

The Tartan Tribune

The Newsletter of McCullough Junior High

October 2018

McCullough.conroeisd.net

Twitter feed @McCulloughCISD

Volume 19 Issue 3

Congratulations to McCullough Students and Teachers Six Top Texas Education Agency Academic Distinctions

Congratulations are in order for McCullough students and teachers whose combined efforts recently led to the awarding of six academic distinctions for success. The Texas Education Agency awards a possible seven top distinctions for academic success, and students who took STAAR exams in the spring of 2018 were awarded six of these honors. In short, our campus is compared to 40 of the top middle school and junior high campuses in Texas. To be awarded a distinction, campuses must achieve academic success in the top quartile (top ten) of these elite 40 schools. McCullough students and teachers were awarded the top Texas academic awards for:

- Academic achievement in English language arts and reading
- Academic achievement in science
- Academic achievement in social studies
- Success in comparative academic growth
- Comparative closing the gaps
- Postsecondary readiness

Tentative Girls Basketball Team

Tryout Information

The 2018-2019 girls basketball team tryouts will be held October 31 through November 2 from 7:00 a.m. until 8:15 a.m. for both seventh and eighth girls. Any girl trying out **MUST** have a copy of a properly completed physical dated April 15, 2018 or later and a copy of her birth certificate. These should be turned in directly to Coach McGuire. Prospects are required to attend all three days of tryouts in order to make the basketball team. Note basketball competes against other available teams to play in our junior high district. Please email Coach McGuire at kmcguire@conroeisd.net if you have any questions.

Track and Field

Tentative Information

Track and field practice starts in January and the season runs through mid-spring. Everyone who comes to practice is on the track team. Participants try out weekly or semi-weekly for the available spots in each specific category for the upcoming track meets. Most meets are limited to three to four slots per competing event.

Tentative Boys Basketball Team

Tryout Information

The 2018-2019 boys basketball team tryouts will be held October 31 through November 2 after school from 4:00-p.m. 5:30 p.m., with an additional day on November 5th for seventh grade only. Note basketball competes against other available teams to play in our junior high district. All participants **MUST** provide a current physical prior to tryouts. Any questions on tryouts can be sent to coach Redmon at nredmon@conroeisd.net.

Parking Lot Speed Limit

The posted speed limit in our lots is 5 mph. For the safety of all, please abide by the posting.

PSAT 8/9

Our campus will administer the PSAT 8/9 on October 11th. We will operate on a modified schedule which can be accessed at our website. It would be most helpful, although not required, if students brought a sack lunch on this day.

Semester and Final Exams for 2018-2019

Tentative dates for final exams are below::

- 12/13/18-12/19/18 Fall Finals
- 5/24/19-5/30/19 Spring Finals
- Please make attendance on these dates a top priority, if your child is healthy. Final exams count for ten percent of the grade for junior high courses and fifteen percent for high school. Missed exams can be made up in January for first semester test missed and the week of June 3rd through the June 6th for any final exam not taken in the spring.

Test Retake Policy

An Opportunity To Improve Learning and Grades

Students have the opportunity in many cases to retake exams in order to improve their understanding of specific topics and improve their overall grades. Tests can be retaken in social studies, science, math, and electives. The maximum grade that can be made on a retest is a 75. Retaking an exam can have *dramatic, positive impact* on the grade achieved by a student at any level. Exams count for 60 percent of the overall marking period grade. Please note:

- teachers may choose to require tutorials or review prior to the retake
- due to the nature of some assignments and lab practicals, teachers can limit which tests can be offered for retakes
- tests cannot be retaken if the student was cheating on the first administration
- teachers may offer a new test or assignment on the retest
- there are no retakes on semester or final exams
- it is up to the teacher as to when retakes will be offered
- retakes normally occur before the school day at 8:00 a.m.
- students may retake one exam per semester for a PreAP class or one each nine weeks for a regular class

Upcoming P.T.O. Meetings

The McCullough Junior High P.T.O. is tentatively hosting upcoming P.T.O. meetings on 9/20, 1/17, and 4/18. These begin at 9:30 a.m. on the scheduled days in the Nancy Bock Auditorium located on the west side of campus. Please look for more information as we approach these gatherings.

