



# St. Denis – St. Columba School

A Holy Ground of Loving and Learning

## Family Newsletter



Weeks of December 21, 2020 - January 8, 2021

### No Bus Transportation for Arlington Students: December 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>

Bus transportation will **not** be available for Arlington students next from Monday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> to Wednesday, Dec.23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **PLEASE NOTE: Schedule Change for this week:**

#### **Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> for Grades 5-8**

The students in the Grades 5-8 Green Cohort will have Physical Education on Monday instead of Spanish class. They will follow the Tuesday schedule and are to wear their gym uniforms on Monday.

#### **Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Students will be dismissed for Christmas Break after prayers at 11:40 a.m. this Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. There may be a lot of car riders this day, so be sure to have a **BIG** sign in your car window with your child(ren)'s name(s) to expedite the dismissal process.

### Class Christmas Celebrations

**Please remember that all food and craft items for the class Christmas celebrations must be prepackaged and individually wrapped.** Students will be able to celebrate the Christmas Season together, but they will be required to do so socially-distanced and at their desks. All items for the parties may be dropped off at the front door and must be **clearly labeled** with the grade and cohort, if applicable, to minimize handling. Please **do not** attempt to drop off anything during the arrival and dismissal process. **The Christmas celebrations will take place on the following days:**

**GOLD DAY COHORT:** Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>

**GRADES K- 1 and GREEN DAY COHORT:** Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>

All students will have a **No Uniform day on Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>** and are encouraged to wear Christmas colors to school and during their Zoom classes!



### Happy Retirement, Mrs. O'Connor!

After 15 years as our School Nurse at SDSC, Mrs. O'Connor has decided to formally retire from the Wappingers Central School District. Over these many years, we have been blessed that she was assigned to serve our school. Not only was she our nurse, she is a St. Columba Parishioner and a mother of four SDSC alumni. Because of these connections to our school community, she grew her position from clinical nurse to school advocate, uniform exchange coordinator and someone who was always eager to step in wherever she was needed. More importantly, she was a "second mother" to hundreds of children and their parents. Over the years she administered more love than medicine to the students. She will be continuing as a nurse with the Sisters of the Catholic Apostle on a part-time basis. She plans to spend her extra time with her family, especially her grandchildren. She will be missed by the entire SDSC community! Her last day in the office will be Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Christmas Vacation



Christmas Vacation begins this Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> at dismissal. School will reopen on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. During Christmas break we request that parents review the contents of their children's backpacks. Are there items that can be removed to lighten the load? Are there any supplies that need to be refreshed pencils, pens, glue sticks, etc.? Has your child turned in homework or brought home important papers for you that were forgotten in folders? Have your child refreshed and ready for the New Year!

### A Message from Sr. Kathleen

I wish you and your families a beautiful Christmas and New Year filled with much peace, joy and relaxation. You will be in my special thoughts and prayers on Christmas day and throughout the New Year. Thank you, most of all, for your love and support. Have a Blessed Christmas and a Safe, Prosperous New Year! See you in 2021!

### Christmas Concert

Mr. Leguizamon and the students have worked diligently to prepare a virtual Christmas concert for our families. Once the finishing touches are complete, we will send out the link for you and your families to enjoy. This will be our special Christmas gift to each of you and your families.

### Together We Did It!

Many said that it could not be done. Naysayers doubted that we could open our school in-person instruction during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Well, we did it! We did it on time and safely. And we've done it **every day** since the first day of school. Covid-19 never stopped us (even though a snowstorm did)! Our Kindergarten and First Grade Classes have been in the school building every day of the week! It's been non-stop learning for all grades! This has truly been a TEAM effort. Thank you to the administration, teachers and families for working so diligently to help us succeed where so many others did not. We are blessed each one of us to have each other in this amazing School Community!



### Let's Build on Our Success

Covid-19 cases are increasing around the country and in our local community. **Please be careful over the break and don't take any unnecessary risks of exposure as you celebrate Christmas or ring in the New Year!** Many Dutchess County schools have already had shutdowns due to positive cases. Your diligence and cooperation following the SDSC safety protocol has kept SDSC free of suspected or positive cases since the first day of school. With the cold and flu season upon us, we also must be extra careful if we want to keep uninterrupted in-person learning at SDSC. You can help by observing the following protocols and reminding your child to do the same:

- Avoid contact with anyone who is not feeling well.
- Always practice socially distancing, especially when out in public.
- Make sure your children "keep their hands to themselves!"
- Reinforce proper handwashing techniques and personal hygiene.
- Make sure your family wears masks when out in public.

### Hot Lunch Program Blue Tickets Expire Soon!

Please use up your old blue lunch tickets before Christmas break. Only newly-purchased **ORANGE lunch tickets** will be accepted beginning Monday, January 4, 2021. Thank you.

### Half Day – January 8<sup>th</sup>

Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup> is a half day of school. Students will be dismissed after prayers at 11:45 p.m.

