



# C.A.R.E. News

Newsletter – May 7, 2008

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## **Our Lady of Grace Catholic School** *this week's Q&A's*

Mr. Mike Johnson, principal of Our Lady of Grace Catholic School, continues his efforts to prepare Our Lady of Grace to open this coming fall. Once again, Mr. Johnson also takes time to answer questions you have posted on the C.A.R.E. News web site.

**Q:** The "Colerain" area as you have soon found out is a "small" community. Why was it just officially announced what the school mascot is when I heard from others in the community what it was weeks ago? I do not understand how this could leak out prior to you announcing this?

**A:** The colors and mascot were presented to the Education Commission on 4/14. We got final approval from the pastors on 4/16. I then announced the color and mascot at a 4/17 joint PTO meeting. I also had teacher meetings on both 4/17 and 4/21 at which time I shared the color and mascot. I failed to put it in the 4/23 edition of the CARE newsletter so it just got out on 4/30. That was my mistake. The CARE newsletter has been the place to get information on OLG and I apologizing for not getting the mascot and color out in the 4/23 edition.

**Q:** I know uniforms are low on the list of priorities for the school, but after having worn one myself for 12 years I have a suggestion. The navy skorts and pants have been a fabulous choice at Little Flower this year. They are much more affordable than the uniform jumpers and are available in most stores. The pants are a great option in the winter.

**A:** The Education Commission met last night and discussed uniform. While fine tuning of the policy is still in process, I do know that the uniform jumpers or long pants will be required for the girls except during those times when we are in our "warm weather" uniform. We will work out the final details of the uniform and get those out soon. Be watching the CARE page as we will announce uniform fittings and details within the next week.

**Q:** What are the colors for OLG? I heard it was going to be blue and light blue. When will we know the class size? I am looking forward to there being foreign language. When will we know about uniforms? Has anyone said maybe just wearing khaki or navy blue pants with white polo shirt for all?

**A:** The colors of the school are Columbia blue with dark blue as an accent color. However, for athletics we are going to be wearing the Columbia blue with black or white accents. This looks great and keeps our prices reasonable.

**Q:** I only know a few of the teachers that were announced as being hired on your last care letter. Can you please let us know what grade these teachers are going to teach if that has been decided yet? Also, usually at the end of the year we have the list of things we need to buy for the next year (i.e., 1st grade needs to buy 5 pencils, etc.). Is that list going to be available by the end of the school year?

**A:** As soon as we make our final decisions on Kindergarten we will be able to make final adjustments to faculty assignments and at that point we will identify grade and subject levels. We are currently working on compiling a supplies list. It is going to be coming home before the end of the year.

**Q:** I recently heard that you are leaning towards using the responsibility/conduct policy currently in use at St. Ann. In the current system, minor infractions can result bigger consequences like detention, in-school suspension, or worse. Students accrue these responsibility/conduct slips throughout the year with no opportunity to wipe the slate clean; a child could be in detention on Friday afternoon for something they

did over a period of weeks or months. I am concerned students may begin to view themselves as "bad" children or, worse yet, they may become immune to discipline because so many students get responsibility slips and end up in detention. I do believe in strict discipline for major infractions and believe the punishment should be as immediate as possible. We need a discipline policy that is fair, well communicated, and evenly administered with thought and care. We hope you will design a discipline strategy that will do just that.

A: Behavioral programs fit (and probably shape) the culture of the school. Different leadership styles (administration and faculty) are going to feel more comfortable with different behavioral programs. What we set up at OLG will be what fits our culture and our leadership. We are not looking to the discipline programs at any of the covenant schools as the "model" from which we will work. We are, of course, considering what has been done and gleaning bits of wisdom from them. One of the things that I do not believe in is allowing little behaviors to add up to big negative consequences. Consequences for behavior, as you said, should be timely and should naturally flow from the offense. The Education Commission is currently considering elements of what will eventually become our behavioral program.

**and from Our Lady of Grace administrative office ...**

Q: What is the reasoning behind the cost of tuition being higher for kindergarten than the cost of tuition for grades 1-8? If my child goes full days, shouldn't the cost be the same as the other grades?

A: There has been a common regional tuition rate for the last couple of years but that did not include Kindergarten. One of our schools only offered full day Kindergarten and the other two offered half day Kindergarten plus an extended day program at different costs.

With the formation of Our Lady of Grace, the three Kindergarten programs cost were looked into and the new rate was a compromise of all three programs' rates. Additionally, the Kindergarten program does not receive parish subsidy because of the way that Kindergarten was structured when it was brought into the schools many years ago. We will examine this structure in the future for possible adjustments.

Q: Can we get a multiple child discount for having a child in kindergarten and a child in the upper grades?

A: Yes, the Kindergarten student does qualify as a multiple child if you have another child in grades 1-8. What you can do is as follows: if you have a (1) child in grades 1-8 and a (1) K child, deduct \$100.00 from the total of the K rate and 1 child rate when added together;  $\$2900 + \$2250 = \$5150 - \$100$  (equals the 2 child discount) = \$5050.

Q: Is there any kind of financial assistance to apply for, besides the payment plans that have been put into place?

A: If you are interested in exploring options for tuition assistance at OLG please call your parish rectory and ask to speak with the Business Manager. Tuition assistance is provided by your home parish. Each parish has its own criteria for further assistance. Always keep in mind that if you suffer some sort of financial hardship (loss of job, hospital stay...) during the school year, please communicate that to your parish Business Manager to see if there are some emergency funds available or a different payment plan can be discussed.

Q: How much is the 'convenience fee' that will be charged if we choose to have tuition payments billed to a credit card on a monthly basis?

Q: I phoned TMS and was told that monthly tuition payments against a credit card would incur a fee in the range of \$8-9 per month. Can it be arranged to have this fee waived? I like the security of using a credit card knowing that I could let the balance carry over if we have a tight month. This would seem to be a preferred method of payment since the school is always getting a timely payment vs. bounced checks or late payments.

A: Yes there is a convenience fee for using a credit card. It is based on a percentage of the total payment made. This is a common practice and assures OLG that they receive the whole payment. We are going to talk with TMS to see if we can get the % reduced. We will respond back when we find out but in the mean time, there will be some form of fee for credit card payments.

The other fees that are charged by TMS are: Check by phone - \$5.00 / Late fee - \$30.00 / Returned check fee - \$25.00.

If you think you have been assessed a fee that is not correct, please contact the Business Manager at OLG. Remember, there are no late fees being charged for any May payment.

**and from Our Lady of Grace PTO ...**

*The minutes from the April 17<sup>th</sup> PTO meeting have been posted on the C.A.R.E. web site. You can access them at [http://www.carenews.org/OLGCS\\_PTO/2008-04-17OLG\\_PTO\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.carenews.org/OLGCS_PTO/2008-04-17OLG_PTO_Minutes.pdf)*

*NOTE: If you missed any of the C.A.R.E. News weekly Q&A emails, you can always access them at <http://www.carenews.org/QandA.htm>*

*Mr. Johnson will continue to keep parents & parishioners updated using the C.A.R.E. News web site ([www.carenews.org](http://www.carenews.org)) and the C.A.R.E. News email.*

*To have the C.A.R.E. newsletter emailed to you automatically as they are issued, go to [www.CareNews.org](http://www.CareNews.org). While you are there, you can also ask questions or leave comments and feedback for Mr. Johnson and the Steering Committee.*