

UUAA 8.25.19

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

August 25, 2019

The first week of school is in the books, so to speak. The energy of students reconnecting with friends and stepping up to new responsibilities and privileges has been infectious. It was especially rewarding to see the kids meet with their elective groups for the first time Friday and dig into activities like cartooning, robotics, photography, and Games for Thinkers.

There are always a few bumps during the opening days for students and teachers alike--jammed locks, errant emails, forgotten lunches, scorching temperatures--but we all emerged from the week remarkably unscathed. I often tell kids and parents that, if we can just make it to the upcoming Labor Day weekend, we can collectively regroup and settle into the predictable ebb and flow of daily and weekly routines in short order.

At the same time, Labor Day marks the end of many opening units, and teachers may start scheduling end-of-unit tests. I would encourage parents to check in with your children about those longer-term assessments and projects so they start the year successfully and create intentional habits for time management and test preparation. Those concepts will be reinforced at school, both in class and during Advisor time.

Teachers will begin adding dates for major assignments to shared online test calendars, accessible through the school website. We also will communicate information about assignments large and small through individual Google Classroom pages. You may have already received emails inviting you to receive weekly "guardian summaries" for various subject-specific Google Classroom pages. If you are worried that you are not being included, please first contact the instructor and ask him or her to check the site to see whether the invitation has gone out, and whether it has gone to the proper email address. You can always see the more detailed posts if your child logs in at home to his or her school Google account and goes to classroom.google.com.

Teachers of core classes will also begin updating grades in PlusPortals by the week following Labor Day. Please let me know if you have any trouble accessing grades through that site (see link at bottom of this email). As mentioned previously, I don't have access to parent passwords but can prompt the site to send you an email to create a new one. I do have access to your username, though, if you've forgotten that.

Other items worth noting:

Intake conferences are wrapping up this week. 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.

Please submit any remaining paperwork, including medical forms, after-school permission forms, and signed codes of conduct. Depending on your child's grade, there may also be a separate middle school trip contract that needs to be signed.

If you're still waiting for **P.E. uniforms** to arrive in the mail, don't worry--simply send your child with comfortable t-shirts and shorts to change into for P.E. class until the order comes. Also make sure your students have reusable **water bottles**. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate!

Please remember that **hot lunch** orders are now completed entirely online through myMealOrder.com (see link at bottom).

Events This Week:

Auditions for ***Into the Woods***, our St. Michael's Musical for this school 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. Interested students must sign up for a five-minute time slot on the Music Room door and prepare a short song of their choice to sing *a capella*. This audition is open to 4th through 8th grade students. Please contact Tony Antista (tantista@stmichael.net) with any questions.

After-school practices continue for our **Flag Football** and **Girls' Volleyball** teams. There is no Volleyball practice this Friday, leading into the long weekend. Games begin the week of September 2. Students who are NOT part of those teams only may attend games on campus unsupervised if they have turned in permission slips to that effect. Students who ARE on those teams, particularly those on the B teams with 5:00 home games, may attend the Upper School study hall until they report to their game without charge, as their athletic fee covers that expense. Please contact Kim Greene (kgreene@stmichael.net) or me with any questions.

Events Beyond This Week:

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. There is no hot lunch service on such days, and Upper School students must attend After-Care in Tankersley Hall rather than the Upper School study hall if needed.

Again, please don't hesitate to send me an email or stop by my office in the Seventh Grade Courtyard if you have any concerns or simply want to chat, though appointments are helpful for longer discussions.

One week down, 35 to go!

Best wishes,

Alex Hawes
Upper School Division Director
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Links of Note:

[Main School Website](#)
[School Facebook page](#)
[School Instagram page](#)
[PlusPortals](#) (for students and parents)
[School Uniforms](#)
[Hot Lunch Ordering](#)
[School Calendar](#)
[Student-Parent Handbook](#)
[SMA Volunteer Page](#)