



ST. MICHAEL *the* ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
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August 17, 2020

Dear Guardian Families,

Welcome Back! You have been missed. As I prayed about how to begin a Parent Back to School letter in the midst of a Pandemic, I struggled with how to include all the important details that need to be shared. While reflecting on the last five months, the feeling of gratitude and appreciation repeatedly came to me. I would be remiss if I didn't share how grateful I am to be writing a Back to School letter.

The teachers returned to the building last week and I am grateful for their commitment, dedication and genuine love for the students and SMA community. Our staff lives by the words of St. Teresa of Calcutta is doing "small things with great love". I am grateful to them for so strongly believing in the Mission and Vision of SMA that they are willing to learn new and different ways of teaching, sanitizing and connecting with each other and the students in order to provide the best education. They are doing everything they can to provide a safe learning environment for our students. Please keep these amazing educators in your prayers.

I am grateful for the support of the Diocesan leadership that is supporting our efforts to provide face to face learning for students in our Catholic schools. I am grateful for our students who have been accepting and understanding of our rules and guidelines to be in the building and return to school. Their smiling eyes and energy make all our efforts worthwhile! Finally, I am grateful for you, our parents, for trusting us even more so this year with your child(ren). Be assured that we are doing all we can to keep the students, staff and SMA



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community safe and healthy and continue our efforts to guide the students to *Know Truth, Love God and Serve Others as His brave and humble disciples.*

We welcome the following new staff members to the St. Michael staff:

Sr. Mary Aquinas, Math Department

Sr. Stephen Patrick, Science Department

Sr. Katharine Rose, English Department

Mrs. Susan Ambrose, Math Department/Science Department

Mrs. Katie Bland, Math Department

Mrs. Laura Eagle, Practical Arts/SS Department/Science Department

Ms. Katie Eilerman, English Department

Mr. Jake Herzog, Fine Arts, Music

Mrs. Katie Kain, SMILE Zone

Mr. Will Wright, Social Studies Department

Please keep our new faculty members in your prayers as they transition into their positions at St. Michael. I know you will help them feel welcomed in our school community.

In addition to our new staff, we are excited to welcome 81 freshmen, 6 transfers and 57 new families to our St. Michael school community. Many of these students have been on campus participating in activities and are transitioning well into our school family. Given the circumstances, we unfortunately had to cancel our new family Welcome Picnic and Parent Club Bonfire. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to gather soon and the Parent Club is exploring ways for families to connect virtually.



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Unlike previous years, there is a significant amount of information to share with parents and I have tried to highlight as much as I can below. Therefore, it is very important to read all the content of this letter and click the links to the additional documents. Thank you in advance for reading to the end of this lengthy letter.

Please take time to read the Return to School Document, PowerPoint, Policy and Procedures and Parent FAQ's linked in this letter. The Covid Task Force has spent many hours researching and establishing procedures and policy to ensure that we meet all recommendations and requirements for safety. However, as we know, their guidelines are fluid and ever changing, therefore it is important to understand that these documents are fluid, may change and should be referenced periodically. They are on our website and linked in the Guardian Glance each week.

MASKS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO BE WORN UPON EXITING YOUR CAR.

*A recent study suggested that Gaiter masks are not effective for preventing the spread of mouth particles. Until additional research is completed, we will allow students and athletes to wear the gaiter masks but encourage the traditional "mask" for school. The Covid Task Force will continue to research and communicate any policy change. Bandanas are NOT an acceptable face covering.

THE [DIOCESAN WAIVER](#) MUST BE SIGNED AND ON FILE PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. PLEASE BRING TO ORIENTATION. THIS IS DIFFERENT THAN THE ONE SIGNED THIS SUMMER.



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Welcome Home, Orientation and Pictures

ALL students MUST be in uniform compliance, which also means it is time to shave the Covid beards, cut the fun, long Covid hair and wash out the hair color. I know for many it has been 5 months since they have had a haircut and I know the hairstylists have missed our students :).

August 26th

8:30-12:00 Freshmen

1:00-3:00 Sophomores

August 27th

9:00-12:00 Juniors

1:00-3:00 Seniors

August 28th

8:30-3:15 Syllabus Day

*hot dog lunch provided, please bring a lunch if preferred

Admittance to School Each Morning:

- Students/Parents MUST complete the **Covid Symptom Screening** using the SWAY APP each morning prior to entering the building. There is one log in per student so parents will need their student log in or can use the student's phone to complete the screening. Directions for setting up the account are located in the link listed on the last page of this letter. For the safety of others, please be honest!



