

CARIBBEAN SCHOOL UPDATE NEWSLETTER



July 31, 2018

Dear Caribbean Families,

Greetings from Caribbean School! As the calendar counts down to the last few days of summer, I wanted to reach out to share some ‘big picture’ thoughts about this coming school year, along with important start-of-the-year news and information to help families prepare for our Opening Day this Thursday, August 9th. You will also find the Board of Directors’ ‘*Caribbean 2020 Progress Report*’ (**ATTACHED**) with important updates on the Classroom A/C/ Project and other campus upgrades begun this summer.

First, a preview of the many exciting initiatives we have planned for the 2018-19 school year. One of the important traits that all great independent schools share is their desire for constant improvement. This has never been truer at Caribbean than today, as we prepare to embark on a series of bold initiatives that will significantly enhance the overall quality of our school program and the daily experience of our students and teachers. Here is a brief list of some of the key areas we will be focusing on this coming year:

- **Improved Academic Leadership:** In an effort to provide more curricular oversight and instructional support for our teachers, we have established a new **Academic Leadership Committee** composed of the Administration and **Department Heads**, who will now have significantly greater leadership responsibility for their departments. This group will meet regularly to continue our work last year in strengthening our overall PreK-12 curriculum, to discuss common department and school-wide issues, and identify specific initiatives that our entire faculty will focus on in their monthly department meetings this year. Specific priorities include improving our **Writing, Research and Technology Programs**; strengthening our **interdisciplinary teaching** and **grade level transitions**; bolstering our **Early Childhood Education Program** (PreK-1); incorporating more **digital literacy and digital citizenship** in our classrooms; and more extensive conversations about the use of current best practices and what emerging brain-based research tells us about importance of our students’ daily learning environment. While teachers have traditionally focused on “what they teach,” our goal this year is to take a more focused look at “how students learn” in order to develop a more thoughtful, ‘student-centered’ learning environment.
- **Extensive Faculty Training and Professional Development:** Knowing that the real strength of any school lies in its faculty, we will be embarking this year on a series of year-long weekly faculty meetings to explore effective approaches for curriculum and lesson planning; differentiated instruction, assignments and assessments; and ways to promote more active student learning. Developing our teachers’ capacity to effectively incorporate instructional technology in the classroom will also be a major goal this year. To accomplish this, we are introducing a more dynamic daily schedule which includes **Weekly ‘Wednesday Late Starts,’** which many leading independent schools have adopted in recent years to provide faculty time to gather for these important conversations (**NOTE: See important information below on our new Wednesday Late Start Schedule!-- ATTACHED**) Finally, we are introducing a new **Annual Faculty Evaluation and Professional Growth Program** to help each teacher identify key areas of strength and improvement in their individual teaching.
- **Co-/Extra-Curricular Programs (“Student Life”):** Under the leadership of Blake Wilson (Dean of Students) and Jose Carlos Caraballo (School Counselor), we are introducing a more robust **School Counseling Program** that combines formal classroom visits, a new **Health-&Wellness Program**, and a variety of **individual support services** for students and families. Other initiatives include a more active K-12 **Clubs and Activities** program; a renewed emphasis on **school citizenship, student leadership and community service**; additional **cross-divisional ‘All School’** events to enhance school spirit; and a host of other efforts designed to create a more dynamic and engaging student-driven community experience.
- **Athletics:** Under our new Athletic Director, Jose Enrique Caraballo, we look forward to building upon last year’s progress in building a more **robust athletic program** that includes high-quality coaching and broader support from our student and

Panther Store News

For your convenience, the Panther Store will open every day from 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM beginning August 8. Doña Julia will be glad to welcome you back and will have available for purchase all the supplies listed on your Materials list.

Check out the new microfiber polos for purchase at the Casa Lopez, Calle Isabel, store.



parent community. Families can look forward receiving more timely information about team practice and game schedules, as well as additional information for parents seeking high-quality on-campus and local afterschool opportunities for their kids.

- **Campus Operations:** Following a significant investment this summer in the installation of a new Public Address System, we will be working with outside consultants this fall to develop a comprehensive **Campus Crisis, Safety and Emergency Plan** to better insure the safety of our entire school community. We will also be working to improve the content and features of our **school website**, as well as providing a host of new user-friendly **Business Office-related services** to assist families in managing their various school-related transactions. Our goal this year is to establish a more digital-based communications environment, which will help all of us better manage our busy day-to-day home-school lives.

In case it's not obvious by now, I am **HUGELY** excited about this coming year! Last year's unexpected events proved Caribbean School's ability to respond to any challenge thrown its way. This year, we step boldly forward with a new list of challenges we have set for ourselves that will further establish us as one of the leading schools not just in Puerto Rico, but in the entire Caribbean-wide independent school community. I look forward to sharing more information in our weekly Friday Newsletters about each of the major initiatives outlined above.

These are truly exciting times for our community. Our past school history offers much we can be proud of. Our future holds even greater things in store. I am delighted to welcome you all back, and eager to get started in building the future vision for our school.

GO PANTHERS!

Warmly,



John W. Carpenter
Acting Head of School

The Caribbean School Administration says: "Welcome Back!"

We take this opportunity to welcome you and your children to Caribbean School for the 2018-2019 school year. A special welcome to our new families. The beginning of every school year brings with it a certain level of excitement. We hope everyone has had a great summer break!

