



ACADEMY OF ST. JAMES OF THE MARCHES

News and Notes

Mrs. Lelia Pappas



October 10, 2018

Dear School Families:

I hope everyone had a wonderful few days off as we celebrated Columbus Day. A few days of no routine is always a great thing. The staff trained on Friday as we focused on instructional practices and the teaching of math. Learning best practices for teaching and brainstorming about how to improve teaching is a great day for staff. This time is very valuable to us!

We were visited by NJ Department of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning on Wednesday, October 3rd. They are visiting all the non-public schools in Passaic County over the next couple of months. The team consisted of 3 Passaic County Prosecutors Officers, 2 Department of Education Administrators, 1 NJ State Trooper, 1 Detective from Totowa Borough and another officer from the state. A lockdown was called and the team reviewed our procedures. I informed the team ahead of the drill that the locks into each classroom are going to be changed as they need to lock from the inside which they do not do. I also let them know we will be purchasing walkie-talkies for anyone supervising students outside so they can talk to the office. The school nurse, Mrs. Lopez in the office and me followed the team during the drill. Upon completion of the drill the state team made some recommendations to the school on how to proceed in the future.

The following is a list of those recommendations in no order of importance.

- Install a camera which covers the stairwells after someone enters the front door
- Inform the school community, anyone who sees something suspicious can call a lockdown, not just the Principal
- We have to remove any identifying signs from the windows of classrooms
- The Faculty Room must be locked at all times
- Staff have to wear lanyards that identify them
- No doors can be propped open
- A clear bin has to be located outside the front door for parents to leave forgotten items for their children
- NO PARENTS CAN BE PERMITTED IN THE BUILDING WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT

I know this will be a tough adjustment as parents are pretty used to freely entering the building. I am sure you understand that in this day and age this cannot continue. For the safety of all, you must make an appointment or we must know your purpose ahead of time if you want to enter the school building any time during the day. The clear bin will be used to drop off items if your child leaves something at home.

There were a bunch of other suggestions but they will remain private but all of them are for the safety of the children and staff. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

There is another piece to this safety issue and that is children being dropped off in the morning ahead of the school day. School starts at 8:00AM. The doors will open between 7:45 and 7:50 AM. If you are going to drop off your students before 7:50 AM they will need to go to before care. Leaving students standing outside the door at 7:40 is just not what we want, nor is it safe. I really request your understanding on this request. If there is some reason that this presents a hardship, let me know.



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Breakfast is served this year from 7:55 to 8:10 AM. We pray from 8:10 – 8:15 and the children move upstairs at 8:15AM. Of course this is different on Thursdays when we go to 8:15 Mass.

Other important upcoming news:

Tomorrow, Thursday, the Student Council will be inducted at the 8:15 AM Mass and all are invited to attend. The students had a bit of a campaign, speeches were held (I was totally proud of all who ran)and the following is the results:

Co-Presidents **Jorge Arana and Litzy Sanchez**

Vice President **Robert Callegari**

Treasurer **Kamila Agurti**

Secretary Anabelle Vargas

Class Representatives

4th Santino Adornetto & Danna Martinez

5th Sofia Molina & Melanie Panana

6th Kristopher Classen & Ayvian Crespo

7th Alex Chira and Alicia Guevara

8th Mauricio Bazan & Ariel Molina

St. James of the Marches will be honoring the Angels of Light for 2018 this Sunday, October 14th at the 10:15 Mass. Mrs. Leslie Dreps, the former Principal, will be one of the honorees and I am encouraging as many families as possible to attend that Mass. A formal brunch will follow which is \$25/per person catered by the Brownstone. Everyone is also encouraged to come have brunch with us. Please call the office or the rectory by Friday to reserve a seat at a table for brunch.

Tuesday, Oct.16th: Family Rosary at the Church at 7:30 PM. October is the Month we honor Mary and the Rosary. Try to fit this in you busy schedule. I also want to impress upon the school community the importance of attending Mass on Sundays and signing your student in at the list found in the back of the church! You have made a dedication to the Academy of St. James School, please, please understand the importance of Sunday Mass that accompanies this commitment. I cannot stress this enough, we need to support the Church as well as the school! Thank you for being the great people you are and will continue to be! Together in Christ we can change the world. I truly believe it!

Peace and Blessings,

Lelia