### No Midterms in January!

The Archdiocese of New York and SDSC will NOT be administering Midterm exams this year. The decision is made with the emotional well-being of students, teachers, and parents in mind. This does not mean that we will be lessening our academic standards! We will be administering instead the MAP Growth Assessment so that we can continue to focus on growing our students. More information will be forthcoming!

### Dress for the Weather!



Fresh air and exercise are critical to our students' well-being, especially during the current Covid pandemic. Students go outside for fresh air breaks, physical education, and recess whenever possible except during inclement weather. Please be sure that your child has a warm coat, hat, gloves, etc. as appropriate to keep them warm. Also please label your child's clothing as the Lost and Found tends to fill up during the winter months with unlabeled clothing. Girls may wear tights, heavy knee high socks and warm shorts under their skirts/jumpers to keep warm.

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### **To Everything there is a Season and a Time for Every Purpose under Heaven**

*Let us continue to keep in our prayers the many among us who are sick and suffering.*

A TIME TO HEAL: John Baker (Father or Mrs. Santiago), Mrs. Boulton, Christian Dill (Grand-nephew of Sr. Cherree), Mrs. Dillon, Jim Keenan (Brother of Mrs. Kish), Mary Krebs (niece of Mr. Krebs), Tonjia Minotti (Mother of Robbie, Grade 4), Mrs. Senno, and for the many who are sick and suffering in mind, body or spirit in this year.

A TIME TO DIE: Robert Perrin (*grandfather of the Kunicki children*), and for the repose of the souls of all our faithful departed.

To our Catholic School Community,

Nine months into the pandemic and life has certainly changed. As we embrace this holiday season, we are well aware that this year will be different. While the Christmas season is filled with joy, it is also common for the holidays to increase stress.

This year, families are struggling with many issues: financial stress, loss of loved one, coping with illness and just managing day to day in the new reality. COVID has changed how we interact in the world and it will certainly impact how we gather and celebrate.

It is important to monitor your mental health and wellness and the mental wellness of your children, family and friends. Below are some tips and resources:

**Be sure to find ways to celebrate with your family.**

- Have honest conversations with your child(ren) about why.
- Plan activities that honor traditions. Find ways to connect with others.
- These resources can provide some ideas: [Supporting Children and Teens during this Holiday Season](#) and [Preparing for the Holidays during Covid-19](#)

**Monitor you own health and wellness and invest in self-care.**

- Turn off the news. Shut off the phone.
- Do what is needed to take care of yourself. Children take their cues from the adults around them. It is important to model healthy coping.
- Look at this for some ideas: [Taking Care of Yourself](#)

**Check in on loved ones.** The reason navigating life during the pandemic is exhausting is because it is! It is normal to feel sad and frustrated at times.

- It is important to monitor anyone with depression, anxiety or mental health struggles and to monitor your family.
- Some advice on how to start a conversation with someone you are worried about can be found here: [Family Conversations](#) as well as tips for monitoring behaviors of children at home - [Helping at Home-Tips for Parents](#).

**Monitor for symptoms of distress.**

- If you think you, your child(ren), or a family member is experiencing a mental health crisis, see the following resources for signs and symptoms: [Warning Signs and Symptoms](#) and [Children's Mental Health](#).

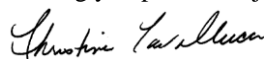
**Reach out for help.** It's okay to ask for support. There are many remote resources available.

- Begin with your medical doctor or the pediatrician to rule out medical issues.
- Ask for referrals for a mental health professional. Most health insurance plans include behavioral health resources.
- Explore [NY Project Hope](#) a program of the NYS Office of Mental Health that offers an Emotional Support Helpline, 1-844-863-9314, 7 days a week from 8am-10pm.
- As noted in a previous communication, ADAPP offers a brief mental health phone consultation and support to parents who have concerns about their child(ren) and will refer them, as appropriate, to additional resources. To participate in this program, please email: [MentalHealthSupport@adapp.org](mailto:MentalHealthSupport@adapp.org), with the name of the school your child attends, their grade, and the city in which the school is located in the subject line. Please describe your concern so the counselor can be prepared to respond, and leave a phone number if you would like a call back. Every attempt will be made to respond within 24 hours, Monday –Friday, during the hours of 8 am to 4 pm.
- **\*\*If you have a mental health emergency, please call 911\*\***
- In addition, we know that there are other challenges that face our families, if you have questions about state and local benefit programs or other community resources, you can send an email to [FamilySupport@adapp.org](mailto:FamilySupport@adapp.org).

**Continue to take advantage of the many resources available online.**

- Many wonderful resources are posted on the [Catholic Schools-Covid-19](#) page as well as [ADAPP's Covid-19](#) resource page. They are updated regularly and provide information about education, remote learning, family activities, and mental health and wellness techniques.

Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas,



Christine Cavallucci, LCSW, CPP  
Executive Director, ADAPP