



# St. Denis – St. Columba School

A Holy Ground of Loving and Learning

## Family Newsletter



Shine Like the Stars

**Week of September 14-18, 2020**

### Welcome Back!

As we began preparing the first Family Newsletter of the school year, we realized how things have changed so dramatically over twelve months. We can no longer do so many of our kickoff activities like the Back to School BBQ, Back to School Night, Top Tastes of the Town, and so on. Students have to attend school under so many safety rules and can't even be with all of their classmates on the same days. Teachers have to learn entirely new ways to teach the students who are in different places simultaneously. The challenges are many, but our commitment to our families is the one thing that remains UNCHANGED and you can count on that! Thank you for entrusting your children to SDSC. Together, we will conquer these challenges.

### The SDSC School Day begins at 8:00 a.m.

All students should be ready and signed on for **MORNING PRAYERS each day by 8:10 a.m.** Please use the MORNING PRAYER link in your children's Google Classroom. It is also attached here: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99200136352?pwd=VzNxeiVtWjFJWWcyVnR5NWM3YXV1QT09>

Meeting ID: 992 0013 6352

Passcode: 968627

### Thank you for your patience!

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE as we continue to iron out the scheduling kinks and troubleshoot the new technology. Here are the tasks the SDSC Team is prioritizing:



- We've upgraded to the maximum capacity WIFI service that Optimum offers. Now we are ensuring that the signal strength is strong, especially in the areas of the building we have been repurposed as classrooms (e.g. gym).
- We believe that the Zoom connectivity issues at SDSC are resolved. There are three computers in every room that have to work in sync both through hardware and software in order to deliver synchronous learning both at home and school. Next week we are going to closely monitor the classrooms to smooth out the "kinks"
- We have installed lavalier microphones so that teacher audio is more audible during Zoom calls. We will continue to monitor audio transmissions to ensure students can hear at home.
- The teachers and the administration have used this week to experiment with Class Schedules, Zoom Meetings and breaks in an effort to create the best framework for each grade to simultaneously address in-person and remote learning. We are going to continue to test options this week. Our goal is to have somewhat permanent schedules for each grade in place by the end of the week.
- The administration is assisting the faculty with creating digital learning materials to bridge the gap until all of the textbooks and workbooks are delivered to the school. We are also setting up accounts for digital resources and textbooks for students. Teachers will provide logon information as soon as these materials are available.

### Home Remote Learning Issues

This week we have helped troubleshoot a number of technology issues at home that are not related to the technology at SDSC. Here are some helpful tips:

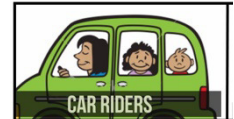


- If your screen is freezing, audio is intermittent or images are fuzzy, the problem is most likely originating with your internet service provider. Be aware that the community as a whole is using much more bandwidth so providers are reporting occasional outages or degraded service. Unfortunately there is nothing you can do about these situations, except wait it out.
- Consider upgrading your internet service if possible. Upgrading your upload rates/capacity will greatly improve watching videos and live streaming.

- Limit the number of devices actively using your bandwidth at the same time while your child is remote learning. The more devices (phones, tablets, computers, streaming television, etc. using your internet service at the same time, the less bandwidth that will be available to any one device.
- If a link the teacher has provided for Zoom, YouTube or other internet-based resource is being blocked, check your firewall settings on your computer and/or modem. A security setting is likely blocking the site.

### Car and Bus Transportation

- **Transportation Notes:** Please send in a **written** note regarding the method of transportation your child will take home, and anytime you need to make a change to that transportation method. You may send in a "standing note" one such as, "Joe will be a pickup unless otherwise notified." Please do NOT call or email changes unless it's an absolute emergency.
- **Car Rider Pickup Sign:** Please put a LARGE sign in your car window with your child(ren's) LAST NAME and GRADE legibly written in BIG BOLD letters. The signs will help our staff more safely and efficiently direct students to their respective vehicles.
- **Car Rider Line:** Vehicles must line up in front of church (enter through ACME). PLEASE DO NOT use the entrance off of Route 82. THIS LANE IS FOR BUSES ONLY.



### Emergency Contact Cards

All students will bring home on Monday an Emergency Contact Card. Please complete one per family and return it to school as soon as possible. Remote students can return their cards during any scheduled material pickup or drop-off day.



### Back to School Night POSTPONED

The Faculty and Administration have decided to postpone our virtual Back to School Night to a date later in September. We want to make sure that we have resolved any remaining issues regarding technology, schedules, etc. so that we can give our families the most complete information about the 2020-21 School Year. Thank you again for your continued understanding.

