



C.A.R.E. News

Newsletter – May 21, 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: Are plans underway to develop a traffic plan?

A: Yes, there have been many conversations about traffic flow at OLG and a plan is being developed.

Q: How safe is my child going to be at the new school?

A: I have worked to develop two different school safety plans and will be getting myself and the faculty up to speed prior to school beginning.

Q: Where will the children be eating lunch? Also, are there any plans to expand the school in the future? How many kids can OLG accommodate?

A: I like the way you're thinking! Actually, there has been talk about what we do when OLG needs to expand to accommodate our ever increasing student body. As expansions go, this would be a fairly easy one given that most of the school is on a slab. We are hopeful that one day we are pulling those plans off the shelf! There will be some renovations to St. Ann's to prepare the building for OLG. Lunch will be eaten in the gym with an expanded serving line that will go right through the wall of the gym (directly across from the current serving line). This will allow a couple of service lines and ample seating space for our students. What is currently serving as the cafeteria at St. Ann's will be classrooms at OLG. Currently we are comfortable with 777 kids in the building. More are possible but 777 works well given the current space.

Q: I am currently the American Heritage Girls Chairperson at Little Flower. AHG will not be continuing at LF after this school year. Right now, the scouting groups are done on a parish level. It might be worthwhile to consider having the scouting groups be on a school level to promote school unity and to ensure they will continue to thrive and grow. I am not sure how the other scouting groups feel about this, it is just a thought on my part.

A: I think this would be a great conversation to have with the other scouting groups. Is there someone willing to take the lead on this?

Q: In the last CARE news, you mentioned that auxiliary services would be offered at OLG. I am interested in knowing more specifically what services have been requested from Northwest Local Schools (intervention specialists, Title I reading/math, speech/language pathologist, school psychologist, nurse ?) This information would be most helpful to many parents who are concerned about having the needs of their children with unique learning needs met. Thanks!

A: We are currently working with Northwest and Hamilton County to ensure that our students will have their needs met. As I mentioned before, we will be working towards ensuring that the services previously provided in our schools continue. Northwest has been great! The specific requests / assignment of staff has been tentatively done and we will use the record of services from each covenant school to revise the services as needed. At this point we have requested the services of a school nurse, school psychologist, speech/language pathologist and a Title I teacher.

Q: We will be moving in June, staying inside the Mt. Healthy school district. Does OLG handle telling the school districts where the children are located that will need buses, or do I need to set that up?

A: We do provide information to the districts that they use to set up their routes. Anyone making a move should ensure that we have their proper address so that we properly communicate with the district. That said, a phone call from you to the district couldn't hurt.

Q: I am a grandparent that picks up my grandson every day from school. He no longer receives transportation from Northwest Local, because he lives within 2 miles of the school. Has any thought been given to hiring a private bus service, that the parents can pay for, to pick up the children that live within the 2 mile radius of school?

A: We did look into this and the busing companies we contacted are not interested in doing student routes. They want to take us from point A to point B and back to point A again. We will continue to look at this issue in the future.

Q: My son was not originally from America (he has only been in America for 3 years) and his English is not the same level as other kids in his class. His teachers are aware of his and they work with him. I am concerned he is going to get "lost in the shuffle" with a new bigger school. Will the teachers at the new school be able to work with him to some degree if needed?

A: Not knowing your child and his language capacity would make it hard to answer the question except for the fact that he has been in one of the covenant schools and it sounds like he is doing well. The other key thing is that you seem to be on top of the issue. Keeping open lines of communication between home and school and intervening early if we see a concern will allow him continued success at OLG. Between your attention to the issue and the dedication of our teachers, I am confident that he will not "get lost in the shuffle".

Q: I see the first day of school has been changed. I didn't know the first day of school had been set! Is there a calendar for the new school year? How were we supposed to have found out when the original first day of school was? I don't see it on this web site. What else am I missing!??

A: The start date was discussed at two different gatherings so when we realized we needed to make a change we were concerned that word of mouth might have already carried the information through the communities. That is why we posted that correction prior to this release of the calendar. The Archdiocese has now given us the official "okay" on our calendar so the days we are in / out of session are noted below (specific celebrations have yet to be added to the calendar).

08/26	First Day of School
09/01	No School (Labor Day)
10/17	Teacher Inservice Day (No Students)
11/24	PM Conferences
11/25	PM Conferences
11/26-11/28	No School (Thanksgiving Break)
12/22-01/02	No School (Christmas Break)
01/19	No School (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)
02/11	PM Conferences
02/12	PM Conferences
02/13	No School (Presidents' Day weekend)
02/16	No School (Presidents' Day weekend)
04/10-04/17	No School (Easter Break)
05/25	No School (Memorial Day)
05/26	No School (Festival Clean-up)
06/05	Last Day of School

Q: When will Our Lady of Grace School get its own web site?

A: OLG's domain name is registered as www.olgcs.org (it is not yet "live"). The creation of our initial web page is underway.

Q: When will the list of teachers and grades assigned be posted?

A: We are one teacher placement away from giving you the list of teachers and where they will be serving OLG.

