

Snow Days/February Schedule Change and Policy Updates

January 21, 2021

Dear SMSA Parents and Guardians,

Below are three important updates regarding snow days for the remainder of this academic year, two February schedule updates, as well as a few policy updates to the Return to the Ledge operational plan.

Snow Days/February Schedule Change

As required each year, SMSA submits an official Academic Calendar to the Archdiocesan Office for Schools and to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Each official Academic Calendar must comply with instructional hour requirements set by the DPI. For the current year (2020-21) SMSA has submitted an Academic Calendar that includes six (6) extra days of instruction to account for any potential instructional time that may be lost due to “snow days.”

During this year of the pandemic and with virtual learning as a new and legitimate option, some have asked if “snow days” are now a thing of the past, no longer necessary due to advancements in learning technology. Our Leadership Team has discussed this question and we are now prepared to share our decision with SMSA parents/guardians, faculty and staff. Therefore, for your planning and preparation:

For the remainder of 2020-21, should inclement weather require a “snow day” declaration by school Leadership, SMSA students will NOT be expected to attend classes virtually, and the campus will be closed. Our Leadership team believes that, given the unusually demanding circumstances of the current year and unique strain placed upon families, students, faculty and staff, allowing the mental and physical break which accompanies a “snow day” is most appropriate. Should all six available “snow days” be used in the next term, only then may SMSA elect to activate virtual learning for any subsequent inclement weather event, thus maintaining fidelity to instructional hour requirements.

Related to this decision, the Leadership Team also believes that it is appropriate to make the following adjustment to the Academic Calendar for Semester II:

- **SMSA will pre-schedule a “snow day” for Friday, February 12. NO CLASSES will meet, childcare is closed as well as the entire campus.**
- **SMSA will pre-schedule a “snow day” for Monday, February 15. NO CLASSES will meet and childcare is closed. However, on February 15, campus is open as faculty and administration will be engaged in a full-day of professional development.**

We recognize that it is significant to make changes to the school’s Academic Calendar, and we do not make this change frivolously. Creating this mid-term break opportunity speaks to the value we place

on the wellness and holistic balance of students and their teachers at a time year that requires a little more care of the soul.

Return to the Ledge Update

The Return to the Ledge operational plan (RTTL) was designed to guide our planning, preparations, and ongoing operations for in-person and virtual learning during the healthcare crisis caused by COVID-19. This is a working document, and upon completion of the first semester, we have made some adjustments, including:

- increased opportunities to celebrate Mass
- additional library, playground and locker access
- enhancements to art and music education
- increased opportunities for performing arts participation

Please [click here](#) to view the RTTL addendum, effective January 18, 2021.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate operating protocols and safety measures, making course corrections which align with the commitments identified in our plan.

We thank all of our parents and guardians for the many sacrifices and adjustments already made in 2020-21 to support SMSA planning, programs and protocols. We are grateful for your continued flexibility and goodwill. Thanks in advance for supporting the decisions and changes outlined above. As always, we are all in this together!

Our Lady of the Ledge, Pray for Us,

SMSA Leadership