

Parent Handbook



THE PARISH SCHOOL

2016-2017

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Vision Statement

All who are impacted by communication delays and learning differences will experience an educational environment in which they thrive.

Mission Statement

To educate children who have communication delays and learning differences, empowering them with the tools to succeed.

Philosophy

At The Parish School, we uphold high standards of excellence. Our philosophy is based on the following principles:

- Students learn best through multisensory teaching methods.
- Children benefit from a balanced curriculum of explicit instruction and hands-on experiences.
- Student achievement increases when the focus is on the whole child—language, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.
- Parents are valued partners in their child’s education.

Objectives

- Provide a supportive educational environment for children at risk for academic failure in traditional settings.
 - Teach an [experience-based \[1\]](#) curriculum integrating communication and social competence.
 - Provide a positive, nurturing environment to help each child build strong self-esteem.
 - Group children according to their strengths and needs by using multi-aged groupings in each classroom.
 - Develop Therapy Care Plans (TCPs) that will provide the optimal opportunity for each child to move at his or her own pace through the curriculum.
 - Remediate language and academic weakness using therapeutic teaching techniques.
 - Utilize learning strengths to teach each child how to compensate for learning weaknesses and develop problem-solving skills.
 - Promote parental involvement in the educational management of their child.
-

History

Founded in 1983 by Robbin Parish, a speech-language pathologist, The Parish School was the first school in Texas to combine the fields of early childhood education, speech-language pathology and learning differences in an integrated, effective program for young children at risk for academic failure.

Accreditation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which is a division of AdvancED has accredited The Parish School. Being accredited means that The Parish School is united with a network of other schools/organizations committed to standards of educational excellence. The Parish School is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

The Board of Trustees

The Parish School's Board of Trustees oversees the fiduciary guardianship of the school and employs the Head of School to implement the policies. The President of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) serves as the parents' liaison on the Board of Trustees.

Parish School Administration

The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is responsible for developing procedures to carry out the policies of the school and for implementing the curriculum. The Leadership Team consists of the Head of School, the Director of Elementary, the Director of Preschool, the Director of Admissions, the Director of Student & Family Services, the Director of Advancement, the Director of Finance and Operations and the Director of Social Learning at Parish.

Head of School: Nancy Bewley, M.A.T, CCC-SLP

The Head of School (HOS) is responsible for all academic and financial programming for the school and clinic.

Director of Elementary: Amy Richard, M.S., CCC-SLP, CALT

The Director of Elementary is responsible for all program and instructional staff oversight for the elementary program.

Director of Preschool Anne Powers, M.A., CCC-SLP

The Director of Preschool is responsible for all program and instructional staff oversight for the preschool programs.

Director of Admissions: Meredith Krimmel, M.S., CCC-SLP

The Director of Admissions oversees the intake, review and placement of students into The Parish School program. She also assists in community outreach activities to develop awareness of The Parish School and its programs and services.

Director of Student and Family Services: Brooke Medina, LCSW, RPT

The Director of Student and Family Services is responsible for the counseling and behavior support for students. This position also provides short-term solution-focused counseling for students and their families and serves as the Nurtured Heart Approach® facilitator and trainer for staff and families.

Director of Advancement: Amy Tanner, MBA

The Director of Advancement is responsible for all fundraising and marketing efforts of the school.

Director of Finance and Operations: Terry Clough, CPA

The Director of Finance and Operations is responsible for all financial matters for the school and Carruth Center.

Director of Social Learning at The Parish School: Renee Attaway, M.S., CCC-SLP

The Director of Social Learning at The Parish School is responsible for all aspects of programming and therapy utilizing the Social Thinking® curriculum. This program focuses on social cognitive skills.

The Management Team

The Management Team is responsible for implementing the procedures developed by the Leadership Team. They provide active support of the school's mission. The Management Team consists of the Administrative Manager, Administrative Assistant, Accounting Assistant, Communications Manager, the Human Resource Specialist and the Campus Maintenance Supervisor.

Administrative Manager: Nancy Mosley

The Administrative Manager is responsible for school-wide communication and the everyday functions of the school.

Administrative Assistant: Amanda Ramos

The Administrative Assistant supports the Administrative Manager and other departments as needed.

Accounting Assistant: Lori Pobutsky

The Accounting Assistant supports the Director of Finance and Operations in financial related activities, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, budget reporting support etc.

Communications Manager: Amanda Arnold

The Communications Manager supports the Director of Advancement and is responsible for internal & external school communications, marketing and advertising, social media and media relations.

Human Resources Specialist: Candice Boyce

The Human Resources Specialist supports the Director of Finance and Operations and Head of School and is responsible for coordinating all Human Resources programs including recruitment, payroll, employee relations and performance management.

