



C.A.R.E. News

Newsletter – May 14, 2008

www.CareNews.org

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: Will there be auxiliary services offered at Our Lady of Grace?

A: Yes, there will be auxiliary services offered at OLG. While this first year is going to be a bit of trial and error as we come to more completely understand the needs of our students, we do know that the services offered at the current covenant schools will continue.

Q: Last year on Veterans Day we had local veterans come to school. Then all the students joined them for a flag raising ceremony. Is OLG going to have events like this?

A: Honoring our veterans in a way that engages them in such a powerful and symbolic act (raising the flag) is a wonderful event. I hope we can have these types of events and they be seen as culminations or beginnings for other activities in the school so that they are not just one shot deals. These experiences are definitely teachable moments.

Q: We've has some wonderful Catholic Devotions (Shadow Stations, May Crowning, etc.) at our current school and I am hoping they will continue.

A: Each of our communities is bringing a rich tradition of faith formation. We will be fully engaged in the faith lives of our students and put in place meaningful experiences rooted in our traditions and our future. Thanks for your feedback on these particular formative experiences.

Q: My third grader has to change for gym and she has to wear "play clothes". If there is a set uniform then everyone will have on the same clothes and less talk among the children about who's wearing what. Can we consider doing this?

A: Thanks for the feedback. The gym uniform is currently being considered. We will take your note under advisement.

Q: I know in a previous news letter there was talk of having a prepaid system for lunch. Has there been any more thought to a prepaid system?

A: We are currently working on investigating our options. Nothing has been decided.

Q: The use of responsibility/conduct slips is not necessarily a bad thing. Children, especially as they get older, should be held accountable to follow directions on their in-school work, homework, behavior policies, getting papers signed, etc. If they continually get away with small infractions, the infractions will get bigger. In the upper grades, especially Jr. High age, you are preparing them for high school where you do not always get a second chance. Many folks send their children to Catholic Schools because of the excellent teachers as well as the "extra" discipline.

A: The wisdom of the responsibility slips is ensuring communication between home and school. We don't want to do anything that would hinder that exchange. I think the responsibility we have to students in our Catholic Schools is to hold the bar high in the area of responsibility/conduct. Not simply for the sake of discipline but because we (parents, students, faculty, staff) have an obligation to create a helpful learning environment. This environment is the result of a total behavior program, not just a discipline program.

We all know that there are some students who know how to negatively impact the environment of a school with never breaking a school rule or becoming a discipline problem. For some of our students this is perceived as an art form to be mastered! I think the question we are fortunate to be able to ask as OLG is forming is not will there be consequences for student behavior but what consequences best serve our community as we move forward.

Q: One of the frustrations I had during the school year involves the school calendar. A calendar was given out before school started, listing vacations, early dismissals, school holidays, etc. But, the calendar has changed many times during the school year. For example, we just found out the last day of school has changed - moved up a day. While a day here or there may not seem like a big deal, it is. We, as parents, plan work, day care and vacations around the school schedule. Once the calendar is out at Our Lady of Grace, do you see many changes occurring?

A: My dad always said, never say never but barring our not experiencing too many calamity days and having to make days up, I don't see the final calendar changing.

Q: Will there be an opportunity to meet the new teachers prior to the end of this school year?

A: I am amazed at the amount of work being done by the parents, faculty and staff on behalf of OLG. As we continue to move forward we are considering how we continue the ever important process of building relationships within the community. Picnics, open houses, parties, etc. are in the works but nothing is finalized. We need to get this done so please hold us accountable and keep asking us about it! If you have any ideas, please let your current PTO members know and they can pass them along. There is an OLG PTO meeting this coming Monday.

Q: What information can be passed along regarding uniform fittings?

A: The plaid jumpers and skirts for OLG will be purchased through Schoolbelles. Of the first priority is getting the fittings taken care of. To ensure on time delivery students must be fitted prior to July 4. To this end, OLG families have the following options (more details will follow as they become available):

1. Right now students may go to the Blue Ash Schoolbelles store (921-3417) and get fitted.
2. Starting June 19 students may go to the Western Hills Schoolbelles store (451-1888) and get fitted.
3. On May 28 and 29 Schoolbelles will be setting up at St. Margaret Mary Church in the Madonna hall to do fittings. They will be there from 3:00PM-7:00PM both nights. You are encouraged to try to get to one of the stores for fittings as the times at St. MM may be very busy. Todd Schulte, our Schoolbelles Rep, is concerned that an extremely high volume will lead to frustrating wait times. Schoolbelles can handle about 50 fittings an hour. It is likely that they will open up times by grade levels to control the numbers. If they do this they will start on the 28th with the younger grades and work their way up and on the 29th they will start with the older grades and work their way down. Hopefully this will work for your schedules.

