

September 10, 2015

Dear Parents, Students and Friends of St. Augustine School:



This is the start to a grace-filled time for our Parish and our School. 105 years ago the Oblate Father and Sisters of St. Ann opened our first school on the very site we will soon be living, learning and growing in - we are all blessed to be a part of the story that is St. Augustine's.

Welcome back to School, all our returning families and welcome for the first time to all our new families joining us for the first time. It is our honour to all serve each family.

With our lack of direct communications via email and phone, we are hopeful that you have found this letter and will take some time to read it –

As you know from our website, we will begin our school year in our little old school as our 'school all bright and new' is not quite ready for us. Some key things to know have been organized in categories for your quick reference.

Thank you for watching our on-volunteer portal for parent participation– Every hour that you have or will commit especially to our move is so appreciated. New opportunities and cancellations are posted frequently.

COMING TO SCHOOL ON MONDAY

- Please consider walking, riding the bus, or biking – we do not have access to the newly constructed back lane until the city approves; the same procedures that we used for the past 19 months apply; if driving, pull up to the drop zone on 8th Avenue, allow the children to exit your car and carefully drive away. Children continue to enter at the front door of the school.
- Remember, we are wearing SUMMER CLOTHING – **no uniforms until we move into our new school.**

ALL CHILDREN WILL BE DISMISSED AT 3:00 AND WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU ON 8TH AVENUE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF STAFF. Please be on time.

- Parking restrictions have changed: Arbutus on the west side is now 2 hour parking; 7th Avenue has no parking at the east end of the block; a bike lane is being installed by the City on 7th Avenue and as of today has yet to be completed. Watch where you park – tickets will continue to be issued if drivers park illegally. Drive very slowly in and around the school. **The children's safety is paramount.**

OUR SCHOOL DAY:

- We are again asking that students **do not bring rolling backpacks**. Lockers for our Grade 2-7 students do not have space for such large items.
- Teachers have made simple accommodations to classrooms as the vast majority of resources are stored in the gym or have been moved into spaces in the new school. Please be supportive and if possible, send your child with any 'tools' you may have left over, such as pencils, crayons, pencil crayons. (EDU-PAC supplies have been delivered, but we are waiting to move them into our new school.)
- **School breaks are:** 10:30 – morning recess; 12:15 lunch; 12:30 lunch recess; 3:00 dismissal (*note: no early dismissal this year*).

Specialists' teaching days are:

- **French:** Tuesday, Wednesday morning only; Thursday
- **PE:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
- **Music:** Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
- **Choir:** - Mr. Arntzen requests that those in choir come WEDNESDAY at 7:30 for a practice for our first mass - has been changed to Thursday at 9:30 at the Church.

Lunches:

- Please ensure recess snack and lunch food is included in your child's pack for each day.
- As the City has new disposal regulations, **all children will be bringing home whatever is left from their lunches**. We can accept recycle items and garbage only. All food /related items must be taken home.
- We will bring our hot lunch program in October; more information concerning this will come in future news bulletins.
- As we continue to have limitations for outside space, and now do not have access to the gym, we are asking that on Monday, when you child(ren) bring home a package of notices/info that you immediately **sign the permission for for walking in the neighbourhood & driving students for field trips and sports' teams**. We will begin taking the children for walks on

WEDNESDAY – without the signed permission form, children cannot leave the school property

Buddy classes will be:

K (Mrs. Chau's class) + Grade 7's

K (Ms. Faherty's class) + Grade 4

Grade 1 + Grade 5

Grade 2 + Grade 6

Grade 3 + Grade 7

Students **LOVE** their buddies and we are so looking forward to creating many opportunities for these classes to be together. It's terrific for the younger students and very empowering for the Intermediate students to assume this important responsibility.



CALENDAR CHANGES/ADDITIONS:

Thursday, September 17 is going to be our **OPENING MASS** – NOT Wednesday. Please consider joining us for Mass.

If your intermediate son or daughter signed up for a **volleyball** team in June, please let him/her know that we expect them to keep that commitment, and any additional children are welcome to join teams, especially any new students coming to our school. More information will be forthcoming on the first day of classes.

After School Club WILL BEGIN ON Monday, September 14; *thanks to Ms. Siy* for the use of her Grade 2 space on this very temporary basis. So much planning and preparation has gone into our plans for our new school and we ask for everyone's continued understanding and patience. (Remember, students

need to be **picked up by 5:45 PM** – we will be there to welcome you!)

Meeting your child's teacher: Because we have such limited space, we are asking that you ensure that you've introduced yourself to your child(ren)'s teacher within the first 2 weeks of school's start if you don't already know her. Otherwise, our annual **Meet the Teacher Night** is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 30, 7:00 PM** starting in the gym; at 7:30, parents are asked to proceed into your child's classroom for a 30 minute presentation by the teacher. A second session will be offered at 8:00. Again, this is a 30 minute session. This is a **mandatory meeting**, and we ask that at least one parent be present.

Other spaces in the school will be open that evening so please plan to spend some additional minutes browsing around the school!

BC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM:

- We will be soon removing grade-level and subject specific curriculum last year's overviews from our website. They will be replaced with the plans that teachers will be following for the 2015-2016 school year. We will talk about our plans for educational change at the Meet the Teacher night.



CELEBRATIONS TO INTRODUCE EVERYONE TO OUR NEW SCHOOL ARE SCHEDULED AS FOLLOWS:

Blessing of our new school building: Sunday, **October 4th**, 2:30 PM beginning at the Church

An adult only event hosted by Faith and Foundation: Saturday, **October 24th** in our new school

Other Informal gatherings for various groups, including the CWL members, alumni students, and our neighbours – **dates to be announced in the near future.**

Know that once we have 'moved in' we are thrilled to welcome everyone in the community to come to know our new school and all that it offers to us.

More details to follow.

ABOUT OUR BEAUTIFUL NEW SCHOOL, SURROUNDING PLAY AREA AND NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT:

The new school space is bright, open, and provides us with amazing opportunities. Floors are arranged as follows:

First Floor: all ODD numbers grades (1,1,3,5,7 –with one grade 1 class not occupied until 2016)

Second Floor: all EVEN numbered grades (2 Kindy classes +2,4,6) + Learning Commons at the east end which encompasses computer stations, library resources, and 3 learning assistance rooms

Above the Reception area, west end: Multi purpose room which encompasses AFTER SCHOOL CLUB and Music room

Basement: storage, systems to support the school and the Uniform Store.

Back lane: once the City provides us with an occupancy permit, we will begin using the back lane as a drop off and pick up area. Detail will follow.

Playground space: As of this date, some work remains to be done; however, we will have more outside space than we had at the conclusion of last school year, and our existing school has yet to be taken down (thank goodness!). This will provide us with much additional space in the very near future.

The equipment that has been purchased (with the money raised in previous years' walkathons) will be installed over the coming 3 weeks – I'm certain that the children will be very excited to see this happening right before their eyes!

Without a doubt, we are going to need everyone's continued prayers, faithfulness and good humour – along with a great deal of person-power. These coming weeks will provide us all with opportunities to both offer our service and time, as well as express our immense gratitude.

(I've found myself comparing this time to being pregnant with a child: you are so thrilled in the very beginning, spend time trying to imagine what your precious child will look like and become, most likely you grow weary towards the end of the pregnancy, and then you have to **wait** - sometimes longer than you wish - as your child decides his/own BIRTHDAY.

And then once your beautiful baby is in the world, you step back, and watch as those you love come to love your child.

We hope that you will come to love YOUR new school!

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Oberndorf'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mrs. Cathie Oberndorf

for the Teaching Community of St. Augustine's School