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Dear St. Andrew's Middle School Families,

I hope that by now you have received the mid-summer-update letter from me introducing the newest members of the St. Andrew's Faculty and Staff. That letter was e-mailed to all St. Andrew's Families on July 13; if you did not receive the e-mail, please check with Renee Nason in the School Office to ensure we have your proper e-mail address.

Knowing the multitude of messages we all receive via e-mail, we thought it prudent to mail this particular message—solely to Middle School Families—the old-fashioned way.

If you have not yet seen the progress being made on the new field turf, please come by School for a visit. While this renovation will most certainly benefit all of our students in Grades PK-8, I am particularly excited for our Middle School students, whose PE and interscholastic athletic experiences will no doubt be enhanced for years to come.

In addition to this and several other physical renovations, we have spent some time this summer examining and enhancing the 2011-2012 schedule for our Middle School students.

One change we are making is moving away from what is typically considered an Elementary-School schedule—large open blocks of time on different days of the week, filled in with core subjects with different intervals and order each day—and toward a more typical Middle-School schedule—consistent period order and length through the week, with consistent time and order for both core (English, History, Math, and Science) and enrichment (foreign language, music, art, PE, religion, and media skills) courses.

We believe this change will result in much-welcomed scheduling predictability and consistency for both our Middle School students and faculty.

Also new this year, we have included a weekly Advisory Period for our students in Grades 6-8. This will be a time—twice per week for our 6th Graders and once per week for our 7th and 8th Graders—for students to meet with their Advisor and their classmates for a variety of purposes—planning community service projects, class trips, working in the Community Garden, hearing guest speakers, improving study and organizational skills, and much more.

Another change—and the primary reason you are receiving this letter now—is that beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, we are asking all Middle School students to be at School and in their primary classrooms **no later than 7:45 a.m. each day.**

In the past, we simply asked students to be on campus no later than 8:00 a.m. each day, in time to begin Morning Exercises with the whole school at 8:00 a.m. In reality, many of our students would enter School just before 8:00 a.m., without a chance to unpack and get themselves ready to begin their academic day just after Morning Exercises conclude at 8:15. This resulted in hours of lost instructional time over the course of the year as students did not have time to get themselves settled and ready for class until well after 8:15 a.m.

As a way of increasing instructional time and ensuring that each Middle School student is ready to start the academic portion of the day promptly at 8:15 a.m. each day, we are requiring that all Middle School students be in their primary classroom (Homeroom for 5th Grade, Advisory for Grades 6-8) **no later than 7:45 a.m.**

From 7:45 a.m. until 7:57 a.m., students and their teacher will begin each day by reviewing the day's schedule, unpacking each student's belongings, and handling any "housekeeping" items that are necessary to begin each day in a prompt and effective fashion.

Any Middle School student not in his or her Homeroom or Advisory by 7:45 a.m. will receive a tardy notice for that day. Tardies will be calculated by the teacher and the School Office, and at the end of each month, any student with an excessive amount of tardies (that threshold will vary each month, depending on the number of school days in that month) will receive a letter from me documenting the excessive tardies.

Any Middle School student who receives more than one tardy letter during the course of the school year will be asked to meet with me and his or her parents, so that we may all formulate a plan to help the student arrive to School on time and ready to learn. Continued excessive tardies subsequent to that meeting could result in disciplinary action and/or a loss of School privileges.

Recognizing that this represents a significant sea change from past years of practice, we are asking for your support—both with the School and with your children—for these new procedures. The Middle School faculty and I wholeheartedly feel that these measures are in our students' best interests and will benefit them next year and in the years to come.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Director of Studies Lynda Callaway. I look forward to seeing you all on August 17, when we will begin the new year together.

Yours,

Mason Lecky
Head of School