



Welcome Back!

Stafford Middle School's Parent - Guardian Newsletter

SMS EAGLE

On Wednesday, August 27th, summer vacation will officially come to an end. The 2008-2009 school year will begin at **Stafford Middle School** on that date, with the homeroom bell at 7:20 A.M.

Homeroom assignments will be posted on the first day of school, and will not be available prior to that date. Parents and students are asked not to phone the school to request information regarding the student's cluster, schedule, homeroom, etc. The schedules will be given to the students on the first day of school.

A *Student-Parent Handbook* will be given to each student, and will have information regarding many aspects of **Stafford Middle School**. Parents are asked to become familiar with the information contained in the handbook, including the yearly calendar, faculty and staff listing, the school schedule including rotation of classes and other

information and policies. We hope that it will help students and parents get off to a good start and serve as a valuable resource throughout the year.

We are all looking forward to an exciting and productive year at **Stafford Middle School**. Our staff is ready and willing to work in partnership with you to make this an exciting and eventful year for your child.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Valentine, Principal
Stafford Middle School

Important Dates to Remember



August 21, 2008 -
6:00 p.m.

New Student Orientation
James P. Prenetta Auditorium

September 1, 2008 -

Labor Day - No School

August 27, 2008 -
7:20 a.m. - 1:50 p.m.

First Day of School!

September 9, 2008 -
6:30 p.m.

PTO Meeting

September 11, 2008 -
6:30 p.m.

Open House

**Stafford Public
Schools**

Mark Fontanella, Chairman
Lisa Bradway
Lisa Finch
Sandy Fowler
Tracy Rummel
Patricia Saunders
Julie Stafford

**Superintendent of
Schools**

Thérèse G. Fishman,
Ed. D.

Board of Education

Stafford Middle School Administration:

Kenneth F. Valentine, Principal
Marco R. Pelliccia, Assistant Principal

August, 2008

Volume 14

Issue 1

The Home - School Connection

Throughout the school year, the SMS staff will be making efforts to stay in touch with you in a variety of ways including: the distribution of a Student & Parent Handbook, the publication of a newsletter for parents and guardians, an annual open house, parent/teacher conferences, report cards, invitations to special events, monthly Parent/Teacher Organization meetings and the maintenance of a school web page. The following is a brief description of these important communication venues:

Student Parent Handbook

All students receive a **Premier School Agenda** at the beginning of the school year. This planner functions as a planning notebook for students to record daily homework assignments and other school requirements. But, it also contains a copy of the Stafford Middle School Student/Parent Handbook. Parents are advised to carefully review this section of the **Agenda**, which contains information about the school, its programs, activities, rules & regulations. In it you will also find a copy of the 2008-2009 school district calendar.

The SMS Web Pages

Over the years, many parents have informed us that their children don't always keep them aware of what's going on in school and aren't always "reliable" in delivering notices that are sent home. In an effort to improve this situation, SMS (as part of the Stafford School District) maintains a web page containing postings of upcoming events, a monthly calendar, lunch menus, homework pages, an online version of **The SMS Eagle**, and more.

Open House

This year's annual Open House is scheduled for Thursday, September 11th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. It will provide you with the opportunity to meet your child's teachers and learn about what is planned in his or her classes for this academic year.



Parent/Teacher Conferences

There are two Parent/Teacher Conferences scheduled for the upcoming year. This year's dates are set for Thursday, December 4, 2008 and Thursday, March 12, 2009 from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.

If you wish to meet with one or more of your child's teachers at other times during the year, please feel free to contact them directly to set up a meeting. Cluster teachers have a common planning period and can meet with parents during that time.

The Parent/Teacher Organization

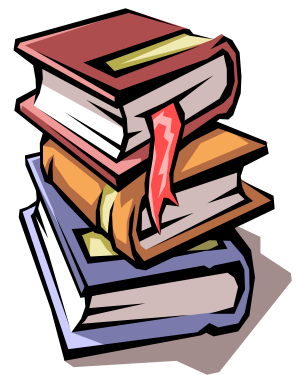
The Stafford Middle School PTO looks forward to increasing active membership in its efforts this year. The greater the active membership, the more that can be done to benefit students and the school. Through fund-raising activities, the PTO has sponsored school assemblies, ice-cream sundaes for students when mastery testing has been completed, and a teacher appreciation luncheon. In addition, they have purchased new books for both the student library, and the professional library. The organization also sponsors book fairs, dances, the orientation evening for new students as well as assisting with the copying and paying for the mailing costs of **The SMS Eagle**.

PTO meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the school library. All parents are urged to attend.

Report Cards

There are six report card dates: October 20, December 4, January 29, March 17, May 6, and on the last day of school in June. These dates are tentative depending on school closings that may occur throughout the year.

Report cards are sent home with the students, so it is important that you check with your child around these dates to assure that you see their grades. As a general rule of thumb, teachers will notify parents of significant progress problems prior to close of a marking period. However, parents are encouraged to call teachers when they have questions about their children to insure a timely intervention.



Please visit the SMS website at:

<http://www.stafford.ctschool.net/SMS/mindex.htm>

Getting Off To A Great Start!

1. Arriving at school in the morning

The school day begins at 7:20 am with morning homeroom. Since staff supervision does not begin until 7am, we ask that you please do not drop your child off at school before that time. Upon entering through the front of the building, students should report immediately to the cafeteria and remain there until the bell rings at 7:05 am signaling that it's O.K. for them to proceed to their locker and homeroom. Those students who arrive after this point in time, should be sure to be in the building in time to go to their locker to store their jackets and book bags, and pick up the textbooks and other materials that they will need for their first few classes.

