

St. Mary's School

Morning Memo – Week of June 11, 2018



1. Follow us on Twitter: @stmarys_mh, Instagram , and Facebook
2. Open registration is on now. We are still accepting applications for spots in all programs including the Fine Arts Academy. If you know anyone who is looking for a school for their child for next year, encourage them to call the school and arrange to meet with administration. We accept both Catholic and non-Catholic students.
3. **It is June and we still have some outstanding chocolate money that needs to be collected.** The funds raised go to support Blue Day, Fun days and pay for many student activities. If you have not paid your chocolate money yet, it is not too late. Please send money, chocolates or a combination of both into the office ASAP.
4. On June 21, 2018 we are having an Activity Day at Central Park. Parent Council is asking students to bring in \$2.00 for a hamburger. Please send that money or pay through school cash online ASAP as we have not received many orders at this time.
5. As we complete the school year, and as you begin your back to school shopping this summer, please keep St. Mary's Dress Policy in mind:

DRESS POLICY

Students' appearance and dress is to reflect a standard of modesty and courtesy that is appropriate and fitting for an educational environment of the school and for making a smooth transition to the work place. Clearly not appropriate for school are extremes of style including, but not limited to, the following: exposed under-garments, open side shirts, "see-through" attire, clothing that shows buttocks, obvious cleavage, and/or excessive waist/midriff, and clothing with symbols, insignias, and printed messages that are inconsistent with the District Mission Statement. Facial and body ornaments (e.g. protruding spiked jewellery) that may endanger safety are unacceptable. All dress and attire should reflect Catholic values.

The Principal or the Vice Principal shall make the final decision on the acceptability of any style of dress. All violations will be dealt with on an individual basis. Students in violation of the dress code may be required to cover up or change their clothing, or may be sent home to do so. If parents come in with proper clothing, the student will remain in the office until the parents arrive and the change in clothing has occurred. Subsequent violations may result in a suspension.

Students may not wear hats or headwear including hoods and bandanas in the school.

6. Congratulations to all students and staff who participated in our "Word of the Week" program last week. We will continue this week. Staff and students are encouraged to be "caught" using the word of the

week. If this happens they will be given an entry form for a draw to be completed on Friday mornings during announcements (Staff draw will occur monthly).

- Student word – philanthropy – the love of human-kind
- Staff word — nostalgic – longing for something one has known in the past; homesick

7. Upcoming Events

- Monday – Regular Assembly – block 1
 - Rehearsal for Spring Show
- Tuesday- Spring Show for Elementary Schools
 - St. Mary's Spring Show at MHC 7:00 pm
 - Tickets available at tixx.ca
 - Homework Club 3:30 to 4:30
- Wednesday - Homework Club 3:30 to 4:30
- Thursday – Year End Mass 10:00 at HFP (with NDA)
 - Grade 9 mixer with NDA - pizza lunch after mass
- Friday – Neon Day
 - Last Pizza day \$3/slice
 - FA Yogurt Sales and Kernels Popcorn \$2 (thanks to the students who did this faithfully all year. Your help is appreciated)

8. This is my last Monday Morning Memo for 2017/18. I hope you have found this weekly communication useful. I also hope you have found at least some of the attached articles useful to help you to work with us to make good educational decisions for your child or to support the decisions we make. I thank you for your support throughout the year. This final article is a reminder of how important it is for parents and school to work together to make St. Mary's the best possible educational experience for your child! It is not a research article, but rather an article written by a middle school teacher from South Carolina. Enjoy...



Dear Parents,

Not all of you are going to agree with what I've written. Some of you will be downright mad after you read it. As with anything, this doesn't apply to every parent out there. I do have those of you that support me and work with me – you know who you are and you know how immensely grateful I am for you.

As this school year came to an end, I started some research about the current state of our school system. This all started as I stared at myself in the mirror one morning, wondering if I should look and feel THIS exhausted. I am a mother of three, we are a farming family, and I am a middle school teacher. Most would say that right there is a sure-fire recipe for exhaustion. But this goes deeper than simply being tired. This school year has left me feeling depleted, defeated, and unsure of my place in my little corner of the world. Rather than throw in the towel, I thought I'd do some digging and try to get to the bottom of my feelings. I was surprised by my findings, and what initially provided me some twisted form of comfort

– knowing I wasn't the only teacher feeling this way quickly turned into fear for our society's future.

Lately, it seems that many parents have adopted a bizarrely lenient attitude toward disciplining children as well as bending over backwards to accommodate their children's every demand. It's unclear what's causing these parents to believe that children should be subject to no limits, no discipline, and no stringent requirements at school. Whatever the cause, these parents are, in fact, doing a terrible disservice to today's young people and to society as a whole. And, they are leaving their children's teachers feeling frustrated, ill-supported, and utterly exhausted.