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- Upon entering the building, the Administration will check to see if the students have completed and passed the screening. If not, they will be escorted to the nurses for triage and screening completion.
 - Freshmen and Sophomores will enter the building at the front of the school.
 - Juniors and Seniors will enter the building at the circle drive.
 - Interior school doors open at 7:30. Students arriving prior to 7:30 will need to either wait outside or in the vestibule.

Lunch

- Orders must be placed by 9:00 each morning via the link in the Daily Announcements.
- Sack lunch option will be offered Monday-Friday for \$5.00
- Hot Lunch will be offered on Tuesday and Thursday for \$6.00
- Grab and Go Items will be available for purchase
- Only Card Payments will be accepted, cash will not be accepted at this time.
- Students will eat in their classrooms for the time being
- All food items will be served in closed containers
- Vending Machines will be available but microwaves will not be available

Mass

- All School Mass is offered most Wednesdays for school and staff. Communities will attend in person on a rotating basis and the Mass will be live streamed into the other Community Houses. We have received permission from the Bishop for Eucharistic Ministers to administer Communion to the students who are attending Mass virtually in their



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House. Students are encouraged to wear Game Day/Dress Attire when their Community attends Mass in person.

- Student Athletes will attend 8:00 Mass on the following rotation and need to be in Game Day/Dress Attire on their assigned Mass day.
 - Monday-Volleyball, Girls Golf and Drumline
 - Tuesday-Cross Country, Softball, Dance Team and Tennis
 - Thursday-Soccer and Cheer
 - Friday-Football and Boys Swim

Dismissal

- Students will be dismissed at 3:15 and are expected to go to their cars upon dismissal
- Students involved in activities will receive instructions from their coach/sponsor
- Community Hallway doors will be locked at 3:30 and students still in the building will need to wait on the Learning Stairs.
- Students not picked up by 4:00 will be directed to wait in the vestibule or outside until they are picked up.

Retreats

Retreats remain a priority for this year! Although we are working on the logistics for where we will be located- retreats will be one day for the underclassmen and two days for seniors. Students will not be staying overnight and Covid-19 precautions will be taken. We are excited to continue our mission of giving students the space to encounter Christ in a



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profound way. Mrs. Burns will be communicating details with each class directly.

The Signs of Suicide Program

The Signs of Suicide Program (SOS) is a Diocese mandated program that will be implemented this fall for all SMA students. In a world where depression, anxiety and suicidality among teenagers is on the rise it is imperative that SMA continues to address this topic. Through a educational video and discussion series, SOS seeks to empower students to respond appropriately and connect anyone with signs of suicide with a trusted adult. Students will not only be educated on the appropriate way to respond to someone who is showing signs of suicide but will be screened themselves for their risk of suicidality. Students will meet with a licensed counselor that day for further evaluation should they screen as high risk for suicidality. Parents will be contacted and involved should any concerns emerge. A more detailed letter and training video for parents will be coming from our social worker, Jana Burns, in the coming weeks.

Uphold Program

As a part of our health and wellness program, SMA is excited to roll out our new initiative, UPHOLD. Uphold is a SMA created, video based curriculum that will help students navigate difficult conversations and topics in our world. Uphold is founded upon the principle of Catholic social teaching in regards to human dignity and will allow our faculty and students to engage in dialogue based conversations through a Christian lens. Please learn more about this initiative by clicking the link at the bottom of the letter.



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Thank you so much for reading the longest, but probably the most important, Back to School Parent letter I have written in my 27 years in education. Many have asked what we need or how they can help. We need the following: Lysol Disinfectant Spray, paper towels, kleenex and Clorox wipes. Donations can be sent to school with your student or dropped off at the Academic Office. Most importantly, we need your prayers and continued support. As St. Paul said to the Thessalonians, *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”*. Join me in rejoicing that we can gather together as a school community, in praying for all those affected during this Pandemic, in having a grateful heart and in trusting that God is in control and will take care of us.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mrs. Jodi Briggs". The script is cursive and fluid.

Mrs. Jodi Briggs
Principal

Document Links:

[Student Waiver](#)

[Return to School Plan](#)

[Covid Response Policy and Procedures](#)

[Parent Covid FAQ](#)

[Return to School Covid PowerPoint](#)



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[Sway App How To](#)

[Uphold Program Overview](#)