

September, 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome back to another school year at Our Lady Queen of Peace! September is an exciting time as our children embark upon new adventures in the world of learning. We strive to make your child's learning experience a fun, spiritual, and exciting one, and hope to instill a love of learning that will last throughout your child's years of schooling. Each new school year brings with it a renewed sense of excitement and eagerness for learning. Children come prepared with their new school supplies and teachers are excited to greet another new group of eager learners. The start of a new school year also brings new experiences. Sometimes these new experiences may cause anxiety for some children. Talk to your child about situations that may be worrying them. To help them feel more confident, you can act out situations that they worry about such as, what if I can't find the classroom/bathroom? Practice some simple openers that they could use to introduce themselves to others. Remind them of the places that they can look for help, such as any adult, the main office or nurse's office.

Our first day of school (with bus service) will be September 8<sup>th</sup> with arrival scheduled for 7:50 (five minutes earlier than last year) and dismissal scheduled for 12 pm. On the first day of school I ask all students to go to the schoolyard and line up according to their new class designation for 2010-2011 which can be checked on the SIS system. In the event of rain, please proceed to your new classroom. The new first grade (last year's kindergarten) will report to the cafeteria along with the new second and third grade (last year's first and second). Thursday and Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> are full days with available bus service for arrival and departure. Dismissal for all children grades 1 to 8 will be 2:30, in grade order. Picture Day is scheduled for Friday September 10<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, our Golf Outing, chaired by John Kelly and Frank Lewis, is scheduled for September 10th. Also remember that we have full day Wednesdays beginning next week and selected half days no earlier than 12 pm. The ITBS standardized tests will again be given in October and there was a late summer change by the New York State Education Department regarding state tests for grades 5 and 8. Please consult the updated school annual calendar on our website for these new testing dates.

**Orientation this year for all grades, except the three year olds, is scheduled for Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup>.** Please consult the schedule below for your child's orientation. Please proceed to your child's homeroom for the respective meetings. It is imperative that you make every effort to attend these meetings to ensure academic success for your child. The front doors at 22 Steele Avenue will open promptly at 6:50.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Date of Orientation</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Place</i>
Kindergarten	Wednesday, September 8 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	Classrooms on Cloister Pl.
Grades 7 and 8	Wednesday, September 8 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Auditorium
Grades 1, 2, 3	Thursday, September 9 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Classrooms at 22 Steele
Grades 4, 5, 6	Thursday, September 9 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	Classrooms at 22 Steele
Three year old	Monday, September 13 <sup>th</sup>	6:30	Classroom on Cloister Pl.
UPK	Wednesday, September 8 <sup>th</sup>	Separate schedule given	UPK Class at 22 Steele

The Lunch program will commence on Thursday and Specials such as gym, computers and Spanish are scheduled to start the week of September 13<sup>th</sup>. All grades will have Spanish for the entire year while grades four and five will continue with the Pilates program in September thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Celeste Zopich, certified Pilates teacher. I am pleased to state that Mrs. Pepel and Mrs. Bavoso will also return, conducting classes throughout the grades. Mrs. Dalmeto, our physical education teacher, is continuing the Presidential Fitness Challenge Program started last year for all of our children. The Afterschool Program, under the excellent watchful eye of Mrs. Albanese, will also begin the week of September 13<sup>th</sup>. This year, our seventh and eighth grades will be the only Staten Island students participating in the Pearson Interactive Science Pilot Program- the first step in our vision of making OLQP a STEM school. We are prepared this year to fulfill our mission statement to explore and initiate innovations in education and our faith which will prepare the students to take their place as leaders in a changing and challenging society.

I am keenly aware of the budget and am trying different ways to reduce our deficit. Hence, we will not be printing out copies of the monthly calendar or archdiocesan student handbook again this year. Instead, I ask that you please go to the school's website, [www.olqpschool.com](http://www.olqpschool.com), click on the tab for student handbook, and read this year's handbook with your child. Please adhere to the uniform requirements are listed under the tab *Dress Code*. After you have read the handbook, kindly sign and return the signature page your child will receive on the first day of school by September 10<sup>th</sup>. Monthly calendars will also be posted in due course.

We will continue to have first and second honors for grades 5 and 6, along with grades 7 and 8. The parameters for this achievement are listed in the handbook. In the interest of being environmentally friendly and to save parents/guardians a little bit of money, lunch boxes (plastic, not metal) are allowed for all children who wish to carry their lunch to school. Paper bags will still be permissible. Please put your child's name and grade on the lunchbox/bag. We are working this year on a new system of collecting hot lunch money. Please be patient as we work on the easiest method of payment for both you and the school.

Please look for the announcements for the band and drama, scheduled to begin soon. The Family Association has been working hard planning Fundraising Nights at Applebees and Wendy's. Both establishments have agreed to donate ten percent of the receipts to our school. Please support this fundraiser while enjoying a nice dinner out. In addition, grocery gift cards for use in Shoprite, Pathmark and Stop and Shop in different denominations may also be purchased with the proceeds going to support our school. Checks written out to OLQP and sent through the school are an easy way to participate in this fundraiser. Janice Rubano has been faithfully chairing this fundraiser now for years! Boxtops are still being collected through school and thankfully submitted religiously by Maria Martinez. Please see the list on the back of this newsletter for participating brands. Our first Family Association Meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 in the school auditorium. More information will follow shortly.

