



MidSummer Musings

Important Summer Information

Lower School Class Assignments will be mailed by teachers on August 18th. Note that in grades 1 through 5, since there are two sections of each grade, the two grade-level teachers will switch for at least one subject. For example, in first grade, Mrs. Blume will teach History to each class while Mrs. Tappe will teach English to each class. That allows students to be familiar with both teachers, and both teachers better come to know all of the students in their grade level.

Kindergarten Meet and Greet: Mrs. Liz Heisler and Mrs. Carolyn Guillen, Kindergarten Teachers, and Mrs. Althea Miller, Kindergarten Assistant, look forward to greeting our newest young students in a casual classroom atmosphere on Wednesday, August 23rd from 10:00 A.M. until Noon in the Kindergarten classrooms. The purpose of this Meet and Greet is to allow Kindergarteners to meet their teacher and other classmates, as well as to become familiar with their surroundings. Mrs. Heisler and Mrs. Guillen are looking forward to a great year. ***Kindergarten parents MUST have immunizations in for the school nurse or you will risk the need to exclude your child. PA state law requires that immunizations are recorded before the child may enter the school. The only acceptable substitute is a letter of religious or moral exemption.***

Preschool Meet and Greet: Mrs. Sharon Navari will also be greeting students on Thursday, August 31st according to this schedule:

3 YEAR OLDS--8:30-9:30

AM PREK – 10:00 to 11:00

PM PREK-- 11:30-12:30

Remember Preschool begins on September 5th for 3 year olds, and September 6th for 4 year olds. Pre-K Plus begins on September 7th.

Preschool Introduction to Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: On Monday evening, August 21st, at 7:15, parents of preschoolers will have the opportunity to learn more about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, an experiential religious formation program for young students, that Mrs. Navari has been trained in and will be implementing in the preschool this year. She will email families with more information in the weeks ahead.

Senior Class of 2018, do not forget about **College Week!!!** It is **August 14 – 16** from **1:00 to 3:15**. Please do your best to be present at all of these classes. We will discuss the “Aquinas Process” for applications and recommendations. On the 16th, we will be conducting mock interviews, this part of the application process is becoming more important every year. Come and learn the techniques that work! Free of charge and definitely worth the time!!

Bus information is sent directly by the school district, usually the week before school starts. Aquinas has no input into routes/times, and they vary based on location of Aquinas families in any given year. **IT IS SUPER IMPORTANT THAT LOWER SCHOOL STUDENTS ARRIVE AT SCHOOL ON THE FIRST DAY WITH THEIR BUS INFORMATION – both school district AND bus number for the afternoon!** (Note that Pine Richland will be sending us a special tag for all Kindergartners who ride a P-R afternoon bus. We will distribute those tags to the P-R Kindergartners on the first day of school. They ask that the student attach that tag to their backpack so that they can identify these little ones and not release them from the bus without a sibling or parent at the stop to greet them.) Remember that we have thirteen bussing districts and not every district sends us their roster/route. It is up to the parents, not the school, to be sure that students know their district and bus number. I recommend taping it to the backpack of Kindergartners and First Graders. We take great care to be sure that everybody gets home on the first day of school ☺, but that is much easier if we know how they are to get there!

Uniform Ordering and Information: All families have received the uniform by email earlier this summer. While uniform pieces may be purchased anywhere, they should meet the guidelines set forth in the uniform code. The plaids must be ordered through **Schoolbelles at 4721 B-125 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 NOTE NEW LOCATION! (412) 630-8480** Aquinas is code #2229. (Orders can be placed online also at www.schoolbelles.com also.) Land’s End is also able to provide the plain items, including high school skirts (although sweaters should be ordered through Schoolbelles only.) Parents should please be sure that students have the appropriate uniform pieces as uniform code will be enforced (particularly skirt length – which is to the top of the knee or longer).

Note that the only acceptable shorts for gym class are Aquinas shorts. Shorts may be ordered through the office. They can also be ordered Schoolbelles where we recently added both a mesh and jersey gym short. All have the Aquinas Crusader logo on the leg of the short. Please be sure students have the correct gym shorts at the start of the year.

