

UUAA 9.15.19

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

September 15, 2019

We couldn't possibly squeeze everything we seek to accomplish in developing students academically, spiritually, artistically, and athletically between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. alone. As a result, the campus is often abuzz with activity after school, when supervision policies change and can become a bit fuzzy. So let's clarify some of them:

On normal school days, students are dismissed at 3:25. When the "all clear" bell rings at 3:35, they must either have been picked up, or they must be under direct adult supervision. If students are still waiting for rides, they will be asked to check into Upper School Study Hall in the Computer Lab. Parents picking them up from there need to sign them out in person, anytime up until 5:30 p.m. Students in Study Hall can leave to watch team games only once the games have begun, typically after 4:00, and only if they have turned in a signed permission form to that effect. They can't wander campus, and they must be picked up once the game or games have ended since they won't be under supervision at that point.

Students participating in after-school sports practices or games, including intramurals, are under coaches' supervision, but please keep tabs on when those activities end so they're not left unsupervised afterwards.

It is vital that students sign out from their homerooms at the end of the day and indicate their destination or activity accurately in case we need to track them down. Only students whose parents have indicated to me that they have permission to leave school grounds alone (to walk home, take the city bus, or go to the library, for example) may do so, and once students have left campus, they are not allowed to return without an adult. We discourage students going next door to Murphy-Wilmot library for a number of reasons, including that children there are not closely monitored.

Finally, students are allowed to use their own personal phones after school to communicate with parents about their plans. However, phones are only allowed to be used for phone calls or texts, NOT web browsing, gaming, social

media, or taking pictures or video. Violations will lead to phones being held for a parent to claim and, after multiple violations, a student's phone being held in my office during every day for release only to parents. We DO have landline phones available for student use before and after school, so personal smartphones are by no means necessary. (Student phone use more broadly is yet another sermon for another day, tying in with my previously promised sermon on sleep. Bet you can't wait!)

In Other News

I sent out email prompts Saturday through PlusPortals for any parents or guardians in our system not listed as "Active." This is not meant as pressure to sign up or use the system—I just want to make sure everyone who wants access can use PlusPortals if desired to view their children's grades. Other parents—and students too—may be listed as "Active" but not realize it or remember their password, and I wouldn't necessarily know. If that's the case for you, just send me an email, and I'll send out a link for you to create a new password that includes your proper username.

There continues to be a roundabout way to view student grades in the PlusPortals system, so I will paste here the directions I included a few weeks ago to help you find those elusive grades:

Log in to [PlusPortals](#). (If you are unable to do that, please let me know.) Once you've logged in as a parent, on the main student screen near the top center (just to the left of Upcoming Events) is a button to click for "More". Select that, and it will take you to a new screen with "Recent Scores" along the right side. You can scroll through all graded assignments that have been published to date. However, to see a summary of any individual course, click on the square-and-arrow button in the top right corner of the "Recent Scores" window. That will take you to yet another screen view with a drop-down menu for each course your child is taking. By selecting a subject, you can then see the current grade as well as a detailed summary of individual assignments and category averages. I would be glad to follow up with anyone individually if that somewhat convoluted explanation doesn't yield success!

Please note that this is an entirely separate system from Google Classroom, which is set up by teachers for individual classes and allows teachers to "invite" parents to view weekly summaries of announcements. Contact your child's respective teachers if you think you're missing out on such

course-specific posts—but be aware that not every teacher may be using Google Classroom routinely.

Events This Week:

● There is a half day with **noon dismissal** on Wednesday, September 18. There will be no Upper School study hall that afternoon, but our students may attend After-care in Tankersley Hall (for a fee) if needed. Students will attend all of their academic classes that morning, for 25 minutes each, with the exception of Fifth Grade, which will be taking part in the first of six art sessions with former St. Michael's parent Audra Scovil.

● **School pictures** are here! Classroom pictures (**red & khaki** uniforms required) will be taken on Tuesday, September 17 for all grades. Individual pictures ("relaxed dress" allowed) will be taken on Friday, September 20, for Upper School. Please make sure your child abides by the rules of free/relaxed dress at the bottom of page 16 of the [Parent-Student Handbook](#).

● This week in sports:

Our middle school fall sports teams will have **team pictures** this week as well. Flag Football pictures will be taken on Monday, 9/16. Volleyball pictures will be taken on Tuesday, 9/17. The kids must remember to bring their uniforms on picture day. The photographer will be taking team pictures as well as individual pictures for anyone interested in purchasing. The team pictures will go in the school Yearbook, so even if you do not plan on ordering, please make sure your child is there and has his or her uniform that day.

Co-ed Flag Football

No practice Wednesday with noon dismissal.

Thursday, 9/19 - home game vs. The Gregory School (A team at 4:00, B team at 5:00)

Girls' Volleyball

No games this week. No practice on Wednesday with noon dismissal.

Intramurals (soccer) for 4th and 5th graders continue this week (but not on the noon dismissal day Wednesday).

● Our **Mass collection** for the World Wildlife Fund continues. Please remind your kids to bring donations on Thursdays. We've had a good showing as of late.

● SMA and the Vaqueros are organizing a **Welcome Back Night** for families on Friday, September 20, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. This fun-filled event is intended for both parents and students, and we ask that parents stay to supervise their children. There will be food trucks!

● 8th Grade Community Service **Team Three** is preparing a meal and serving at Primavera Men's Shelter on Saturday, September 21. Thanks to Team Two for doing an amazingly efficient job in helping make roughly a THOUSAND sandwiches last Friday evening, and to the entire Seventh Grade for coming through with countless dozens of eggs to make hundreds of egg salad sandwiches.

Events Beyond This Week:

● “**Frozen Fridays**” are happening each Friday this month to raise money for the 8th Grade graduation plans (\$2 per frozen treat). Our 8th graders will be selling the treats in front of the School Office, as well as at select volleyball and flag football home games. The 8th graders are encouraged to sign up to help sell treats—the sign-up sheets are on the door of my office. There's also a **Chipotle fundraiser** scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 1, from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. at 6501 E. Grant Rd. to support 8th Grade graduation.

● Our first “**Fee Dress**” Day is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 25. Upper School students who contribute \$2 are allowed to have relaxed dress for that day (following the rules for such attire stated at the bottom of page 16 of the [Parent-Student Handbook](#).) As opposed to Frozen Fridays, these Fee Dress days raise money for the 8th Grade Community Service program, particularly to pay for the ingredients for meals prepared and served at Primavera Men's Shelter each month. So it's a win-win for all!

● Our **New Parent Welcome** event is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 2, from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in the Smith Parish Center. We'd love to see many of our wonderful new families that night!

● **Fall Break** will be here before you know it: October 7-11.

● Our beloved **Grandparents' Day** event is scheduled for Fri. Oct. 18, from 8:00 - 10:30 a.m. That evening, the annual Upper School **Coffee Cabaret** musical performance will be held from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. so grandparents and other loved ones in town that day might catch both!

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](#)
[Google Classroom](#)

[School Uniforms](#)
[Hot Lunch Ordering](#)
[Student-Parent Handbook](#)
[SMA Volunteer Page](#)

[Main School Calendar](#)
[5th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[6th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[7th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[8th Grade Test Calendar](#)