Speaking of the Family Association, Father Pancrose has plans to continue a drawing (in order to increase attendance) whenever the Family Association meets where the prize will be \$250 toward tuition. A parent/guardian must be a paid member and present to win. The eighth grade parents will be eligible for another drawing in May whereby their child's name (one boy and one girl) will be entered into the Staten Island Federation Scholarship drawing based on the number of Family Association Meetings attended for the school year 2010-2011. Please make every effort to attend and become a paid member. If you have not submitted your email to the family association, please do so by emailing [olqpfamily@gmail.com](mailto:olqpfamily@gmail.com). All future notices and meeting minutes will be sent via email. Please remember that the Safe Environment qualifications must be met if you would like to volunteer or participate in class trips.

The general fee schedule was distributed in June and there is a lunch duty fee of \$50 which is returned to you in ten dollar increments as you perform lunch duty. These are the only fees you will be asked for the school year 2010-2011, besides the World's Finest Chocolate Bar Sale. Any other fundraising is voluntary and much appreciated. Please send in any money by check during the course of the year in an envelope labeled with your child's name, class, and reason. Please have all fees paid by September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

First Holy Communion for our second graders will be Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> with Mrs. Cusack's entire class scheduled for 9:30 while Mrs. Mohr's entire class is scheduled for 11:30. Confirmation this year will be held on Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Again, more information will be made available as soon as I am able to disseminate the information.

I ask you please to write a note to the teacher if there is a concern or problem with your child. Please do not speak to the teacher "just for a minute" in the morning as mornings are hectic and the teachers need to bring in the children for valuable instruction. I am in the yard every morning so please see me if there is an urgent concern and I will take care of the situation. Additionally, please bring your child to the line if you so wish, but then either leave or step behind the class. I will be forced to disallow all parents in the yard if I see parents hovering over their children next to the line. Not only is it intimidating to the other children and causes anxiety, an adult interferes with my line of vision and I cannot adequately supervise the yard. While dropping off, please do not get out or park your car by the side of the school. This creates a back up of cars leading to New Dorp Lane some days! Please park your car in the church parking lot if you want to stay for a few minutes. I have only the safety and concern of your children on my mind, and I do not want to wait until a child gets hurt before something is said and

done. Also, late passes will be issued for all children entering school after 7:55. Kindergarten parents will have to take your child to the main building for a late pass if your child is late to school.

You as the parent play a crucial role in your child's life by reinforcing what is expected at school. Please review the handbook with your child and discuss school rules and procedures. Also, take some time each evening to review their homework, inquire about what they are learning that week, or just look at the work sent home from classes and ask questions. We have all encountered the discussion that begins with, "What did you do in school today?" The usual answer is, "Nothing.", but by taking the few minutes to look over their work, you can ask specific questions about the topics they are studying in school. Engaging your child not only informs you as to what they're learning, but it lets them know that you're keeping on top of them.

Setting a schedule for your child will also help to ease anxiety. Children thrive on structure. Having a routine for mornings to prepare for school, such as getting dressed, having breakfast, packing supplies/lunch, and catching the bus helps to calm students' nerves and assures them that they can handle the day. A routine for completing homework after school and preparing their belongings the night before also helps students to develop positive habits. Remember those butterflies you used to get as a child before the first day of school? (I still get them!) Your child may feel the same way- so being patient is key in easing their anxiety.

Remember to attend Mass regularly with your family. Children need to see that Church is more than just Sunday Mass- it is the body of Christ. At Our Lady Queen of Peace students have the opportunity to learn their faith and to live it. Social justice is not only taught, it is lived here, and our goal is to bring your child an awareness of God's love for him/her, as well as an obligation to live a moral life and work for justice for others.

It has come to my attention that one of our eighth grade graduates, Thomas Coffey, has been awarded a scholarship over the summer from the Lions Pop Warner Organization to Monsignor Farrell High School. The scholarship was established to encourage scholarship and athleticism- something we are proud to state Thomas exhibited here at OLQP! Another student, Lorenzo DiMaio who is a third grader this year, won a partial scholarship through the Columbus Citizen Foundation for the school year 2010-2011. Congratulations to both families!

We have been invited by Borough President Molinaro to participate in the Columbus Day Parade up New Dorp Lane in October. Marianne Falcone has generously agreed to organize the students to march. What a beautiful scene it would be to have as many students as possible march holding our school banner! How exciting and proud it is for our school to be given this honor. Please either call the school or contact Mrs. Falcone if you would like to make memories and enjoy a great parade.

At this time I would like to thank all of the students and their families who have generously showered me in June with gifts, flowers, and beautiful words of support. Unfortunately I broke my right hand this summer and was unable to properly acknowledge my students' generosity in writing. Can you believe I am typing this letter with only my left hand! Please know that I appreciate all that you have done, and continue to count my blessings every day I am your principal.

Finally, the teachers and I will be making a concerted effort to keep you informed throughout the school year about your child's progress and school activities. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the school office if you have any questions or concerns. Rest assured I have the safety, security, and academic excellence of your children at heart always and will never do anything to comprise the integrity of your child's education.

Even if you do not golf, please support our Golf Outing on Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup> by attending the golf dinner (information can be accessed through our website). Last year's dinner had a plethora of prizes and was very entertaining. The class with the most participation will be awarded their own dress down day. In addition we are preparing for our Fun Run on September 25<sup>th</sup> hosted by the Staten Island Federation of Parents and our Fall Festival chaired by Mrs. Santino and Mrs. Albanese. Enjoy a day filled with fun, friends, and our school family while supporting our school. Thank you for all of your support. I am looking forward to a wonderful year!

Love and prayers,

Mrs. Signorile