

August 23, 2020

SUNDAY EVENING NEWS

Our Purpose in Life

*“Dear God, at some time, we ask ourselves what our place or purpose is in life.
We wonder what difference it makes that we exist, what our role is in the larger scheme of things.
We question whether it’s worth the trouble to work hard at our lives, to learn all that we can, to grow into
the best person we can possibly be.*

*The contribution we make compared to all our efforts may seem very small.
But all large, important things are made up of many small, seemingly insignificant parts.
Every person is part of the world, of human history, of the energy of the planet and the universe.
Amen.”*

June Cotner

Peace and Greetings:

Trust you and your family are in good health. To keep our St. Paul community fully informed during these unprecedented, ever-changing times, I plan to email you on Sunday evenings with announcements, achievements, etc. throughout the school year. I apologize for being repetitive, at times, but I recognize the abundance of information and appreciate how overwhelming things may sometimes feel ... so these are gentle reminders.

As this COVID-19 summer begins to wind down, our faculty are preparing to return to campus this Tuesday, August 25th and our students “phased in” with their respective class orientations starting next Monday, August 31st. We feel confident that St. Paul has/will continue to do everything we can to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for everyone. That said, we recognize, in spite of our extensive and tireless efforts, there are no guarantees.

As stated previously, ultimately the sustainability and success of our transition back to St. Paul relies heavily upon every member of our school community abiding by the precautions and behavioral expectations that have been communicated. I can’t stress this enough, regardless of one’s personal opinions or beliefs regarding COVID-19, everyone has a responsibility to understand and comply with the thoughtful health and safety expectations and protocols outlined in our Reopening Plan – Fall 2020. Please be familiar with this comprehensive document.

However, as we return to school your responsibilities extend well beyond our borders. There are enough examples across the country of how the irresponsible behavior of a selfish few can ultimately infect/impact many and force in-person school closures. More than ever before, students holding themselves and each other accountable, both on and off campus is imperative if we cherish in-person learning at St. Paul. Otherwise, the option will inevitably be everyone studying from home.

This is our place ... this is our purpose in life right now. Be assured that our seemingly “small” individual efforts and sacrifices will have a significant collective impact on the larger school community we call home. Our objective isn’t just to come back. We hope to stay back. Have this essential conversation as a family, commit yourself and make good life choices by consistently practicing preventive health habits during this stubborn pandemic. We can ALL do this but it needs to be intentional ... it’s not going to happen by chance!

#spstrong

MAIN OFFICE HOURS

The Main Office will resume normal weekday business hours from 7:00 am – 3:00 pm starting tomorrow, Monday, August 24th.

REOPENING PLAN – FALL 2020 UPDATE

St. Paul plans to begin the 2020-2021 Academic Year in the In-Person Learning model. After the initial orientation and phase-in period, students will be expected to attend school in-person five days a week unless they have opted for the Remote/Distance Learning alternative, also five days a week.

OPENING CALENDAR

As previously announced, the orientation calendar for the first week of school is as follows:

Class of 2024 only	Monday, August 31 and Tuesday, September 1, 2020
Class of 2021 only	Wednesday, September 2, 2020
Class of 2022 only	Thursday, September 3, 2020
Class of 2023 only	Friday, September 4, 2020

Virtual orientation/information sessions will be held on Wednesday, September 2nd and Thursday, September 3rd at 3:00 pm for students opting for remote/distance learning to begin the school year. Remote learning students will receive a Zoom invitation next weekend and are required to attend one of the two sessions. In addition, remote learning students will be required to participate virtually in appropriate orientation sessions with their class on the assigned day. Specific instructions/times will be communicated.

School doors open at 7:00 am for students, faculty and staff. In the morning, everyone will only be allowed to enter school through the monitored main front door or rear center staircase. After 7:45 am, students who are tardy and all visitors must enter through the front door. **Effective Tuesday, August 25th everyone will have their temperature checked before entering the school and are required to wear a mask and hand sanitize upon entry into the building.**

WATER

We have reviewed the CT Department of Public Health (DPH) *Building Water System – Return to Service Guidance* document and have been in contact with the Bristol Water and Sewer Department regarding our drinking water supply. Given the lack of use since March and consistent with DPH guidelines, our water lines have been flushed continuously for many hours on multiple days over the last two weeks. Last Thursday, the Bristol Water Department took bacteria test samples and sent them to a private laboratory for testing. I will update you in the next newsletter but we expect the results to be negative.