We would like to remind you that every child must have a green vaccination form (P-VAC 3) and a current dental evaluation form on record. The law requires us to check on these forms and verify if these are up to date.

Here are some important reminders for all:

Visitors' Parking

Due to the limited number of parking spaces, parents will need to park outside on Calle Navarra. After signing in at the gate with the security guard, please report directly to the Main Office.

Class Lists

Class lists with classroom/homeroom teachers will be posted outside on the Lower and Upper Courtyards bulletin boards the first day of class.

Back to School Nights

The program is planned for Thursday, August 23, for the Lower School, and Thursday, August 30, for the Upper School, starting at 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The purpose is to orient parents to the school and to meet the current teachers.

Please check our website www.caribbeanschool.org for up-to-date information like the school calendar, activities, teacher email addresses, handbooks, procedures, etc.

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Orientation

Parents of Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten students are requested to meet with their children's teachers on Wednesday, August 8 from 9:00 – 11:00 AM in the classrooms. This will be an informational meeting regarding procedures and curricular offerings. You

may begin to bring your child's supplies to this meeting if you wish. Teachers suggest that a few supplies per day is best for collection managing purposes.

Seventh Grade Student Orientation

Seventh grade students will report on Wednesday, August 8, at 9:00 AM to the upper courtyard wearing proper uniform. They will be dismissed at 11:00 AM.

New Upper School Students

New upper school students will report on Wednesday, August 8, at 1:00 PM to the upper courtyard wearing proper uniform. They will be dismissed at 2:30 PM.

We look forward to another productive and successful year ahead as we continue to make Caribbean School the very best that it can be while watching our students learn, achieve, and grow to the fullest of their potential.

Cafeteria Services

Beginning immediately on August 9, the cafeteria will have breakfast and lunch available. Breakfast is available for purchase in the Panther Lunchroom every day from 7:00 --7:50 a.m. No cooked breakfast can be ordered after 7:45. Lunch orders will be taken each morning in homeroom and students who want a sandwich must order them by 8:00 a.m. (grades PK-6 in the Panther Lunchroom and grades 7-12 in the Panther Corner store). Lunch will feature a hot entree as well as sandwiches and other items. Snacks will be available every day after school in the Panther Lunchroom until 4:00 p.m.

Due to health and safety concerns, students are not permitted to purchase food from any outside vendor or to accept food deliveries from any outside vendors. Students must either purchase a lunch in the Panther Lunchroom or carry their lunch. Microwave ovens are available for student use in the lunchroom.

School Uniforms

Girls' Dress Code

1. In grades Pre-Kindergarten through 6, girls must wear a white or blue collared knit polo shirt bearing the school insignia. Shirts must be tucked in.
2. Girls in grades 7 & 8 must wear white or royal blue collared polo shirt bearing the school logo. Shirts must be tucked in at all times and **vests are optional**.
3. In grades 9, 10 and 11 girls must wear white polo shirt bearing the school's insignia. Shirts must be tucked in at all times and **vests are optional**.
4. Senior girls have the right to wear an alternate dress code once they have earned the privilege by adhering to the rules in the handbook for two weeks. This privilege can be revoked temporarily or permanently by the administration if students in the class do not adhere to the rules in the handbook.
5. Skirts or jumpers made from the approved Caribbean School material where the length reaches the top of the kneecap must be worn.
6. Single-color black lace, buckle or loafer shoes must be worn. Shoes should be of material that is "shineable." High heels, clogs, platforms and canvas sneakers are not allowed. Plain white, navy or black crew-length or ankle socks must be worn (no "no show" anklets are permitted).
7. Hairstyles must be kept simple. Only natural hair colors are permitted. Hair must be well groomed and clean.
8. Simple jewelry is allowed but no more than two earrings per ear or two bracelets per wrist. Facial piercings are not allowed.
9. Nails are to be well-groomed with no designs.
10. Students in the Lower School are not permitted to wear cosmetics or makeup.

Boys' Dress Code

1. Boys in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 11 must wear a white or blue collared knit polo shirt bearing the school insignia. Shirts must be tucked in.
2. Boys in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 11 must wear navy blue dress pants. Jeans of any type or cargo pants are not permitted. Pants must be in good condition and fit properly. They must be worn properly, not down on their hips.
3. Beginning in 1st grade belts are mandatory and must be black.
4. Navy blue shorts (not cargo shorts) may be worn in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 6.
5. Single color black laced, buckle or loafer shoes must be worn. Shoes should be of the material that is "shineable." Canvas shoes (sneakers) are not allowed. Plain navy blue, black or white crew-length socks must be worn.
6. Hairstyles must be kept simple. Hair must be well-groomed and clean. Hair cannot touch the collar. Hair color must be natural.

7. Boys must be clean shaven and may not wear beards, mustaches or sideburns that extend below the ear.
8. Boys may not wear earrings while on campus or while representing the school in any activity. Facial piercings are not permitted and boys may not color their nails.
9. Senior boys have the right to wear an alternate dress code once they have earned the privilege by adhering to the rules in the handbook for two weeks. This privilege can be revoked temporarily or permanently by the administration if students in the class do not adhere to the rules in the handbook.

Please be advised that these rules will be in the Parent-Student Handbook which will be distributed shortly to all families.

Academic Excellence and Caribbean School are Synonymous.
www.caribbeanschool.org