Our tradition is that ***middle and high school boys will be permitted a bow tie instead of the regular school tie on Wednesdays if they wish.*** It can be any pattern of bowtie. This is in solidarity with our male faculty members who try to remember a weekly tradition of Bowtie Wednesdays! ***Middle and high school girls may wear a neck scarf on Wednesdays.***

Family Directory Information: Note that once the Backpack portal is opened with this year’s information, the family directory can be accessed or printed straight from the Backpack. If you set the toggle to Search for STUDENT, and leave all settings to ALL, then choose “Printable Version” at the bottom of the “Search Student/Parent Directory”

page, you can access all of the information that families chose to allow for publication. I would suggest that you wait a couple weeks before printing so that all info is correct.

Email Communication Verification: We are able to send family emails through the email addresses that each family verified through the Backpack when they completed their enrollment for this year. That is the means by which this email has been sent. But the quickest way to communicate with the entire school community – particularly for closings and delays – is through the Aquinas-Announce list. Enclosed in this mailing is a form where a family can list every email that you wish to receive the bi-weekly Footnotes, as well as any closing/delay, or other timely information that we need to send home to families. Once we have gathered that information, we will “test” the list-server by specifying a day and time that you can expect an email. Until then, we will communicate via email through the backpack contact list.

Summer Reading and Supplies: Summer Reading and Supply Lists are on the web site under the “My Aquinas” tab. High School does not have a supply list, as needs will depend on the student’s scheduled classes. One may presume a need for high school students to have several 3-subject notebooks, a few single-subject notebooks, pens, and pencils. Note that each student will receive an assignment notebook/planner when school begins.

Graphing Calculators: All *students in math classes above the level of Algebra I* are required to have a Texas Instruments graphing calculator. This would include all high school students in Algebra II or Geometry and higher and any 8th grade student that will be in Geometry for the coming year. The required calculator is the TI 84 Plus or TI 84 Plus CE. Note that the CE model is rechargeable rather than battery operated. My experience is that a charge lasts almost a month! Either one of these calculators has all of the capabilities needed through Calculus. The cost varies from \$100 to \$130 and both are widely available at office supply stores and Wal-Mart, Target, etc. Both are fully functional for the classroom. With 80+ identical calculators in the high school, ***please be sure to use a non-removable means of identifying your calculator and its cover.***

Didache Bibles are required of *all 9th grade students* for use in their Religion Classes as well as for their personal reference and reading, and can be purchased in the main office. The Didache Bible is a version of the Ignatius Bible with commentaries inclusive of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Didache Bible costs \$40 and is hard cover. We find that the hard cover version holds up much better for use throughout the high school years.

Golden Children’s Bibles are required for all middle school students. As an initiative that began during the Year of Faith, we began having the middle school students become familiar with the stories of scripture. They have very much enjoyed reading the Bible in this format which makes it easier to follow the chronology of Biblical history. This Children’s Bible is available hardcopy in the front office for \$15 and may be purchased anytime this summer or at the start of the year.

2017-2018 School Calendar: The calendar is attached to this mailing and is also online at the website under the ‘My Aquinas’ tab. Note that the first day of school is Tuesday, August 29th.

Lunch Duty Form: A form for Lunch Duty Requests is also attached to this mailing. Please complete the form and return it to school by Friday, August 18th. If the form is not received at school, we will schedule you into the regular rotation for lunch duty, which will be four or five times during the school year.

Hot Lunch: Hot lunch may be ordered each morning at school if desired. Payment is made through a declining balance plan through *payforit*. Each student account may be “loaded” with a cash balance through the parent’s credit card. The regular cost of lunch is \$3.75 for K – 5, \$4.50 for grades 6 – 12 per student. A la carte items such as milk, salad, sandwich, chips, cookies, etc, are less. As soon as new students are entered into the system, parents will be sent directions on how to establish a payforit account. Until that time, new students may pay with cash.

Parent Night: Mark your calendar now for Parents’ Night on Wednesday, September 6th, beginning at 6:00 for Lower School, and at 7:00 for Middle and Upper School. More information will be given at the start of the year!

Looking Ahead: **High School Students and their Parents** should plan to attend **College Night on October 5th at 7:00**. Mark your calendars now. More information will be available in September.

Note that ALL TEXTBOOKS BORROWED OVER THE SUMMER MUST BE RETURNED BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 18TH. THIS IS ESSENTIAL AS WE PREPARE BOOKS FOR STUDENT USE THIS YEAR.

The office is open from 9:00 to 3:00 Monday through Thursday if you need assistance or information.

Enjoy the last part of the summer!