Free and Reduced Breakfast/Lunch

Many students can qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunch. If you would like to see if your child qualifies, please contact Tammy Long at 832-592-5100.

Assistant Principals:

Steve Skidmore (7th A-K)
Beatriz English (7th L-Z)
Craig Harbin (8th A-K)
Lindsay Nichols (8th L-Z)

Counselors:

Amanda Rogers (7th A-K)
Jana Goforth (7th L-Z)
Marti Meerscheidt (8th A-K)
Alex Schultz (8th L-Z)

Principal:

Chris McCord

Upcoming Events:

- 9/20 P.T.O. Meeting
 - 10/5 Early release
 - 10/8 Holiday
 - 10/16 Pep Rally
 - 10/30 Pep Rally
 - 11/19 Thanksgiving holidays begin
 - 12/19 Early release
 - 1/10 Incoming eighth grade parent/guardian information meeting
 - 1/15 Incoming seventh grade parent/guardian information morning (9:30 a.m.)
 - 1/16 Incoming Seventh Grade Parent/Guardian Information Night (6:00 p.m.)
 - 1/17 P.T.O. Meeting
 - 1/29 Elective Information Night
 - 2/7 Cheerleader Tryout Information Meeting
 - 3/7 Incoming Parent/Guardian Help Session
 - 3/8 Early release
 - 3/26 Highland Girl Tryout Information Meeting
 - 4/5 Course request deadline for 2019-2020
 - 4/8 P.T.O. General Meeting
 - 4/19 Holiday
 - 4/22 Holiday
 - 5/27 Holiday
 - 5/30 Early release
- All dates are tentative*

McCullough Phone Numbers

Transportation: (832) 592-8800
Main Line: (832) 592-5100
Main Line: (936) 709-7215
Fax: (832) 592-5116
Attendance: (832) 592-5111
Kidchat Tipline: (888) KIDCHAT

Office Hours 8-5 Each School Day

Anonymous Alerts Anonymous App for Safety Concerns

Our campus will be utilizing the Anonymous Alerts app designed to allow students, or anyone inform our campus administration of any safety concern during the 2018-2019 school year. This app will allow any completely anonymous upstander and an administrator to engage in completely anonymous two-way confidential ongoing communication regarding an issue. The app can be downloaded either at the Google Play store for Android or Apple store for iOS. Note the important following information to use when utilizing the app:

- Login/Password- conroeisd

Please be aware 1-888-KIDCHAT will still be available. For a complete overview of Anonymous Alerts and how it works please view the following video on YouTube- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksC8TIIJCwj&feature=youtu.be>

Helping Your Child Make Good Decisions and Avoid MAJOR Legal and School Consequences... The Danger of Making Threats as a Joke

In 2018 all threats should be, and are, taken seriously. We follow up on every inappropriate communication whether it be verbal, online, written, or communicated by any other means. A great thing about our students is that they trust us, let us know, care, and have a relationship with our staff that allows them to confidently communicate concerns. Our staff values that trust and takes it very seriously. At the outset of this year campus administration met with students in person through language arts classes on September 17th and September 20th to explain in detail the dangers of making threats in any form, as well as the consequences for doing so. Consequences for making inappropriate threats include expulsion from school as well as accompanying legal consequences. Most of the time young kids are trying to be funny. Please visit with your child in advance of school starting to ensure he/she realizes **no one will think it is funny and no one will think it is a joke.** Information can be given anonymously for investigation at 1-888-KIDCHAT or through the Anonymous Alerts app.

Bicycle Safety and Awareness

If your child is riding a bike, our bicycle rack is on the west side by the football field. This area is under video surveillance and is close to the west doors in case of rain. Please remind your child to please make certain he/she does not ride through the parking lot. The setup is such that the rider can ride through the grass and bypass normal parking lot traffic. ***If you operate a vehicle in our parking lot, please be cognizant of all bicycle, car, and foot traffic.*** The first week of school we met with all students to discuss bike safety and expectations. It is also highly recommended every bike be locked at all times.

