

UUAA 8.18.19

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

August 18, 2019

Welcome to the first of many installments of *Up Up And Away*, my weekly message to families of Upper School students at St. Michael's. Occasionally I may use this space to dispense pearls of wisdom (usually plundered from others) about education and adolescence, but at the start of the school year, it's all business...

Earlier this afternoon I generated emails for any Upper School families not listed as "Active" in the PlusPortals system. PlusPortals allows families to view grades on an ongoing basis for children in grades 5-8. Students and parents may be considered "Inactive" if they are new to the school or have never logged into PlusPortals before (which is common for families of 5th and 6th graders because their grades weren't accessible to them last year). The login information will be the same as that which parents have used previously for any older children.

If you have forgotten your username, please email me and I can send you that information. I don't have access to parent passwords, but if you have forgotten yours, let me know and I can send a link to create a new one. Teachers of core courses will soon begin updating grades for their classes at least every two weeks; enrichment teachers will update grades at least twice per trimester--once at Progress Report time and once at the end of the term.

Other items worth noting:

Band and Choir start this week for grades 5-6 (Mondays and Wednesdays during the school day). Advanced Choir will have its first meeting Wednesday morning at 7:15 a.m. Ms. Stafford will send information to Advanced Band students and families soon about the start of the year. If your seventh or eighth grader is interested in either Advanced Band or Choir, please contact Ms. Stafford or Dr. Antista respectively if you haven't already so they know whom to expect.

Intake conferences are underway. If you have not yet done so, please schedule a time to meet with your child's main homeroom advisor. These conferences are critically important in understanding the strengths and needs of our students as we begin the year, and they are required. I am happy to sit in on any conference, if desired.

Please submit soon any remaining paperwork or permissions, including 6th grade immunization forms, after-school permission forms, and signed codes of conduct.

Events This Week:

Upper School **Study Hall** begins Monday, running Mon-Fri from 3:30 - 5:30. You don't need to sign up in advance. Families will be charged each month based on the number of times a student attends: \$5/day with a maximum of \$50/month. Reductions are possible for families receiving financial assistance--please inquire with me or with the Business Office.

Upper School students this week will select their top choices for their first trimester **Friday elective**, which begins this Friday. I will send a separate document summarizing their options.

After-school practices have begun for our **Flag Football** and **Girls' Volleyball** teams. The dates and locations of games will be published in this space each week. Please contact Kim Greene (kgreene@stmichael.net) with any questions.

Events Beyond This Week:

Auditions for ***Into the Woods***, our St. Michael's Musical this year, will be held Monday and Tuesday afternoon, August 26 and 27, and the first read-through rehearsal is on September 3, at 3:30. Please contact Tony Antista (tantista@stmichael.net) with any questions.

There is no school on Monday, September 2, in observance of **Labor Day**.

The first round of **Renaissance Star 360** standardized testing (Reading & Math) will be completed during the week of September 9-13.

Our Upper School **Back-to-School Night** will be held **Thursday, September 12**, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Parents are highly encouraged to attend!

Seventh graders are requested to bring a dozen peeled, hard-boiled eggs for Casa Maria on Friday, September 13.

There is a half day with **noon dismissal** on Wednesday, September 18. Upper School Study Hall does not run on half days, but Upper School students may attend Aftercare in Tankersley Hall on such days (only) for a fee.

That's all for now! The best way to reach me is via email (ahawes@stmichael.net). Please don't hesitate to send me a note or stop by my office in the Seventh Grade Courtyard, though appointments are helpful for longer discussions.

Best wishes,
Alex Hawes
Upper School Division Director