

May 16, 2020

Dear Upper School Students and Families:

Well, we've all made it to the finish line, sort of. The normal schedule of Zoom classes has ended, though we have some special events and presentations planned for this upcoming week (see below). I am so proud of our students for persevering through the normal challenges of our rigorous curriculum and the novel challenges of life under the unprecedented Covid quarantine.

We have tried to be flexible and forgiving during this period of distance learning. However, third trimester grades are closing, and it's vital that students take one last glance at posted grades to see whether anything is missing or incomplete. No late work will be accepted after Thursday, May 21, at noon.

The usual buzz about the impending summer break feels dampened due to the limitations on social gatherings, travel, and summer camp programming. Mr. Sullivan's letter last week included a short survey asking for feedback on our current distance learning program and on interest among families for possible summer offerings. Please take a few minutes, if you haven't yet, to fill it out here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QMHH7PG>

The survey will close this Wednesday, May 20.

I know many of you are anxious to know what school will look like in August. I am too. All I can say is that as soon as this school year concludes, we will immediately turn our collective attention to planning for August and our alternatives for providing a rich and robust educational experience no matter the conditions. As Mr. Sullivan noted in his last email, we plan to present to all families in mid- to late June a comprehensive framework for the coming year, including our evolving "flex-blended" model of instruction, to be implemented as needed, if needed. This framework will include details of our health and safety protocols for campus.

We have indeed learned many lessons from the past two months. We will do everything in our power, leveraging the advantages of our small size, to create a safe environment for learning in the classroom. But we will be ready if there are times when we need to resume distance learning, drawing upon the lessons of these last few weeks and using the ample time this summer to retool our approach where necessary. Your experiences and feedback will inform those plans.

Here are additional items to look out for this week:

● **Art Expo Online** is ready to view, and it's awesome:
<https://sites.google.com/stmichael.net/art-expo/home>

Congratulations, Ms. Faltico and Ms. Allen, and a million thanks to Zach Rebert for transforming the event into a virtual extravaganza!

● Both students and their families are eagerly encouraged to watch the **Upper School Awards Ceremony** video (viewable after 9:00 a.m. Wednesday) and the **K-8 Soar with the Eagles** video (viewable after 11:00 a.m. Wednesday). Links to those videos will likely be shared through Google Classroom and by email.

● Please remember that it is essential that students come to campus this week to **exchange materials** during their designated time. Eighth graders get to keep their Chromebooks upon graduation. For everyone else it's vital that we receive both the device itself and its charger back. All Upper School students, furthermore, will need to return any additional school property, such as textbooks and **sports uniforms**, still in their possession and retrieve any personal materials, their portfolio of artwork, and perhaps some miscellaneous items. We are hoping the Yearbook will be able to be distributed by Wednesday, but production was slowed at the printing facility due to Covid, and I can't guarantee it will be ready then. This year's edition of our literary magazine, *Eagle's Quill*, will not be ready until the end of June for similar reasons.

For safety's sake, we are going to space out the Upper School students over four separate shifts, according to last name:

Wednesday, May 20

3:00-4:00 p.m. - last names **A-F**

4:00-5:00 p.m. - last names **G-L**

Thursday, May 21

9:00-10:00 a.m. - last names **M-R**

10:00-11:00 a.m. - last names **S-Z**

If your family absolutely can't swing through during your scheduled time, you may choose another, but please let your advisor know beforehand. We must spread out the foot traffic as much as possible. This will not be a time for students to catch up with one another—rather, it's a quick grab-and-go. Masks are **highly** recommended! Teachers will try to remove items left behind in lockers in advance, but if locker combinations have changed or the lockers can't otherwise be opened, students may need to come back another time when it's less crowded to fetch any remaining items.

● Eighth grade families recently received an email containing further details of our “**drive-in graduation**” at La Mariposa Resort, to be held on Saturday, May 23. It should be fabulous!

● Selection forms for **Band or Choir** for current fourth and seventh graders, which went out last week, are due back to me by May 29. I will assume that students now in fifth or sixth grade will continue with their music selection from this current year. If a student wishes to switch from one group to the other, parents should contact Ms. Stafford and/or Dr. Antista soon.

● We have published the Upper School’s **summer reading lists** on the school website [here](#). Instructions for book reports as well as math packets will be distributed with **report cards** in early June.

There is always a lot going on at the end of the school year, even under normal conditions. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns about **anything**!

Best wishes,

Alex Hawes

Useful links:

St. Michael’s Distance Learning Webpage

<https://stmichael.net/covidresponse/distancelearning/>

PlusPortals

<https://www.plusportals.com/SaintMichaelsParishDaySchool>

Arizona Together

<https://arizonatogether.org/>

This is a thorough compilation of resources, regular information updates, and links to community support.