



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY

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KEEPING IN TOUCH

November 1, 2009

Dear Parents,

I extend special greetings on the start of the "holiday season", which we just entered through the Halloween door. I trust all survived! Please focus your attention on several items.

G-20 make-up days are Monday, November 30, 2009, and Friday, February 12, 2010. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

Health Update

First, I thank the SEA community for its composite cooperation during these harrowing pandemic times and ask that each member continue your support as we remain in the early stages of the H1N1 and annual flu season. Yes, we have endured a few isolated, stressful experiences where sick children remained in school too long, but on the whole, SEA has remained relatively healthy. We are tracking daily the number of absences that are related to flu symptoms, even though we do not have any officially confirmed H1N1 cases. Parents have called informing us that their physician is treating an illness as if it is H1N1 flu. Therefore, it becomes more important that children with fevers and other flu-like symptoms not attend school for at least 24 hours after their temperature has returned to normal and they feel and look healthy. Please remember that ***SEA personnel are NOT health professionals***, but we are seriously following the advice and procedures provided to us by local, state, and national health officials. When we call informing you that your child is sick and needs to depart from school as soon as possible, please give us the cooperation we need from you.

A New Basketball Program for 3rd, 4th and 5th Grade Students

A new eight-week basketball program for these primary grade students will be offered on Saturday mornings from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. starting in January. Coach Gathagan will be sending specific information, including sign-up procedures, shortly. We are very pleased to offer an additional voluntary enrichment program as another extension of our regular curriculum. Both SEA staff and parent volunteers will supervise this skills development program.

Eighth Grade Commendation

At the recent Thursday Chapel service, I recognized the eighth grade class at the close of the Core Values Commendations part of the service. At this time of the year, eighth grade students are invited to visit independent, parochial, public, and boarding schools for a day as part of their introduction to high school placement opportunities following their graduation in June 2010. By the end of October, our students visited six schools as individuals and in groups. I have received personal communications from the leaders of each of the six schools, singing the praises of our students' visits. Let me offer just a small sampling of actual verbal and written comments I have received. "What an outstanding group of young persons. They were so engaging, warm, confident, and yes, well-behaved." "Bill, what can we do to encourage these youngsters to seriously

consider our school? Many teachers and even some of our students commented on how well these students would blend into our school.” “What are you doing at St. Edmund’s that year after year we interact with such outstanding, mature young teens during these visitation days? To a person, they were at ease, smiled, demonstrated solid academic and organizational skills and leadership qualities by the questions they asked and the responses they gave to questions posed. Our only problem is that we don’t seem to admit as many as we hope by the number of invitations sent. Bill, what can we do better?” “Bill, during your students’ recent visit we again saw future leaders as we have benefitted from as recently as the current school year.” (At this school, the ninth grade class president is a 2009 SEA graduate.) I could go on and on as my placement folder is becoming thicker with communications represented by the quotations in this letter.

I wanted our eighth grade students to be so recognized in Chapel as part of the Core Values Commendations in the presence of all other students in grades one through seven, faculty and staff, and the numerous parents and other visitors attending. I wanted them to know of my personal and professional pride in being the Head of a school that is truly trying to teach and live daily these timeless Values, knowing full well that as mortal humans, we are not and never will be “perfect”, whatever that means. I wanted each one to know that personal decisions regarding how we want to be seen by and appreciated by others can bring respect and honor to family and self, and, related to the high school visitations, to St. Edmund’s Academy. What a marvelous outcome for doing what comes naturally, thanks to a quality upbringing in these early years guided primarily by the family in a trusting partnership with the school. And finally, I wanted our younger students to witness a well-earned accolade that serves as a powerful model for their own aspirations.

Congratulations to the Class of 2010. May you continue your quest for excellence in all that you do for the remainder of your eighth grade year. Your future has never been brighter in the high school choices and opportunities available for your selection.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The first formal Parent-Teacher conferences take place this week. Simply stated, the underlying purpose is to assess how the year is progressing in terms of the teacher’s/curriculum’s expectations and the student’s actual performance when responding to the curriculum. The written progress report will guide the conversational flow with both parent and teacher reaching a common understanding of the student’s progress in the first nine weeks of school. However, during the conference, a problem may be identified or may emerge in the conversation. For purpose of clarity, a problem is defined as a discrepancy between an expected and an actual outcome. Any problem should be viewed as an opportunity for the parent and the teacher to first make sure that the expectation is clearly understood, and then to focus on what is or may be contributing to the actual performance discrepancy. This understanding (not necessarily agreement) is essential to implementing a plan that reduces and eventually eliminates the discrepancy. It is not unusual for expectations to be adjusted, especially if the performance discrepancy is due to developmental issues or skills not yet mastered. It is important for both the parent and the teacher to be on the same page at this time to continue unified support of the student’s journey toward the completion of a successful school year. Enjoy a productive conference.

William Kindler