



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY

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KEEPING IN TOUCH

February 26, 2010

Dear Parents,

I am very pleased for the month of March to begin as it moves us closer to the official start of Spring. It serves no useful purpose here to reflect upon the numerous disruptions of the past few weeks other than to hope that the worst is behind us. It is fair to state that all schools, private, public, and parochial are thoroughly reviewing policies and procedures pertinent to external conditions that can and do hamper normal operations.

Even as a private, independent school, St. Edmund's Academy must meet specific Pennsylvania student attendance days and instructional hours. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides regulations with two options ---180 student attendance days with a minimum number of 5 daily hours, or a specified number of annual student instructional hours, which is 900-990 hours depending on the grade level. Public schools and many parochial schools follow the 180 days option. Most private, independent schools follow the student instructional hours option as our school days are longer. This option expects a school to provide at least a 6 instructional hour day. Briefly, when a public school goes on a two-hour delay, it can still count the day towards its 180 day option. When a private, independent school goes on a two-hour delay, those hours are deducted from the student instructional hours option. I only give this as an example to clarify that we still have a state regulation to meet. This regulation is not factored into a decision that is made for the safety and well-being of our community, but it is a part of the decision for scheduling make-up days. A very formal review is underway to create a unified student instructional regulation in Pennsylvania.

Due to 1 January and 4 February closures, St. Edmund's Academy lost a minimum of 30 instructional hours. One of those days was made up on February 15, President's Day. The other days will be made up as follows:

- Monday, April 5 – Easter Monday
- Tuesday, June 1 – full day instead of a half day
- Wednesday, June 2 – full day for PreK through grade 6 instead of a half day (7 and 8 grades 1 pm dismissal with 8th grade graduation as scheduled)
- Thursday, June 3 – full day instead of No School
- Friday, June 4 – full day instead of No School (SEA Kennywood Day rescheduled for Friday, June 11)

Susan Miller will describe the few program changes that will take place as the result of this revised calendar in a special March letter. If there are additional instructional hours required due to future delay/closing decisions, the need for an expanded school year will be considered for the week of June 7.

The annual March break continues as scheduled on the calendar. SEA closes at the end of the school day on Friday, March 19, and reopens on Monday, April 5. Historically, these two weeks have been scheduled in advance by members of our school community, including teachers and staff attending professional development

opportunities. Once again, St. Edmund's Academy will offer a child care program Monday, March 22, through Friday, March 26. Specific information will be sent shortly.

I extend sincere appreciation for all the wonderful support we received from the SEA community throughout these past few weeks. I am especially grateful for the constructive suggestions offered. Please continue to provide them as we are "all in this together." Finally, I offer heartfelt thanks to the St. Edmund's Academy faculty and staff for their overcoming personal hardships and major safety hazards in order to be present for their professional responsibilities when the school resumed operation. Their commitment to SEA and our students must never be questioned.

William Kindler