



THE ACADEMY OF SAINT MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE

BRIDGES

WWW.STMATTHIAS.ORG ❖ JANUARY 07, 2021



SCHOOL RE-OPENING

As all of us are getting very tired of dealing with Covid-19 and the new "normal," my hopes for re-opening PK, kindergarten and the distance learning pod in Friendship Hall on January 11 are dashed. The rise in the positivity rate and the fact that I currently have 5 teachers who are in quarantine due to exposure to someone with the disease makes it impossible to open as expected. It is important to note that none of these teachers were in the school building in the past three weeks and at this point none of them have tested positive for Covid-19.

On the other hand, 7 out of 12 Catholic elementary schools in Prince George's County are having their children return to school this Monday. School cases of Covid in the 52 Catholic elementary schools that are open in the Archdiocese of Washington are very low. At St. Matthias, from September 8 through November 24 there were no cases of COVID in the teachers or students. The protocols for safety in school are working. Governor Hogan expects teachers to receive the vaccine at the end of the month.

The decision if and when to bring children into our school is an anguishing one. Ultimately, it is a decision that every parent must make. Coming into school or distance learning will be options until the end of this pandemic. Because the decision rests with parents, any decision or plan made by the school is incumbent on the will of the parents. Therefore, I am asking that you complete the survey that accompanies this communication. Time is of the essence, so responses are due by Wednesday, January 13.

The school is prepared to welcome the PK and kindergarten students and those who were in Friendship Hall to class on Tuesday, January 19. Parents who choose to send the children into school, must attend a Zoom meeting and sign a Memorandum of Understanding prior to the children's arrival at school. The meeting for families whose children will return to school on January 19 will be on Wednesday, January 13 at 7 P.M.

We hope to gradually open other classes beginning on January 25. A detailed plan and schedule will be presented once data from the parent survey has been reviewed.



STATE OF THE SCHOOL MEETING



The Annual State of the School Meeting will take place virtually on Tuesday, January 12 at 7 P.M. Our pastor, Fr. Jack Kennealy will present the school's financial status. Mrs. Schratz will address progress on the strategic plan and academic initiatives. Families will receive an electronic invitation to the meeting. Please respond by Monday, January 11. The link to the meeting will be sent out then. Families who attend this meeting will receive one volunteer service hour. More importantly, families who attend will have an opportunity to be with other school parents and learn more about their children's school.

Mark Your Calendar

Friday, January 8
School Mass 9:45 am

NOON DISMISSAL

Tuesday, January 12
State of School Meeting
7:00 pm

Wednesday, January 13
God's Rods
2:15 - 3:00 pm

Pre-K and Kindergarten
Parent Meeting 7:00 pm

Friday, January 15
CommUnity Reads
9:45 am



SCANTRON

Students in grades 2-8 will be taking the mid-year Scantron tests in reading and math virtually via Zoom. Like the tests in the fall, this is an abbreviated test. The students will answer the 30 questions for reading in one sitting and the math questions at another time. The tests is to be completed by the student independently.



Please be sure that your child is on time for the session, has had a healthy breakfast and a good night's sleep prior to taking the test.

The schedule for the reading test is as follows:

January 11	Grade 8	8:30 a.m.	January 19	Grade 4	10:00 a.m.
January 12	Grade 7	10:00 a.m.	January 20	Grade 3	9:30 a.m.
January 13	Grade 6	9:30 a.m.	January 21	Grade 2	10:00 a.m.
January 14	Grade 5	10:00 a.m.			

The math tests will begin the week of February 8. Results will be sent to parents in early March.

The protocol for the tests will be reviewed with the students and they will each be put into an individual breakout room to complete their test.

Tips and Tricks for Testing at Home

Before the Test

- Prepare a quiet area in the home for testing.
- Ensure the student has adequate scratch paper.
- A calculator, if requested by the instructor
- Clear the cache and cookies on the student machine.
- Turn off all pop-up blockers.
- Turn off all screen savers.
- Make sure all other browser tabs are closed before you start to logon.

Avoid these types of interactions during the test session.

- Reminding students of the time
- Helping students with words or problems that are too difficult for them.
- Helping students narrow their answer choices.
- Providing help with reading passages or question content.
- Hovering over the student as they test.

RE-ENROLLMENT



Current families may now re-enroll their children for the 2021-2022 school year on TADS by clicking on the reenrollment tab. If you are enrolling a sibling who is new to our school you must complete an admissions application. There will be no increase in tuition for the coming school year. We are developing an aggressive virtual open house schedule and marketing plan to recruit new families to our school. However, "word of mouth" is the most effective way to send new families to St. Matthias. Increasing enrollment is critical if we are to hold the line on tuition increases. Likewise, having a firm commitment from our current families is a key component of our enrollment planning. **All families who intend to have their children attend St. Matthias in the fall of 2021, must reenroll by March 15.** The re-enrollment fee remains the same at \$200 per family. After March 15, the fee increases to \$350 per family. Finally, if you know that your children are not attending our school in the fall, please let us know via email or phone as soon as possible.