Q: Why are we not dividing the classes based on ability? The more gifted children could be pushed and challenged more and the students who need extra help could move at a slower more in-depth pace.

A: Ability grouping is by no means a panacea. Some of the research shows gains for some students grouped by ability in the areas of Math and Reading. These two subject areas are specifically on our radar at OLG and the faculty has already been engaged in conversations about what might make for the best program at OLG. Currently we are considering our options with 7th and 8th grade Math.

Q: Was there a decision made regarding Kindergarten and full/part-time sessions?

A: Yes. OLG will have three classrooms of full day Kindergarten. We have around 10 families indicating a preference for the half day option. What we will do is take those students attending for the half day program and spread them through the three Kindergarten classrooms. We will work with the core curricular areas in the morning and the half day students will leave us sometime before noon (the time has not yet been finalized). The three Kindergarten classrooms will then continue on with the rest of their day.

Uniform Fittings

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.

In an effort to facilitate a smooth process, please show up according to the schedule noted below:

Wednesday, 5/28

3:00-4:15 K-2

4:20-5:35 3-5

5:40-7:00 6-8+

Thursday, 5/29

3:00-4:15 6-8

4:20-5:35 K-2

5:40-7:00 3-5

While you can pay for and process uniform orders at the fittings, there will not be product for you to take home that night. They will, however, have items on display and will do fittings for both boys and girls.

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.

Dress Code Questions

Q: You mentioned only navy blue pants. Does this mean khaki is not allowed next year? Also, when wearing shorts, are they allowed to wear shorts with elastic bands? And lastly, when will we be able to purchase new school sweatshirts to wear with the uniforms? Will it be through school belles as well, or through the school office?

A: Uniform pants and shorts at OLG are to be navy. Belts are to be worn with pants and shorts and belt loops are required on both. The uniform sweatshirts are in process and we will get you details soon.

Q: As stated in last week's C.A.R.E. newsletter, the OLG school sweatshirts will be the only sweatshirt allowed to be worn. How soon can we place orders for these? Do we order them through OLG or Schoolbelles?

A: The school sweatshirt is currently being designed. We are also currently getting bids from different vendors. We will be making this information available as soon as decisions are made. You will (most likely) order them through OLG or the vendor.

Q: What is the cost for the jumper? Skirt? And what do they look like? For the warm weather uniform for girls can skorts that match the same length requirement be worn in lieu of shorts?

A: The cost of the jumper is \$37.00 and the skirt is \$36.00. The plaid has various shades of blue and white (including a great light blue). Since we are only ordering this through Schoolbelles, you can refer to it as "OLG's plaid". Skorts are not a part of OLG's uniform.

Q: As for the girls 3-button knit polo shirts, may they have a band at the bottom? For the 5-8 grade girls that wear the skirts this type of polo seemed to work well for the girls at Little Flower this past year. No reminding to tuck in this type of shirt as for the banded shirts were always well below waistline and more comfortable.

A: To be totally honest, we discussed it and decided it would not be the only shirt style but I don't recall what we said about it being an optional one. I'll need to get back to you on this one!

Q: Just to clarify in regards to the dress code shirts ... "solid white or light blue collared shirts must be worn by boys. Solid white collared shirts must be worn by girls.." Based on this, girls are NOT allowed to wear light blue - correct?

A: Right, the thought being that the white shirts look better with the jumper/skirt.

Q: Can we incorporate a used uniform sale into one of the new school events over the summer? Plenty of Navy pants and blue shirts for boys, along with belts, navy sweaters, etc., that others may appreciate buying at discount prices instead of new.

A: Great idea! We'll get this information to our PTO and Education Commission and encourage them to incorporate this opportunity into the gatherings. Schoolbelles will also coordinate our donating old uniforms to schools serving in economically disadvantaged areas of the world.

and from OLG admin ...

Update on Credit Card Fees

Upon review of the question concerning credit card fees with TMS, we have an update. We have discussed the fee structure and have found that we can pass along a flat fee internally at OLG. That fee will be flat \$3.00 instead of a percentage of the amount. This will only apply to charges that are for tuition payments.

Q: 'Hello, I have returned my forms back to the school for Tuition Management. I chose to pay 11 months and had to make a check out to OLG for the first month. When do you plan on cashing that check? It has not gone through my bank? Please let me know asap so I can continue paying bills and making sure that check does not bounce. I turned it in at the end of April.

A: All checks received thru Monday the 19th are now deposited as of 5/21/08

and from OLG PTO ...

Here are the names of the Our Lady of Grace PTO Board:

President ... Jenni Petrey

Vice-president ... Donna Steinbach

Treasurer ... Suzanne Myers

Recording Secretary ... Evie Trentman

Trustees

Lisa Jagoditz / Amy Howson / Staci Pursley / Jenny Diers

Cassie Smith / Kate Ries / Katie Stahl / Amy Ahrnsen

Our Lady of Grace PTO will also be temporarily using the CARE News site to post their announcements .. online at www.carenews.org/OLGCS_PTO

*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.*