REMINDER FOR PARENTS WHO DRIVE THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL

Please use extreme caution in the parking lot when dropping off students in the morning.

Drive slowly and watch for pedestrians in the parking area. Also, please advise your child of the importance of looking both ways before crossing through the parking lot.

The student drop off area is in the front parking lot. The driveway directly in front of the building is reserved for school buses.

4. Lunch

Lunch will be served in the cafeteria starting the first day of school. The price for a meal is \$2.10 and includes milk. Students who received free or reduced (\$.40) meals last year will continue to receive them until October 1st. In order to be eligible for free or reduced meals after October 1st, students must bring a letter to school from the Department of Income Maintenance or bring in a Free/Reduced Lunch Application filled out and signed by parents or guardians. All students will receive this application during homeroom of the first day. Please be advised that students will not be allowed to charge their lunch.

2. Transportation to and from school

The Board of Education provides bus transportation for all students. Everyone is expected to ride on an assigned bus to and from school (this information has been listed in the *Hartford Courant*, the *Journal Inquirer* and the *Reminder*). Students are not permitted to walk or ride bicycles to or from school since virtually all means of access onto and off of the premises (i.e., trails through the woods, the "sidewalk-less" main road) are potentially dangerous to their safety and cannot be supervised by the school. The lone exception to this policy, of course, is when a student is being picked up by his/her parent or guardian or – **with advance written notification** – someone designated by the parent or guardian.

3. Emergency Information

On the first day of school, students will be given two **Emergency Information Cards** to take home. These cards are important in assuring that a parent/guardian or (in the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached) a responsible adult can be contacted to assume the care, transportation and responsibility of a child who is injured or becomes ill at school.

Parents are asked to complete the information, and to discuss it with their child so he or she is aware of its content. Be sure you have filled out the reverse side of the card which includes permission to transport, but understand no medical treatment can be given until a parent/guardian is present. **Both** cards are to be returned to the school by Friday, September 5, 2008.

5. Insurance

Students received information regarding school insurance. This is provided primarily for families who do not have medical insurance. Parents are encouraged to review the parameters of the insurance policy in order to decide whether to enroll. Students should return the insurance envelope to school no later than September 5th.

6. Medication

The law states that there shall be a written physician's order and written authorization from a parent for each medication given. The forms required are available at the school. School personnel will not dispense medication without these forms. A parent, guardian, or other responsible adult must deliver the medication to the school in a pharmacy labeled container. This also pertains to all over-the-counter medication, such as aspirin, cold and cough medicine, etc. School personnel will not dispense medication delivered to school by a child. If you have any questions regarding the medication policy – please call the school at 684-2785.

If, at some point in time during the year, your child is out of school and will need to take medication when he/she returns, you may call the school nurse and request that the forms be sent to you in advance of your child's return to school.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:

Students should bring lunch or lunch money, pens, pencils, and a notebook. Other materials will not be needed.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY



EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARDS

In case of emergency, each student is required to have on file in the school office the following information:

- ◇ Parent(s) or guardian(s) name.
- ◇ Complete and up-to-date address.
- ◇ Home telephone and parent(s) or guardian(s) work telephone.
- ◇ Emergency telephone number of a friend or relative.
- ◇ Physician's name and telephone number.
- ◇ Medical alert information (health problems, known allergies, medications currently being taken, etc.).

ALERT NOW COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The home-school communication system will continue this school year.
More information will be forthcoming.

SCHOOL - HOME COMMUNICATIONS

Adults, and especially parents, through their words and actions, create powerful models for children. By modeling good communications skills, we teach our children how important it is to ask questions, to be considerate of others, to be good listeners, and to offer helpful advice. Keeping the channels of communications open between home and school is important to the success of all students. Parents can assist in the learning process by keeping teachers informed about issues that may impact their child's success at school.

The classroom teacher is the best source of information concerning a child's school performance. Parents are encouraged to confer with teachers during the school's regular conference schedule or at anytime during the year. Our goal is to provide an excellent instructional program for the children of Stafford Middle School. We welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can provide every student with the very best education possible.

COMMUNICATING FROM HOME

In Writing

Please communicate with your child's teacher by written note at any time.

If you would like your child's teacher to call you, please include in your note the number at which you can be reached and the best time to call.

In Person

Please schedule conferences in advance by telephone so that the teacher can arrange to be available.

Letting the teacher know in advance what specific topics you would like to discuss will help the teacher be better prepared to address your questions and concerns.

Be prepared to ask specific questions relating to your child's academic progress and/or behavior at school.

By Telephone

Teachers are generally available for brief conversations before and after school. For school office hours, please check the Parent Handbook or call the school.

In general, phone conversations should be brief. If more time is needed, a conference should be scheduled so that the teacher may thoroughly review the issue or concern.

If a teacher is called when busy with students, the office will take a message. Your message should include the best time to call and the number where you can be reached.

Via E-mail

Each teacher can be contacted via the school system's email. Please do so by accessing the SMS Faculty Web Page:

<http://www.stafford.ctschool.net/SMS/Homework.html>

Stafford Middle School
21 Levinthal Run
Stafford Springs
CT

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Stafford Springs,
CT 06076
Permit No. 15

**Mailing
Address
Goes
Here**

August / September 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
17	18	19	21	21 6 pm New Student Orientation	22	23
24	25	26	27 First Day of School	28	29	30
31	1 Labor Day School Closed	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 6:30 pm PTO	10	11 6:30 pm Open House	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20