

Middle School Newsblatt

Innovative education of the whole child through German immersion.



November 20, 2020

This will be the last Newsblatt for November as TCGIS pauses next week to do some professional development and the adjusting that accompanies good teaching, and then an end of week pause to give thanks in what will probably be a very different Thanksgiving for all of us. Next weekend I plan to model for my children thankfulness as we remind ourselves of how much we still have versus what has been taken away. What a difference eight months can make in changing one's perspective! I will hug them just a little bit tighter this year. I wish you all a good two weeks and a healthy Thanksgiving.

~Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean

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Middle School Schedule

K-8	K-4	5-8
Nov. 16-20	Distance Learning	Distance Learning
Nov. 23-27	NO SCHOOL Conferences PD Thanksgiving	NO SCHOOL Conferences PD Thanksgiving
Nov. 30 - Dec. 18	Distance Learning	Distance Learning
Dec. 21 - Jan. 1	NO SCHOOL Winter Break	NO SCHOOL Winter Break
Jan. 4 - Jan. 22	Distance Learning	Distance Learning

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Reminders:

Specialists Change Approaching

Starting **November 30th**, middle school students will have their next specialist rotation. In the next rotation (November 30th until January 18th), 5th and 6th grade classes will have "A" cohorts in Drama, "B" cohorts in Art, and "C" cohorts in Sport.

7th and 8th graders will move to their last Semester 1 specialist rotation, which can be found [here](#).

Student Absences

Students are not allowed to excuse themselves from class. Parents must follow traditional protocol of informing the office at Inf@tcgis.org of any absence. We at the Middle School, in the spirit of self-advocating--do encourage students to connect with their teachers via email and obtain any missed work.

Distance Learning Support

To camera on or not to camera on! That has been the question. I have been in several classrooms over the past three weeks and seen students' cameras on and students' cameras off. I have seen lessons with most cameras on. I have seen lessons with all cameras off. When we entered into Distance Learning this year, we knew this would be a challenge for synchronous learning. Our experience has confirmed that, to the greatest extent it is possible, equitable, and unburdensome, synchronous learning goes best when participants have their cameras on.

A huge part of immersion teaching is using comprehensible input and seeing the expressions on students' faces to get immediate feedback on whether they understand. Cameras off makes this tricky.

There *absolutely* are appropriate reasons for having a camera off, and for those students and circumstances, we support that choice. We also understand that various parts of lessons lend themselves better toward having the camera off, such as work time.

Our ask: please have family conversations about what cameras on and cameras off mean for interaction and learning. When does it make sense to have it on? When should it be off? If your child is in a situation where it makes sense they have their camera off, please discuss other ways they can show their engagement (i.e. participating in the chat). If your child really can and should have their camera on, discuss why it is important to do so (i.e. to

help build a more interactive, pro-social environment, to show the teacher you are engaged, etc.).

Yours in the work,

Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean and **Esther Neu**, Dean of Academic Support