Campus Maintenance Supervisor: Jeff Wallace

The Campus Maintenance Supervisor is responsible for the maintenance of all buildings and grounds on campus, the alarm system and assists the Special Events Coordinator as needed.

The Coordinator Team

Coordinators are responsible for organizing and communicating school activities. In addition, some members of the team are responsible for attending Placement Committee and Collaborative Consultation meetings as members of the Instructional Staff.

Integrated Arts and Sciences Program Coordinator: Terri Garth

The Integrated Arts and Sciences Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the program, schedules and performances. The Integrated Arts and Sciences Coordinator meets weekly with these specific teachers.

Healthcare Coordinator: Angela Burris, LVN

The Healthcare Coordinator is responsible for medication administration, overseeing any health issues, health emergencies, transportation to hospital, and scheduling of state mandated screenings. The Healthcare Coordinator reports hearing and vision results to parents. The Healthcare Coordinator is responsible for the annual training of the staff and the annual health reports to the state.

Events and Volunteer Coordinator: TaQuida Atkins

The Events and Volunteer Coordinator supports the Advancement team by coordinating event needs and managing volunteers, in addition to serving as the Parent Teacher Organization liaison.

Assistant to Admissions and Advancement Departments: Sarah Swantner

The Assistant to Admissions and Advancement provides administrative support to both of these departments.

Custodian: Mark Hordge

The Custodian is responsible for the cleaning and sanitation of all buildings and supports the Campus Maintenance Supervisor.

Camp Acorn Leadership Team

The Camp Acorn Leadership team is responsible for all aspects of Camp Acorn's program administration related to the four-week language camp & day camp.

Camp Acorn Director: Stefanie Heintz, M.S., CCC-SLP

The Camp Acorn Director is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the camp including staffing, child placement, program development and financial reporting to ensure follow-through of the curriculum and the philosophy of The Parish School.

Camp Manager: Nancy Mosley

The Camp Manager is responsible for assisting the Camp Acorn Director in program administration. Responsibilities include carpool, medications, forms, and scheduling.

Carruth Center

The mission of Carruth Center is to advance communication, independence, and emotional well-being through individualized, collaborative and child-centered therapy practices. Services offered by Carruth Center include individual speech and language, occupational and music therapy, developmental assessments, Language Development Class (LDC), Language Learning Tools (LLT), and mental health services such as individual and family counseling and play therapy. Carruth Center services are open to all children in Houston, whether or not they attend The Parish School. Carruth Center clients are encouraged to continue their therapies at Carruth for the duration of the year.

Carruth Center Leadership Team

Director of the Carruth Center: Karen Dickerson, Ph.D. CCC-SLP

The Director of the Carruth Center is responsible for coordinating and overseeing therapeutic services provided at the Carruth Center.

Office Manager: Virginia Dietz

The Office Manager supports the Director of Finance and Operations and Clinic Director as well as managing customer and vendor relations.

Optional Programs

Adventure Playground: Jill Wood, Director

Adventure Playground allows children to conceptualize and build their own playground with the supplies and tools available. This after school program is available to Parish students and outside community children from 6 to 12 years of age, Monday-Thursday afternoons from 3:15-5:30 p.m. Late pick-ups are to be avoided and, if frequent, a late fee may be levied.

Early Morning Drop-Off: Nancy Mosley

Early Morning Drop-Off is designed to assist parents who need additional childcare prior to regular school hours. This optional program is staffed by Parish School paraeducators and is

open to Parish School students only. The program is Monday through Friday from 7:00 - 7:45 a.m. for elementary students and 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. for preschool students. Families participating in Early Morning Drop-Off are to park and bring their child into the office.

Music Lessons: Open

Individual music lessons are available in piano, guitar, voice and violin. Students may also explore music for enjoyment and discover their favorite instruments. Lessons are scheduled for a mutually agreed upon day and time and will take place on The Parish School campus. Music lessons are available for the Elementary levels only (schedule varies).

Elementary Extended Day Program: Nancy Mosley/Amy Richard

Elementary extended day is designed to assist parents when the standard 3:15 p.m. pick up time is not convenient. Students participate in games and other activities supervised by a Parish School staff member. This is not a tutoring after school program, but your child can work on homework if desired. This program is Monday through Thursday from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

Preschool Extended Day Program: Nancy Mosley/Anne Powers

Preschool extended day is designed to give your preschooler additional learning and social opportunities beyond the regular school day. The program is led by Parish School staff and is open to Parish School preschool students. This program is Monday through Thursday from 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.; 12:00 – 4:30 p.m. for Early Childhood students.

