



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY
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KEEPING IN TOUCH

September 1, 2009

Dear Parents,

WELCOME TO ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY'S 62ND YEAR. Everything about the start of the first day was optimal --- beautiful weather; high energy among students, parents, faculty/staff; and attractive, safe, and healthy facilities ready to receive our community of learners. We opened with 288 students compared with 268 last year. I especially extend a very special **WELCOME** to our more than 50 new students and their parents. Thank you **ALL** for supporting our operations by reading the multitude of communications sent this summer, and following the essential procedures resulting in a very smooth opening. By 8:30, the School was humming with an efficiency of action as if we had been in session for weeks.

Our theme for the year is to sustain **HEALTH** in all of its forms for all. With the bombardment of so much communication by local, state, and national health organizations regarding H1N1, I want to summarize a few very important points from my May and August Keeping In Touch letters, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the many meetings I have attended with local health officials, and the very sound guidance we are receiving from SEA health professionals. The overriding emphasis made by all these resources is for schools to emphasize to parents: **KEEP CHILDREN WHO ARE SICK AT HOME!**

Here are steps we have in place based on the current directives being provided to us, in addition to the preventative education procedures in place in each classroom and throughout our facilities:

- **Extending the time sick students stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Children who are still sick, especially if they still have a fever, should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after their symptoms have gone away. SEA will work closely with parents to provide learning support as appropriate.
- **Allowing high risk students to stay home.** Certain groups are at higher risk of developing serious complications from the flu. These groups include children under the age of 5 years and those with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease. These students' parents should consult their physician to make the decision to stay home.
- **Being especially vigilant of students arriving with or developing illness symptoms during the day.** School personnel will not hesitate to ask students about symptoms suggestive of a respiratory infection such as fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and fatigue. Any student who has at least 2 of these symptoms will be separated from others, offered a surgical mask if appropriate, and sent home as soon as possible. ***We are not physicians or health professionals, but are the first line of defense regarding this major health issue and are being advised to make firm decisions even if the outcome results in parental inconvenience or a difference of opinion based on the symptoms.*** Is it possible that we may overreact to a child's symptoms? YES! Yet in these early days with the information provided to us, I am prepared to handle the concern of overreacting than one of being

negligent. Where difference prevails, we may ask for a written physician's opinion on the child's condition to attend school. We fully need your help and understanding with this issue.

I will continue communicating with you on H1N1's and any other health issue's potential effects on our school community as the school year progresses.

Onto another item that is a HOT TOPIC in Pittsburgh and with schools ---***The G-20 Summit – September 24-25.*** At this time, PCIS schools (Pittsburgh Consortium of Independent Schools), which includes St. Edmund's Academy, are planning to remain open. We know that the Pittsburgh Public Schools are closed on those days and that they will not provide bus service. Again, several meetings have been held on this item with the strong recommendation that we conduct normal services in a very abnormal environment. Due to security issues surrounding the extremely complex planning for this summit, we are told that we will be advised if events and/or conditions may lead to a decision to close. Obviously, there will be a need for many to consider alternate travel arrangements due to official decisions affecting the greater Pittsburgh area. I will keep you posted.

Finally, in our sincere effort to provide effective communication this year, I have heard from a parent that SEA's e-mails are landing in the "junk mail folder." That certainly was not our intent. In discussion with our technology specialist, I am told that this must be handled at the receiver's end. The recommendation is for you to add "stedmunds.net" to a safe sender list in your e-mail preferences and this should allow our e-mails to get through.

Enough for the first day! I am so hyped about the tremendous accomplishments that we hope will take place this school year for each student, that I must remain firmly anchored regarding the importance of the sustained Home and School partnership --- a partnership requiring mutual respect, confidence, and trust. Even though I know that you will remain close with us on behalf of your child(ren), I must write the words ***please do so.***

Now as I end the opening day of the 2009-2010 school year, I leave you with this quotation,

"If you want to be successful, it's just this simple: Know what you're your doing. Love what you're doing. And believe in what you're doing."

Will Rogers

Yours in Peace and Gratitude,

William Kindler