Parking Lot Safety and Reminders

The safety of our students, staff, and you is our top priority. As we discussed in our incoming parent/guardian meetings, we are lucky to have two independent pick-up and drop-off locations. That is great for everyone. Our west (football field side) lot is the main place for parents/guardians to pick up your child. As a major point of emphasis, keep in mind the following reminders:

- Phone use while driving in a school parking lot and any street is prohibited by law.
- The posted speed limit in our lots is 5 mph.
- Please ensure any family member, sibling, grandparent, or driver of any association understands the parking lot safety plan and respects it for the safety of all.
- For the safety of your child, please do not have him/her dropped off in the main parking lot in the morning and then asked by you to cross traffic. All morning drop off is along the curb exiting the right side of the vehicle only.
- In the afternoon, parking lot pick up on the west side is only in the coned-off area located by the painted crosswalk. If you are picking up your child in the west lot, please come all the way to pick them up at the designated area.

Vaping Awareness for Parents/Guardians

Nationally there has been a significant increase in "vaping" among teenagers. This terminology may also be known as e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are hand-held devices that heat liquid fused with nicotine or other liquids. Students across the country can, and are, vaping many different substances. Many of the devices used by teenagers to "vape" are not easily recognizable and appear as a normal writing pen or elongated USB thumb drive. In order to deceive parents/guardians, these devices which appear to be a regular USB thumb drive even light up when plugged into a USB receptacle. This also charges the battery used to heat the liquids. Among the most popular is a device known as a "JUUL" which harbors the liquid substance at the end. Teenagers find these devices attractive to use because the vapor emitted is hard to detect and generally they do not feel as if they are as harmful as traditional cigarettes. A recent study that came out in February of 2018 has found that the vapor of these devices contains lead and other metals dangerous to all, not just the user. Be aware these devices on campus have the same school-based consequences as regular cigarettes. Although our instances of student vaping are less than in most areas, it is not at all uncommon. In almost every instance the parent or guardian is *shocked* when their child is engaged in this activity which research is now revealing is far more dangerous than students realize. We have had no instances of students using THC in their vape, but this is very common nationally. School and legal consequences may be assigned for possessing these devices. Additionally, engaging in vaping may impact eligibility for students.

Electronics and Phones - Expectations, Pros, Cons, Rules, and Considerations for Parents/Guardians to Know

Students are allowed to bring electronics to school as long as they are off between 8:50 and 4:00. Use of phones during each child's 30 minute lunch is permitted for personal use and accessing Canvas to obtain assignments. Your assistance in helping your child understand that vibrate is not equivalent to off is appreciated. For student safety and privacy, electronics are never allowed to be out or on while in the locker room or bathroom. School and felony legal consequences will potentially occur for phone/camera use in areas of which there is a legal expectation of privacy. These items, including phones, are immensely popular among young people. However, due to the fact that these are high theft items on all campuses, it is highly recommended that parents/guardians consider whether their child is mature enough to keep up with these very expensive devices. The amount of smartphones left by users on tables, benches, and in the hallways is *staggering*. These items are brought at the student's own risk. Note in advance that if a student's use of electronics, including phones, violates policy, the device will be taken up and consequences for the inappropriate use will be assigned. The phone may need to be picked up by a parent or guardian depending on the infraction and overall number of violations and may not be returned to the student on the same day. Please do not ask your child to have his/her phone on so that you can text or call them, potentially disrupting instruction of children. If you need to get information to your child, please call 832-592-5100 as we deliver messages directly to students.

Tentative Student Pep Rally Dates and Details

McCullough is tentatively set for student pep rallies on 9/18, 10/16, and 10/30. Note these are pep rallies for students and each gathering will begin at 8:00 a.m. sharp and conclude around 8:32 a.m. There is a designated area for parents/guardians to sit for the pep rally provided all children have a seat. Expect heavy traffic on the west side leading up to the pep rally start time. Entry is exclusively through the main brown west patio doors on the football field side of the building. Thanks in advance to all of the students and sponsors for their hard work in making these rallies happen for the entertainment of all.

Automated External Defibrillators

Our campus now has four automated external defibrillators for use if ever needed. These reside by the clinic, in the fieldhouse, by the gym, and on the upstairs mezzanine.

Free Parent and Student Access Center

Parents and guardians have free access to Parent Access Center via www.conroeisd.net. This portal gives complete access to student grades, attendance, tardies, discipline, STAAR scores, and other information. This tool can also give parents/guardians the opportunity to set thresholds where you will be emailed scores of each assignment. Students also have the same access via Student Access Center.