VENTILATION

As reported in our Reopening Plan, we have reviewed the CT Department of Public Health (DPH) *Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems during the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

We hired Air Temps, an experienced outside HVAC mechanical engineering firm to inspect and service our ventilation system to assure that it operates at maximum capacity for the existing equipment in the building. They have replaced any belts, fans and motors that needed repair. In addition, we are in conversation to enhance our existing HVAC system. I'll have definitive details on feasible and timely upgrades in the next newsletter.

During the fall months, we will teach with classroom windows and doors open to provide additional fresh air/ventilation. Also, some classes may meet outdoors, as appropriate.

HEALTH ROOM

Your Health Room Emergency Information Card (yellow form) and pre-filled SPCHS Information Form (Emergency Parent Reach), originally distributed in the June parent mailing are due.

According to Connecticut state law, as a requirement for entrance to Grade 11, students are required to have a physical examination in either Grade 9 or 10. In addition, a student who is attending a school in the State of Connecticut for the first time (regardless of the grade) is required to have a health assessment/physical examination. Students who wish to participate in sports must have a sports physical done yearly. This year due to COVID-19, the validity date has been extended from 13 to 15 months.

Parents interested in bringing medication to the health room can do so on Monday, August 31 to Friday, September 4 between 7:00 – 8:00 am. Our school nurse, Liz McGuire, will be located under a tent by the front flagpole to accept your drive by medications.

DAILY HEATH CHECK

A reminder that the online Daily Heath Check survey must be completed by all students, faculty and staff prior to arriving at school each morning. All responses will be received by the health room and are confidential. If a student or faculty/staff member answers YES to any of the survey questions they must stay home from school and follow the recommended protocol. Failure to honestly submit your survey on a daily basis may result in losing in-person learning privileges. Use link below.

<https://forms.gle/v9mNDN8abHEYBk8G6>

TRAVELING OUT-OF-STATE

Just a reminder that anyone traveling out of state must be quarantined in accordance with CT and DPH guidelines. Currently, travel to an identified high-risk area for more than 24 hours requires a 14-day quarantine. Please plan accordingly for the start of school.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

You are expected to read and discuss with your child the 2020-2021 Student Handbook, located on our website before printing, signing and returning the Agreement for Students and Parents (found under the Student Life tab) by September 8.

LOCKERS

Consistent with many high schools, St. Paul has decided not to assign lockers at the beginning of the school year primarily for health reasons (i.e. what comes into school, goes home at night). Please remember to sanitize your backpack every night. Also, should we be forced to transition to remote learning, no one would have books, etc. left in their locker which was a problem last spring. We will revisit this as the weather begins to turn.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

A reminder that all student schedules were considered final as of July 31, 2020. Any changes initiated by students or parents now require a \$100 fee per schedule change, unless the change is recommended by the student's current teacher, guidance counselor and/or Dean of Academic Life. **Given the health and safety requirements during COVID-19, we will not approve course changes if they result in exceeding recommended class sizes.**

TRANSPORTATION

Families that have registered for out-of-town bus transportation will receive their confirmed bus routes/regional stops this week. Bristol students should consult the Bristol Press or the Bristol Board of Education website at www.bristol.k12.ct.us for route information. If you have any questions regarding transportation, please contact Elizabeth Gunn, egunn@spchs.com, in our finance office.

ATHLETICS

As previously announced, the scheduled start of fall sports has been postponed. The CIAC and CT Department of Public Health have been in conversation this week to finalize CT's High School fall sports plan. We will continue to keep you informed of the details and the schedule for fall sports as we receive it.

A reminder for student athletes and their families to register and fill out all of the necessary paper work on the school website if you plan to participate in a fall sport. It is important that all of your paper work is complete along with an up to date physical so we can be prepared for our fall teams to hit the ground running with their conditioning sessions and practices once the final determination is made.

FINAL WORD

That's it for now. Don't hesitate to contact me/us if you have any questions or concerns. *Thank you* for your trust and confidence in St. Paul as your educational partner. We recognize and share in your cautious enthusiasm as this school year approaches. We don't know with certainty what the future will bring but we do know what our ministerial purpose is as we welcome your sons/grandsons and daughters/granddaughters to St. Paul this fall. May God continue to guide and protect all of us on our journey.

St. Paul, pray for us,

Cary M. Dupont '72
President/Chief Administrator