The rate at which good teachers are exiting the school system is sky rocketing, and if things continue at this pace, no one will be willing to go into teaching at all. The average new teacher these days is lasting a whopping 4 years before calling it quits. Those seasoned teachers that have witnessed this strange, cultural shift firsthand are dropping like flies, realizing they don't have the energy to fight this uphill battle. But, perhaps the saddest thing is that these schools are turning out children who are ill-suited to being constructive, productive members of our society.

Boundaries, routines and early bedtimes: 13 habits that raise well-adjusted kids

Childhood is a phase of intense physical, emotional, and psychological development. Children need to learn what behavior is appropriate in our society, and how to get along with their peers and the adults in their lives. They need to learn how to play by the rules, as opposed to being taught that it's acceptable to break the rules or simply ignore the rules altogether, fostering a serious sense of entitlement among our youth.

Kids need to learn essential values such as empathy, responsibility, hard work and self-discipline. They must be taught conscientiousness, resilience and integrity. When parents refuse to set limits, give kids consequences, or have appropriate expectations of academic and social performance, students are deprived of the skills and attitudes necessary for their future success. We are essentially robbing them of the greatest gift we can give them.

If there's one thing we can all agree on – we mommas do love our babies. Unfortunately, someone – somewhere – at some point in time – planted a seed of doubt in our minds, telling us if we set limitations for our children, then we don't love them. Oh how I would love to come face to face with this person in a dark alley.

If you think spoiling makes for happier kids, you haven't done your research because the statistics I found completely contradict this. A recent article I read pointed to research which shows that the rate of depression, anxiety, and drug addiction in high-school and college students has exploded in the past five years, and many are saying that over-protective parenting and overly lenient school environments are a large part of what's to blame for this. Turns out, despite all the eye rolling, these kiddos really do feel safe, loved, and worthy when we show them who's in charge.

Ok, so that was a lot.

Ready for the good news?

I know I am.

This isn't rocket science. You don't have to earn some fancy degree to understand it. We, if we band together, can clean up the mess we've made. These are simple ways we can fix this as well as a bunch of personal promises I will make to you as your child's teacher.

1. For starters, your kid is capable of doing and saying things that will shock the living daylights out of you. We work with these kids every day and see your child in a different light than you do. If we come to you with a problem or write your child up for disrespectful behavior, don't automatically fight it. Take a moment to digest it. We don't have it out for your child. We don't hate your kid. We don't get a weird thrill out of writing detentions. We want what you want – for them to rise to the occasion and be the best version of themselves they can be. But, they aren't born with the tendency to do this. We must guide them, direct them, and model this for them.

Please know that I am right there in the life raft with you. I have a rising 7th grader, 4th grader, and kindergartner. Most nights end with me lying in bed praying for God to help me do it better tomorrow. My three babies are so perfectly imperfect. When my 9 year old's (AKA the least likely member of our family to be accused of people pleasing) teacher emails me to let me know that he has lost his recess due to inability to sit still and keep his hands off his classmates, I resist the innate urge to 1) crawl under my desk and hide, 2) jump to his defense (he's a little boy who'd rather be outdoors!), and 3) ignore the problem that he's obviously causing in her classroom. Will he have his side of the story? Yes. Will I hear him out? Yes. Will it change the fact that an adult took time out of her busy day to email me because my child upset the flow of her teaching day? No. Punishing him at home for disrespecting authority at school is difficult. It's tiring, takes a lot of effort, requires a tremendous amount of patience, and is just plain inconvenient. But, the fact is: his teacher

needs me to follow through, just as I need her to educate my boy. She and I have to work together to drive this bus, otherwise the wheels fall off and we all end up in the ditch.

2. Trust me. When I write a child up or tell parents that their child has been a behavior problem, I can almost see the hairs rise on the back of their necks. They tense up and are ready to fight, defend their child...and let me tell you – it is exhausting. One of my biggest pet peeves is when I tell a mom something her kid did and she turns, looks at him and asks, “Is that true?” Well, of course it’s true. I just told you.

We (women) tend to tear each other down. I see a heavy gravitation toward this with my middle school girls. They can be mean, hateful, and downright cruel. Unfortunately, some of us never moved on from Mean Girl University – in fact some of us are still regular attendees hoping to graduate magna cum laud. We don’t lift each other up and support one another. We jump at opportunities to attack each other, albeit much more behind the scenes in adulthood – it’s an attack nonetheless. And, let’s be honest, it hurt when we were teenagers, and it’s hurtful now. It’s no wonder when I come to you with something your child has done wrong at school; your defenses immediately go up. Somehow it has turned into me pointing the finger at you, whispering behind your back that you are a bad mom. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your child’s bad choice isn’t a direct reflection on you as a person. The way you choose to handle it – IS. Every kid will mess up. Every kid will disappoint us at times. Every kid needs a slew of adults to be invested in them, care about them. This isn’t supposed to be a competition among us as women. I want to be part of your village – goodness knows, I need my children’s teachers to be part of mine.

