

WILDCAT WEEKLY



NEWS FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S LAIR OCTOBER 9, 2006

Dear Parents and Friends of St. Peter's,

This past week our nation was once more shocked by a horrible tragedy—the shooting of the young Amish girls near Lancaster, PA. It reminds us of how all of us—school personnel and parents—must embrace the serious need to be vigilant and abide by all of the rules that govern the safety of our children. I am sure that no one would have thought that a small, one-room school house in the Amish country—among people who are God-fearing, hard-working, and family oriented—could have been the scene of such a tragedy! We must be careful that we are not lulled to sleep by thinking that such things could never happen in greater Greenville! We are fortunate to have a student body of such wonderful young men and women. We can see their individual beauty as God's creations and rejoice in the innocence that marks their lives. At the same time the adults of our school family must work together to ensure their continued safety and security on a daily basis.

Bishop Michael Burbidge, our new Bishop, is as committed as Bishop Joseph Gossman was in taking steps at the diocesan and parochial levels to help us be more secure. All of our faculty, staff, and coaches must have a background check before one can work with our children. Our employees all must attend a program provided through the diocese about child abuse and neglect. I have spoken to our faculty and staff about certain procedural issues when with children—either as a group or when working with only one child. I work closely with the local law enforcement agencies to ensure proper supervision of our facilities and checking on potential threats to our children. I work with the fire marshal to maintain our building within the local fire codes. We provide monthly fire drills as mandated by law. The faculty and staff worked hard last year in updating our emergency procedure plans. I am proud of our students during our fire drills. Consistently, they evacuate the building in a little over one minute. This is exceptional when you have over 600 people leaving the school. We will continue to monitor and update our procedures for evacuations, lock-downs, and tornados.

I ask that our parents—as most of you do—always follow the simple rule of signing in and out when entering our building and wearing a visitor pass. I ask that you continue to sign children in and out during the school day when they leave and then return for various reasons. I also continue to ask parents not to park in Green Springs Park and across 5th Street to pick up a child. It is dangerous and yet some folks simply ignore this request. It is something I just don't understand!

Some folks have expressed some concerns over the new doors at the front of the school. They are an added security feature to our school. Too often in

the past people we know have entered the building without being “recognized” first by the front office and signing in. They have been found “roaming” throughout the building. If people we know could do this, so could anyone. The local police have applauded this addition to our school and the added security it brings. Please know—regardless of any individual’s opinions and feelings, I will ALWAYS choose the side of our children’s safety and security. I will always believe that every one of our faculty, staff, and parents feel the same as I do.

We can always improve. If you notice areas that are lax or you have ideas, please forward them to me at jfencik@stpeterscatholicsschool.com.

Thanks to all of you who contribute to the safety and security of our school. Your co-operation with our faculty and staff is deeply appreciated.

May God bless you and your families!

Mr. Fencik