**State Student Success Initiative (SSI) Information
A Gentle Reminder that Eighth Grade Students Must Pass the
State Reading and Math STAAR
Exams in Order to Advance to Ninth Grade**

As a reminder, Texas students currently in eighth grade are required by the state Student Success Initiative (SSI) law to pass the eighth grade STAAR math and reading exams to advance to ninth grade. Eighth grade students will have three opportunities to take these exams, with two tests for each subject, coming in the school year and one each in the summer if necessary. Summer STAAR testing will occur in late June if necessary and students who do not pass the exams on the second administration are required by the state to attend summer STAAR Academy. Our goal is to support each child to help him/her do their best and pass the first time. If you have a child in eighth grade, please note this state law before making any firm decisions regarding out of town summer vacations.

Free Homework Help Available for Students

McCullough offers many different varieties of tutoring and homework assistance for students. Taking advantage of these programs provides invaluable and free help for students. Please note, programs include:

- Free teacher tutoring at 8:05 a.m. daily (note one or two days per week teachers have morning duty).
- SPARKS peer tutoring during Advisory
- PAWS homework help Monday through Thursday from 4:10 p.m. until 4:50 p.m. in the downstairs library.

Early Checkout Specifics to Help

If you are checking your child out early during the school day, it will be far quicker if the student brings a note to the front desk before school with your clear directions on what time he/she should be waiting for you in the front office. Keep in mind, this is even more important if the child is in athletics or physical education as it can take much longer to locate them and have them in the front office if they are picked up without an advance note. A form is available on our website for use to help make the process faster. This document is located in our parent services area titled "early release request form." Additional forms are available as needed at the front desk. *A parent or guardian must come into the building to check a student out.* For student safety, please note in advance a photo I.D. is required to check out your child. Additionally, to avoid frustration or delay, note the only people who can check out a child are the legal guardian or person(s) listed as an emergency contact.

2019-2020 Drill Team Tryouts Tentative Dates

The McCullough Highland Girls Drill Team tryout informational meeting for 2019-2020 will be held on Tuesday, March 26th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Bock Auditorium. Tryout packet forms will be due Friday, April 5th by 5:00 p.m. The tryout clinic will be April 15th through April 18th and April 23rd through April 26th in the large gym from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Tryouts will occur on Saturday, April 27th at 8:00 a.m. Please contact Ms. Gilmore at slgilmore@conroeisd.net or Ms. Nichols at lnichols@conroeisd.net if you have any questions.

Riding Home on an Alternate Bus in an Emergency

Students may be allowed to ride home on an alternate bus in the event of an *emergency*. However, there are a number of action items students/parents/guardians need to know in advance to ensure a student can and does secure the appropriate transportation home at the end of the day. These include:

- some buses are operating daily at maximum capacity and *cannot* take extra riders.
- to ride home on an alternate bus with a friend, a note from a parent or guardian is required including the full name of your child, alternate bus your child needs to ride, parent/guardian phone number, and parent/guardian signature.
- a contact number where you can be reached to potentially verify your desire for a change in your child's transportation.
- a request form with the parent signature and contact information must be submitted to the grade level office by noon for verification.
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Crossing Guards

We have crossing guards that can help students cross at the southwest crosswalk connecting the main parking lot and Creekwood Park. Also, we now have crossing guards at the Panther Creek and Glen Loch intersection.

Science Fair

Junior high science fair will occur on Friday, February 1st. Specific information on the day will be distributed by your child's science teacher. Note students participating in science fair must be academically eligible according to U.I.L. guidelines to participate in the exhibition.

Club Sports

Tennis, Golf, Soccer

Information on club sports including tennis, golf, and soccer will be coming as information becomes.

Easy Ways to Earn Money for McCullough Students Through Our P.T.O.