Schoolbelles is the required supplier of the jumper (K-4) and the skirt (5-8). Other uniform items can be purchased at any uniform supplier or from a department store carrying a school uniform line. The sections of our Dress Code policy that pertain to uniform purchases are noted on the next page.

DRESS CODE

Our Lady of Grace has a school uniform to express and promote our unity and identity. We are one school community gathered together to celebrate and grow with one another. We wear our uniform with pride as a sign of our shared pursuit of excellence. Therefore, the uniform is a requirement for all students (K-8) on all school days; exceptions are made only by the Administration.

SHIRTS

Solid white or light blue collared shirts must be worn by boys. Solid white collared shirts must be worn by girls. Shirts must be either:

1) a three buttoned polo style shirt.

or

2) a button up oxford style shirt.

Shirts must be purchased from one of the uniform companies or a department store which carries a school uniform line of clothing. Shirts may be long or short sleeved. No stripes, logos or markings are allowed on the shirts. Only the top button of the shirt is allowed to be unbuttoned. All shirts must be tucked in (not “bloused” over) and be in good repair. Undershirts must be plain white. Plain white turtlenecks may be worn as an additional layer but must be under the uniform shirt.

PANTS

Boys and girls may wear trousers/slacks purchased from one of the uniform companies or a department store which carries a school uniform line of clothing. The pants must have belt loops and a navy, black or brown belt must be worn at all times. The pants must be solid navy blue (no stripes, logos or markings). Corduroy, double knit, twill, sweatpants, cargo pants, pants with pockets on the sides, pajama bottoms, athletic pants or any other non-uniform pant may not be worn.

SKIRTS

Girls in grades K-4 will wear uniform plaid jumpers or pants. Girls in grades 5-8 will wear uniform skirts or pants. Plaid jumpers and skirts must be purchased from Schoolbelles (visit www.schoolbelles.com). Skirts and jumpers must be no shorter than 3” from the knee and be no longer than just below the knee. Skirts may not be rolled at the waist.

SHOES / SOCKS / LEGGINGS

Shoes must be worn and fastened properly at all times. Shoes must have closed toes and closed heels. No clogs, sandals or platform shoes may be worn. Shoes with wheels are not allowed in the building. If boots are worn to school they must be removed and appropriate school shoes must be worn during the school day. Black, gray, white, or navy socks must be worn at all times and must be visible with shoes on. Black, gray, white or navy tights or leggings may be worn under the uniform jumper or skirt (leggings must completely cover and extend beyond the knee).

SWEATERS

A solid navy uniform style cardigan or pullover sweater may be worn. No hooded sweaters are allowed. Our Lady of Grace uniform sweatshirts may be worn over the uniform. No other sweatshirts may be worn unless it is a designated “Spirit Day”. A collared uniform shirt must be worn under sweaters and sweatshirts.

SHORTS

Uniform shorts may be worn before October 1 and again after March 31. Shorts must be navy and purchased from one of the uniform companies or a department store which carries a school uniform line of clothing. Shorts must be no shorter than 3” from the knee and be no longer than just below the knee. No patch pockets are allowed. No pockets on the sides of the shorts are allowed. A navy, black or brown belt must be worn with the shorts.

and from OLG admin ...

Q: If I send my daughter to all day Kindergarten is the extra \$1200.00 a tax write off as child care? Will I make two checks out to school?

A: Our Lady of Grace's all day Kindergarten is not the same as the extended day was in the past. It is not child care, so it would not be a write off.

Q: Both the latest CARE News and in the tuition packet that came home last week mentioned OLG's Business Manager. Who is the business manager for the school and is this person in charge of the school's budget? One of the big reasons that OLG exists is because of financial issues. What is being done to track income and expenditures at Our Lady of Grace?

A: Yes, there will be a business manager for Our Lady of Grace. The business managers from all four parishes have been working together to get us to this point. They have been working with me with regards to all aspects of the budget and physical issues of the campus. They are evaluating systems right now for OLG and will continue to work together for the immediate future. There will be a business manager responsible for OLG and that job description is being completed.

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) 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. While you are there, you can also ask questions or leave comments and feedback for Mr. Johnson and the Steering Committee.