Social Learning: Renee Attaway

Social Learning at The Parish School offers small group therapeutic intervention to help children “think socially” and interact with peers and adults more appropriately. The groups are led by certified speech-language pathologists trained in the Social Thinking® methodology.

General Information/Policies/Procedures

School Hours

Early Childhood Class (formerly Level A)

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

Preschool and Prekindergarten Classes (formerly Levels A/I and I/II)

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday

9:00 - 12:00 p.m. Friday

Primary, Lower and Upper Elementary Classes (formerly Levels II/III-VII)

8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday-Thursday

8:15 - 12:00 p.m. Friday

Friday ALL school dismissal is at 12:00 p.m.

Arrival

Please be aware that arrival time is an important part of the school day for children to transition from home to school, therefore teachers are not available for information sharing and conferences at this time. However, please use the Good News Book, email or phone to address questions or concerns.

Early Childhood (formerly Level A)

Drop-Off 8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. For the first semester of the year, parents park in the parking lot and walk their child to the classroom. Beginning the second semester, the class will transition to carpool drop-off with other preschool classes.

Preschool and Prekindergarten (formerly Levels A/I and I/II)

Drop-Off 8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Follow the circular drive around to the flagpole near the south end of the circle drive. Paraeducators will be waiting at the drop off point at the south end of the circle. Children are removed from the car by a paraeducator or parent helper. Staff will return to their classrooms at 9:00.

Elementary

Drop-Off 7:50 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Follow the circular drive around to the covered area at the south end of the circle drive. Paraeducators will be waiting at the drop off point at the south end of the circle. Children are removed from the car by a paraeducator or parent helper. Staff will return to their classrooms at 8:15.

All students must remain buckled in their seats until an adult helps them out of the car. To ensure safety, students standing to look out sunroofs or leaning out windows is to be avoided. In the interest of safety for students and staff, all students are requested to exit the car from the right side. DRIVERS SHOULD NOT LEAVE THEIR CAR UNATTENDED IN THE DRIVE. ALL CARS MUST WAIT UNTIL THE CAR IN FRONT OF THEM MOVES BEFORE MOVING. PLEASE DO NOT DRIVE AROUND CARS. CELL PHONE USE IS PROHIBITED.

Each year, one preschool and elementary family bids and wins permission to “go to the front of the carpool line,” for afternoon carpool only, Monday through Thursday. The winners must be in place before the line starts moving. This winner is the only exception to driving around other cars.

LATE ARRIVALS ARE TO BE AVOIDED

Elementary students are tardy after 8:15 a.m.
Preschool students are tardy after 9:00 a.m.

On-time arrival is essential to setting the stage for productive learning. It is also critical in our ability to provide a stable and predictable routine for your child. Therapeutic services may be affected if a child does not arrive to school on time. Drivers who arrive after drop-off time or when a teacher or paraeducator is not at the carpool station, must park in the lot and take their child to the office and sign them in after which arrangements will be made to have someone escort him/her to class.

Parking in the fire lane-designated areas is prohibited and may result in a fine.

Dismissal

Students will be released through the carpool line each day. A carpool tag will be assigned to each child. Please hang the tag on your rearview mirror so that it is visible to staff. Please note, any arrangements made for internal staff to transport a child to or from The Parish School are at the risk and liability of the parent and staff member. The Parish School will not be held responsible for any injury or damages that may occur.

Early Childhood Class (formerly Level A)

For the first semester of the year parents will park in the parking lot and walk to the classroom to pick up their child. For the second semester, the class will transition to carpool drop-off with other preschool classes.

Preschool and Prekindergarten Classes (formerly Levels A/I and I/II)

Children will be picked up in front of the Administration Building. Cars may drive to the Administration Building, and a paraeducator will escort the children to the car.

For preschool students staying for Extended Day, pick-up time is no later than 4:30 p.m. The parent or caregiver checks in at the front office and the student will be called to the front office for pick-up. Do not go directly to the extended day class for pick-up. Children must be checked out through the front office.

Elementary

Same as drop off.

For elementary students staying for Extended Day, pick-up time is no later than 4:30 p.m. The parent or caregiver checks in at the front office and the student will be called to the front office for pick-up. Do not go directly to the extended day class for pick-up. Children must be checked out through the front office.

Friday ALL school dismissal is at 12:00 p.m.

The Early Childhood class dismisses from the Carruth Center Porch. Both preschool and prekindergarten classes dismiss from the north side of the administration building porch. Elementary students are picked up at the end of the circular drive.

Children who are not picked up within 15 minutes after dismissal time or when extended day has ended will be escorted to the office for pick-up. Parents who arrive more than 15 minutes after the designated dismissal time may be charged a late fee at the rate of \$1.00 per minute.