Below are a few of the very easy ways parents/guardians can help earn money for our students and the McCullough P.T.O. These ways include:

- Amazon Smile— Start shopping each time by going to <https://smile.amazon.com>. Link your account to "McCullough Junior High School PTO" and 0.5% of your purchase will go to our campus.
- Kroger— Visit <https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow> and link your card EACH YEAR to McC Jr. High #81354
- Randalls— Visit <http://www.randall.com/ShopStores/GoodNeighbor.page> and link your Randall's card to McC Jr. High # 1476.
- Exxon— Exxon will donate \$500.00 to the school designated for every 20 volunteer hours worked by employees or their spouses.
- Box Tops for Education— Box Tops for Education can be turned in to the front office
- Join the McCJH P.T.O.— It is not too late to join our P.T.O. A basic membership is only \$20.00. The link to sign up is <https://mcculloughpto.weebly.com/joinvolunteer.html>.

Tentative Color Guard Tryout Information for 2019-2020

The McCullough Junior High Color Guard audition clinic will be held at McCullough in the gymnasium May 1st through May 2nd from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. All pick up of students should occur at 6:00 p.m. on the west side entrance by the football field. The audition will occur on May 3rd at 4:30 p.m. and will extend until it is over. Students may be picked up as soon as their group is done. Please contact director Angela Danney at adanney@conroeisd.net if you have any questions. More information is available on the McCullough Color Guard website.

Volunteers Needed for the Drop Off Room

If you would like to volunteer in the drop off room for the 2018-19 school year please contact jroc1174@aol.com

Ongoing Bullying Prevention

During the first week of school administrators will meet with students through language arts classes to discuss school procedures, expectations, and where to go for help with any need. A wide range of topics are covered including the student handbook. One aspect of this is bullying prevention. If your child is bullied or perceives he/she is bullied at school, please have your student contact his/her administrator in the grade level offices. Email addresses for our assistant principal staff are available on our website. We want to help. Letting the appropriate assistant principal know, so that he/she can investigate, is key.

2019-2020 Cheerleader Tryouts Tentative Dates

The McCullough Cheer tryout informational meeting will be held on Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bock Auditorium. Tryout packets will be due Friday, February 15th by 5:00 p.m.. The tryout clinic will be March 4th-6th, in the large gym, at 4:30 p.m. Tryouts will be on Thursday, March 7th at 4:00 p.m. Please contact Shelly Newitt at snewitt@conroeisd.net or Ashley Harbin at aharbin@conroeisd.net if you have any questions

Student Safety and Backpacks the Last Two Days of School May 29th and May 30th

Keep in mind for student safety, backpacks and bags of any type are prohibited on the last two days of school, May 30th and May 31st. Students may enter with a small purse, phone, pen, review packet, and calculator if needed. Any backpack will be taken up at the entry doors and purses/bags may be checked. This information will be articulated over the P.A. often in advance so that all students are aware of the annual safety procedures.

Subject: Important U.I.L. Competition Information for Parents/Guardians/Students to Know Prior to the Seasons Beginning

* Periodically contests may be canceled or delayed due to lightning. When lightning occurs within a ten mile radius, we are required to wait 30 minutes before resuming the outside event. If we delay a game due to lightning please evacuate the stands and return to your vehicle or the safety of our building. We want to play, but the safety of our students and fans always comes first.

* Any contest short of varsity is not made up, replayed, or rescheduled.

* We have no control over the delay or cancellation of a contest at an opposing school where we are not the home team.

* If a game is canceled early due to conditions that clearly dictate it is unplayable we will attempt to email you. This is a rarity for outside events. We always make an effort to play the contest. A call on playing, delaying, or canceling the game may not be made until game time or even after the scheduled start depending on developing conditions. The best way to know the ever changing status of an event is to follow our campus Twitter feed @mcculloughcisid. Additionally many activities have their own Twitter feed they update with information.

* If you have family or friends flying in from afar to see a child play, your assistance in ensuring they understand this in advance is much appreciated.

* Entry fees at Conroe I.S.D. junior high events remain only two dollars for adults and one dollar for students. Please note when we are the visiting team at other school districts, entry fees may be much more. Tournament fees are considerably higher.

* If you are a fine art or athletic parent/guardian attending a game involving our home stadium sunglasses are highly recommended.

* U.I.L. academic eligibility is real. Please note students in Texas have to pass all of their courses at the end of the first six weeks and every subsequent nine weeks to remain eligible for games, contests, concerts, plays, and other competitions. The complete calendar of U.I.L. eligibility dates can be accessed on the front page of our website.

