rewards is a program where your child can earn money for college - \$100 in sales is \$1000 of tuition and \$250 in sales is \$2500. This accumulates and can be used for 16 colleges in Wisconsin and many more throughout the US. All you have to do is register at www.gaschoolstore.com and send emails to sell magazines and gifts.

MAGAZINE AND GIFT SALE KICKS OFF IN 1 WEEK! - If you had sales last year, you will be receiving a card with the information from those sales. You can remind family and friends that they can renew magazines or check out the gifts at <http://www.gaschoolstore.com>. Our school code is 2535623. The gift catalog has many options including jewelry, personalized return address stickers, candy and more. There is something for everyone, so consider doing your Christmas shopping early. With orders of \$60 or more, everything comes to your house for free (some orders have special shipping and handling). Student prizes are only awarded during the sale dates 9/14-9/30.

REUSE-A-SHOE DRIVE – The Sustainability team is gathering shoes for rehoming/recycling this September – look for drop off containers at the south end of the Gathering Space and in the school lobby. Please bring only paired shoes that are tied together by the laces if possible; high heels are not accepted. Good pairs will be rehomed via charities like Casa Maria, while worn or moldy pairs will be dropped off at one of the city’s collection sites. If you would rather take shoes over directly, visit the city of Milwaukee’s website to find a location near you at:

<http://city.milwaukee.gov/Milwaukee-Recycles/DropOff/Disposal-Recycling-Guide/Shoes>

1st - 5th GRADE BOYS: BEGIN THE ADVENTURE - Scouting promises you the great outdoors. As a Scout, you can learn how to camp and hike without leaving a trace and how to take care of the land. You’ll study wildlife up close and learn about nature all around you. There are plenty of skills for you to master, and you can teach others what you have learned. 1st through 5th grade boys and their parents are invited to learn more about Cub Scouting with Pack 231. Please join us on Tuesday September 13 from 6:30 - 7:30 in the school cafeteria. Can't make it to the meeting? No problem! Contact Pack Committee Chair Dave Blanchard for more information at blanchard.dave@gmail.com.

DESPERATELY SEEKING PHOTOS FOR THE ST. SEBASTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL REPORT AND CALENDAR!

Parents and teachers: We need your help to continue to make the calendar a successful fundraising tool and an enjoyable calendar for our school's families! Do you have photos from GRADUATION, FIRST COMMUNION, SCHOOL PLAY, SCHOOL CONCERTS, High Interest Day, FIELD TRIPS, SPORTS or daily activities in the classroom from the 2015-16 school year or from the current 16-17 school year? PLEASE SHARE! In addition to the activities listed, we are especially in need of photos that include the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.

Please email full size photos to trish@flourishdesignworks.com before October 12. Photos from your phone can work, however; please send original sized photos. Do not reduce the size when you email them.

If photos are too large for email, or you would like to make other arrangements to transfer photos, please contact Trish at the above email or call 262-349-4339 to make arrangements.

We can't make the calendar without your help. THANK YOU!

BOUTIQUE PLANNING MEETING - Join us on September 15 at 7 p.m. in the parish house as we gather to plan the very special 50th celebration of the holiday boutique. Your ideas and suggestions are welcomed and needed. If you are unable to attend the meeting but have suggestions or would like to participate in any way, please call JoAnn Stasiewicz 414-405-5303 or Sue Olson 414-331-3358.

**CURRENT PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
(contact the office at 453-5830 for information)**

- YAC Gym Runner
- Playground Supervision
- Lunchroom Supervision
- Magazine Sale
- Library Aide

You must have completed SafeGuarding training to volunteer