### Hot Lunch Program

**Our Hot Lunch Program will begin on Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.** The menu can be accessed on the SDSC ios App or by using the lunch menu shortcut on the front page of the school website. The cost of the hot lunch \$3.00, *which includes either white or chocolate milk*. Lunch tickets are available for purchase in the Front Office. Please send an envelope with check or cash marked "lunch tickets" and they will be returned to you. Tickets can be purchased in strips of 10 or greater. Students must have a lunch ticket to order lunch. We will honor any remaining lunch tickets that were purchased prior to the shutdown of school through December.

We are grateful to Mrs. Judy Boulton for coordinating our Hot Lunch Program again this year. Mrs. Boulton has added new menu items from local vendors and restaurants this year. In addition she has worked diligently to provide healthy yet economical lunches that can served in compliance with Covid-19 safety guidelines. It's been quite a task!

### Beverages Available for Lunch Purchase

We are offering three beverages for purchase during lunch. Exact change is preferred.

- Chocolate or white milk: \$.50
- 8 oz bottled water: \$.50
- 16 oz bottled water: \$1.00



### Paul Effman Music Program



Paul Effman Music Service will be continuing the SDSC band and strings programs this year. All lessons will be conducted online. A separate email with details has been sent to you. For more information or to register for the program, please visit <https://ed.pemusic.com/join/>

### Until We Meet Again...

SDSC has to bid very fond farewells to two very valuable members of our faculty and staff:

**Mrs. Sandy Fisher** has had to resign as our music teacher. She has healthcare concerns which necessitate limiting her exposure to people during this pandemic. She loves her students and will miss them very much. We hope that she will be able to bring back her cherished Storytime program when it's safe to do so.

**Mrs. Janet Graves** has had to resign her position as our administrative assistant so that she can assist her children with fulltime remote learning. She wishes the circumstances were otherwise so that she could continue to support our ministry here at SDSC. Mrs. Graves introduced many efficient practices to our front office, and her presence will be deeply missed.

### **Welcome to Our School Family!**

**Sr. Cherree Ann Powers, C.R.** has joined our Sisters at St. Columba Convent and will be assuming the role of front office Administrative Assistant. She brings with her over 40 years of experience in education, including 30 years as a principal. She loves children and wants to continue to share her gifts, talents, and experience in a school community.

**Mr. Daniel Leguizamon** will be joining our faculty as the new Music Teacher. He comes to us with an impressive educational background. He holds a Masters in Piano from the Manhattan School of Music, Masters in Education from Fordham University, and a Ph.D. in Education from Cappella University. He has 30 years of experience teaching music to students from Pre-K to Grade 8. He has taught music in New York Catholic Schools for the last 17 years.

### **Come Back to Us Soon!**

Please continue to keep Mrs. Sharon Senno, our Second Grade Teacher, in your prayers. We wish her a very speedy return. May God hold her in the palm of His hands!

## **SUPPORT YOUR SCHOOL WHILE YOU SHOP!**

Covid-19 has severely limited the ability of our Parent School Association to raise much needed funds for our school. You can help simply by shopping for your everyday needs and participating in these programs!

### **Amazon Smile**

Did you know you can raise money for SDSC every time you shop at Amazon.com? [Click HERE to sign up for Amazon Smile](#). All of your Prime Membership benefits apply!



### **Box Tops for Education**



Download the mobile Box Tops for Education App on your phone. Scan your receipt and SDSC receives a donation for each Box Tops eligible product you purchased! [Click HERE to get the Box Tops App](#). You can find box tops on everything from cereal, to school supplies, socks packaging to snack boxes!

### **Hannaford Helps Schools Program**



Do you shop at the Hannaford grocery store in our area? You can help earn money for our school when you purchase from more than 1,500 participating products. When you check out you will receive 3 school dollars for every 4 participating products you purchase. Submit/deposit your school dollars in our school's collection tower in the Hannaford store at 1490 Route 9, Wappingers Falls. Visit [www.hannaford.com/helpschools](http://www.hannaford.com/helpschools) to learn more.

### **Stop & Shop A+ School Rewards Program**

Our school has the opportunity to earn cash from the Stop & Shop A+ School Rewards Program. Please take a moment to register your Stop & Shop card at [www.stopandshop.com/aplus](http://www.stopandshop.com/aplus), or call Customer Care at 1-877-366-2668 OPTION #1. Our school's five-digit ID code is 08994.



### **ShopRite For My School Program**



Please register your ShopRite Price Plus Club Card at [www.shopriteformyschool.com](http://www.shopriteformyschool.com). Then purchase participating products at ShopRite and earnings will be automatically credited to our school account. All General Mills products are now included.