* Note the first grading period for the U.I.L. concludes on September 21st. By law the first marking period is only six weeks. This means grades that determine eligibility are compiled statewide from a smaller total number due to the limited number of days involved. Translated, this means each grade has more impact than over the normal nine weeks period. Students need to understand that overall averages can change wildly, either way, pending exams that are taken leading up to the September 29th date a Texas student could lose eligibility.

Bus Accidents and Breakdowns What to Know in Advance

Our buses do a great job each day of driving our students safely to and from home to school. To put it in perspective, in a given week CISD buses drive further than the distance from Earth to the Moon! With these miles comes the inevitability of minor bus wrecks or breakdowns. It is a rarity, but it does happen. Most students have phones now to keep you updated. Please note in advance we will attempt to send you email updates if we can and if we have updated information. The preferred method of getting the child home after an incident is by the bus or a replacement bus. Please be aware if you do appear on the scene we cannot release students to parents or guardians until we get the go ahead from the police who are working the accident. Thanks for your understanding and cooperation in advance.

Plagiarism Checking, Prevention and Information

Please note teachers do check papers for authenticity and plagiarism via online verification resources.

Student Emotional Health Helping our Children Be Their Best

Our counselors, administration, and staff care deeply about the emotional health of our students. Teenagers undergo a lot of stress due to expectations both real and perceived. We work hard to counsel and encourage students who need emotional guidance. If you have a child you are concerned about, please contact our counseling staff to update them as needed. When we have concerns we will work hard to let you know also. If your child has a concern about another individual, please encourage them to let one of our counselors know so that we can be aware and assist.

GT Testing

The nomination window for Spring 2019 GT screening is October 1-December 19, 2018. The screening window is January 28-February 8, 2019. Please email Erin Parks if you would like your child screened.

Building Entry and Morning Drop Off Time 8:00 a.m.

The McCullough building will open for students at 8:00 a.m. Unless a student is in a specific school activity that begins prior to 8:00 a.m., please do not drop your son/daughter off prior to this time.

KIDCHAT Anonymous Tipline 1-888-KIDCHAT

Our campus and district have an anonymous tipline that can be accessed 24 hours a day by contacting 1-888-KIDCHAT. Information can be communicated at this site regarding activity that is illegal or inappropriate occurring both in the community or on a school campus. Students play a key role in helping keep the school and community safe. Reports are followed up upon by school administrators and/or police. In some cases, informants may qualify for a monetary reward for information leading to felony arrests.

School Cash Online

Our campus and Conroe I.S.D. will be utilizing a program known as School Cash Online during the 2018-2019 school year. This is a convenient and secure way to pay for your child's fees online. This program will replace Webstore which was used in the past. To visit this site and preliminarily enter your child's information, please visit <https://conroeisd.schoolcashonline.com>. From this portal parents/guardians can view and pay class fees and purchase clothing.

Knowing Where Your Child is After School / Helping Eliminate Stress of Locating Your Son or Daughter

When you are a parent/guardian seeing your child come home from school is an exciting time. Our goal is to ensure your child comes home each and every day at the time you expect and through the method you anticipate. We care and want to ensure everyone is reunited appropriately. However, at dismissal in secondary schools across the country students choose their own path coordinated with parents/guardians to arrive home whether it be by bus, bike, car, or walking. Every day we have over 2100 children arrive home just as the plan was meant to be. On an occasional basis we have a situation where a child chose an alternative plan on his/her own after school without alerting a parent or guardian. Please echo our suggestions we make to students to help ensure your child notifies a parent or guardian if the child unilaterally decides to change his/her plans. We have a phone available for free use by students in the front office all day every day until 6:00 p.m. Our office stays open late over an hour after school is out until 5:00 p.m. with Ms. Eikelberg as our receptionist to assist. There are many dangers associated with students having cell phones and by no means are they required. However, late in the afternoon or early in the evening cell phones are a *great tool* to find your child when otherwise it may be next to impossible for anyone, including a parent, police, or us. Also, some devices have the ability to be located by a parent or guardian to narrow down the location of the phone and the child.

Bus Email Notifications

Our administrators use an app known as BusHub to keep you updated on potential bus delays. This information is sent specifically to email addresses listed by parents when registering your child. We will send these updates to help you as the situations allows. So that you always receive updated information, please keep the school updated on any email changes.