

SAINT MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Mrs. Linda L. Cherry, Principal
542 Cypress Avenue
Garden City, SC 29576

July 20, 2011

Dear Parent and Guardians,

As the new principal at Saint Michael Catholic School, I would like to welcome you to the 2011-2012 school year.

I arrived on July 11 and am already impressed with the dedication of staff members, parents, students and volunteers who have been in and around working toward the coming school year. The floors shine like a block of ice and the walls are freshly painted. Both Mr. Chip and Mr. Jim have been working day and night to ensure our facility is ready for the first full day on August 17. Mr. Ed Pott, parishioner and volunteer, has been outstanding in the technology support of the school offices as well as the classrooms and our entire Technology program. We will be seeing more of him in our school this year.

Mrs. Esposito and Mrs. Floyd in the school office have been wonderful in showing the "new kid on the block" the ins and outs of school life at Saint Michael. Father Ray and all of the Parish staff have been very helpful and it is gratifying to see such wonderful support for our school from the entire parish.

I attended my first School Board meeting as well as my first Parish Council meeting. I met with Mrs. McDonnell, PTO President, as we reviewed plans and activities for the coming year. I will be meeting with the faculty individually before the end of the month. Our opening staff meetings will take place before school begins.

Attached you will find the Final and Approved 2011-2012 School Calendar. The draft calendar was reviewed by the School Board and Pastor, as well as me. We are pleased with the final calendar as it provides the optimal education for your child/ren. Students are scheduled for 180 instructional days. This is the minimum required by the State, while they encourage up to 190.

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In addition to the minimum number of instructional days, there is a minimum number of instructional hours required. We are using the minimum of 5 instructional hours, exclusive of lunch and recess, for the 2011-2012 school year. State standards emphasize moving toward 7 instructional hours per day, exclusive of lunch and recess. I share this with you because we do have close to 7 hours of instructional time on full days.

In order to meet the minimum requirements we will be moving toward a little longer day in 2012-2013, but for the current year we will ensure that at least the 5 hours are met on any day. As a result, the few early dismissal dates you will see in the approved calendar show the early dismissal times as 12:30 for grades PK/K and 12:45 for grades 1-8.

As the teachers are preparing, we know you are preparing as well. We would like to give you the opportunity to see the school, visit the classrooms, chat with the teachers and me prior to the first day of school. We have set a new Welcome-Open House for Sunday, August 14th. We will gather in the gym at 2:00 p.m. for a short, general introduction of staff and then have you move around and visit the classrooms, etc. Each teacher will have some information to share with you, although we were not able to schedule enough time for presentations in each room while allowing time for parents with multiple children to sit-in on each classroom presentation. I realize vacations are set and this may be a conflict day for some, but I encourage as many of you as possible to come with your children and see what will be their "home away from home" for the 2011-2012 school year.

One question that has come to me is the school dress code and whether I would be changing that. Changing school dress codes/uniforms takes a year to plan/review with many involved, so the answer is I am not making any major changes in the uniform or dress code. I read over the code and am making a couple of clarifications:

1. Socks must be worn at all times. The length of those socks does not matter, as long as the socks are clean, go with the uniform and do not distract from education by drawing attention away from learning.
2. Shoes may be dressy or casual (sneakers), as long as they are clean, go with the uniform, have no blinking lights or wheelies and do not distract from education by drawing attention away from learning.

As parents, I know you will monitor what your child puts on their feet before they leave the house in the morning. As teachers, principal and other school staff members we want to concentrate on providing a quality education for your child rather than watching everyone's feet. We also hope that our students realize dressing for success includes matching and appropriate attire from head to toe. They have a job as "student" each day and should come dressed appropriately for their job.

Hopefully, these two minor clarifications in the dress code will work well. We will use this year as the "pilot". If all goes well, we will include it in the official dress code policy for 2012-2013.

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Please be sure to sign up for "E-mail Alerts", as the majority of our correspondence will be sent to all parents via this system.

If you have not already entered your information in the "Fair Share" database, be sure to do that as soon as possible. Everyone involved in Saint Michael School shares fairly in its success, its programs and its work. For those new to Saint Michael, each family must commit a minimum of 5 hours per quarter (20 per year) in volunteering. There are many ways to volunteer throughout the year and hours of actual volunteer work are logged by each family. More information on this program is available through the school office or PTO. For families that wish to opt out of the Volunteer Fair Share portion, they have the second option of paying \$90 per quarter (\$360) per year, in support of the work/fundraisers other volunteers are doing. [Each family is required to sign up for one of the two options.] Teachers and School staff will also be "sharing" this year. To those serving on boards as volunteers, that is a way to earn your hours however, you will need to log on and record your hours (meetings, etc.,) to fulfill your commitment. While it has been difficult in the past to ensure all are participating in Fair Share, we feel we have a way to make it easy for everyone. Thank you, in advance, for what you will do to share in the success of everything associated with Saint Michael Catholic School.

Have a blessed ending to this busy month and may God guide you in your work, prayers and daily life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda L. Cherry".

Mrs. Cherry

Principal