3. For the love of Pete, please quit with all the excuses. If you really want to help your children be successful, stop making excuses for them. Last summer, I was at the pool chatting with a parent and her son about his summer reading assignments. He told me flat out, with no shame, that he hadn’t even started, and I let him know I was disappointed because school started in two weeks. His mother chimed in quickly and told me that it had been a difficult summer for them and that she was allowing him some “important fun time” because it was summer. Wow. Some parents will make excuses regardless of the situation. Unfortunately, they are raising children who will grow into adults who turn toward excuses, unable to exhibit a strong work ethic. If you don’t want your child to end up 30, jobless, sitting on your couch, eating Lucky Charms and playing Fortnite, then stop making excuses for why they aren’t succeeding and demand more from them. God has trusted you with this child. You owe them that gift.

4. Parents, let's be partners. It's OK for your child to get in trouble sometimes. It builds character and teaches life lessons. As teachers, we are confused by parents who stand in the way of those lessons; we call them helicopter parents because they hover over us, waiting for the opportunity to dive in and save their child every time something goes wrong. If we give a child a 79 on a project, then that is what the child deserves. Don't set up a time to meet with me to negotiate an 80. Each time you do this, you are slowly chipping away at our ever so important parent/teacher relationship. Let them fall down. Let them hurt a little. And, I can assure you, they will want to do better next time.

5. This one may be hard to accept, but you shouldn't assume that because your child makes straight A's they are getting a good education. The truth is, a lot of times it's the ineffective teachers who give the easiest grades, because they know by giving good grades, everyone will leave them alone. I honestly can't blame them. They aren't verbally attacked on the cereal aisle at the grocery store (true story). They don't avoid social media because of rants ending with hashtags that are...well, just plain mean (#andpassiveaggressive #justsayin). Parents will say, "My child has a great teacher! He made all A's this year!" Come on now. Seriously? In all honesty, it's usually the best teachers who are giving the lowest grades, because they are raising expectations. Yet, when your child receives low grades, you complain to the headmaster, not only exhausting our school administration, but leaving your kids' teachers feeling like they have no value. Please, take a step back and get a good look at the landscape. Before you challenge those low grades you feel the teacher has "given" your child...you might stop to realize your child "earned" those grades and that the teacher you are complaining about is actually the one that is providing the best education.

6. Teachers walk on a sea of eggshells. The sad reality is – a great number of administrators and teachers these days have hands that are completely tied. In many ways, we live in fear of what will happen next. We walk on eggshells in a watered-down education system where teachers lack the courage to correct or re-direct a child without fear of being summoned to the office to explain ourselves. Administration is overwhelmed trying to please parents (b/c we are paying a pretty penny for education), taking vitally important time away from running our school. It's a cycle that, if not broken, will have truly devastating effects.

7. Last but most certainly not least...I KNOW you love your children. I love them too. These kids get into my heart in a way I can't explain to you. I just ask — beg of you — to trust me, support me, and work with me, not against me. I need you to have my back. I need you to give me the respect I deserve. Please don't badmouth me in front of your kid. Please don't passively aggressively attack me on social media. Lift me up and make me feel appreciated. I promise every chance I get, I am lifting you up in my classroom. I promise I appreciate the

hard work you are doing at home. I promise I am not the enemy. I promise I am on your side. I promise I am cheering your kid on with the loudest momma voice you can imagine. I promise in the end, you and I want the exact same thing. And finally, I promise – if you will let me –to give your child the best education humanly possible.

You and I, together, could be quite the force to be reckoned with, don't you think?

#ourfuturecanbebright #together #joinmyOPSVillage

Sincerely,

Mrs. Erin Axson

This story was submitted to Love What Matters by Erin Weigle Axson, a middle school reading and writing teacher in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Important Dates 2017-2018

June

11	Assembly
11	Rehearsal for the Spring Show
12	Spring Show at the College
14	School Mass 10:00 AM – Holy Family Parish
15	Neon Day
15	Pizza \$3/slice, Kernels Popcorn \$2 and Frozen Yogurt \$2
17	Father's Day
19-22	Detentions for outstanding Library books at lunch
20	Grade 9 French Language Arts Achievement Part B Exam, Grade 7 and 8 French Language Arts Part B
20	Art Club 3:18-4:30PM
21	Fun Day and Walk for Wishes
21	Aboriginal Day
22	Grade 9 Farewell
25	Grade 9 Social Achievement Exam, Grade 8 Science Exam, Grade 7 English Language Arts Part B
26	Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Part B Exam, Grade 8 Social Studies and Humanities Exam, Grade 7 Math Exam
26	Grade 6 Orientation 1:00 pm
27	Grade 9 Math Achievement Exam, Grade 8 English Language Arts Part B exam, Grade 7 Social Studies and Humanities Exam
28	Grade 9 Science Achievement Exam, Grade 8 Math and Grade 7 Science Exam
29	Last Day for Teachers