For children enrolled in the Adventure Playground program, parents are expected to pick up their child at 5:30 p.m. from Adventure Playground outdoor area located behind Chestnut Oak Cottage.

If your child is enrolled in Individual Music Lessons, please refer to the music teacher for the pick-up time and location.

Absences

All students are expected to attend school every day. Children who are frequently absent or who are consistently late to class will have difficulty adapting to the school structure and will have difficulty meeting Therapy Care Plan (TCP) objectives and making progress. Excessive absences may interfere with the child's ability to move to the next level. In addition, insurance companies will not reimburse for days the child does not receive therapeutic services.

No Peanuts Allowed

The Parish School implements a program that expressly prohibits peanuts. This practice has been implemented to address the needs of the children who attend the school who have a life-threatening allergy (anaphylaxis) to peanuts. Simple contact with peanuts or their oils could be potentially fatal to these children.

For every child with life threatening allergies, we will develop an individual plan and emergency procedure with input from the child's family and physician. This plan will include a description of the child's allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies, signs and symptoms, and any action that needs to be taken in the event the child has an anaphylactic reaction. This plan will be shared with staff working directly with the child. All staff members receive first aid/CPR training including the procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, how to recognize the signs and symptoms, and how to administer medication.

Additionally, if your child is placed in a class with another student who has known life-threatening allergies, your child's class may have restrictions to tree nuts or other food items. You will be notified of this and will receive information regarding food restrictions and suggestions of alternative foods that can be brought to school.

Lunch, Snack and Lunch Boxes

Parents will provide an individual daily morning snack for their preschool child. Snack time is an important time to learn about nutrition and practice pragmatic and self help skills.

Elementary students all have a morning snack time. Each child brings his or her own snack.

Student lunches may be ordered through Simply Fresh Kitchen. Orders must be placed two weeks in advance for each month. Ordering and payment is made directly with Simply Fresh Kitchen via their website: www.thesimplyfreshkitchen.com.

Children may also bring lunch to school. **Lunch boxes should be labeled with the child's name.**

Students should bring lunch in containers suitable for preserving the heat or cold, although there is a microwave oven available for heating. **Refrigerators are not available.**

Teachers or paraeducators eat with the children in the building. Students say a blessing before meals.^[2]

The Parish School emphasizes healthy eating habits. Lunch should include protein, fruit and a beverage. No soft drinks or candy (diet or otherwise) should be sent to school. We encourage students to drink water, juice or milk with their snacks or meals. Any uneaten portions from a child's lunch will be sent home in order for parents to see what is being eaten.

Children may bring bottled water to drink throughout the day.

Car Seat / Seat Belt Guidelines

Texas motor vehicle law requires children under the age of eight (8) years to be restrained in an approved child passenger safety seat while being transported in a motor vehicle, unless the child is taller than four feet, nine inches (4' 9").

Parish School staff will not place a student under the age of eight (8) in a car without a car seat. If you or the person picking up your child does not have a car seat, please park in the parking lot and enter the main office to sign your child out of school. Do not wait in the carpool line or block the lane while you sign your child out of school or place your child in the car.

Texas law requires the motor vehicle driver to ensure that all passengers are properly restrained within the motor vehicle. The Parish School does not assume any responsibility for the installation of the child safety seat or the proper restraint of your child within the child safety seat. It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to ensure the safety of the student while he/she is transported to/from The Parish School.

Backpacks

All children should have a backpack large enough to hold their Good News Book, lunch and a change of clothes.

Dress Code

All students must wear The Parish School uniforms purchased from Parker Uniforms or Lands' End, that have the current school logo on them. The Parish School reserves the right for final approval of any garment or accessory bearing the school logo.

Each item of clothing should be clearly marked with the student's name. This is particularly important for sweaters and sweatshirts.

All footwear should have a closed toe and closed heel, and socks must be worn. Tennis shoes are most appropriate.

Classes may decide on special days to have "Free Dress Day" for which the children may wear regular play clothes. The teachers will let the parents know when a "Free Dress Day" will occur.

All students should bring a complete change of clothes (these may be regular clothes) in the event of an accident or spill. These must also be labeled.

Limited used uniforms are available for families and/or accidents if a change of clothing is not available.

Lost and Found

Lost articles that have been found will be taken to the Administration Building. At the end of the year, unclaimed items will be donated.

Toys

Toys should be left at home except for "show and share" items and items permitted by the classroom teacher. Weapon toys are strictly prohibited.

DVDs/Digital Streaming

Movies and digital streaming are used in the classroom to augment thematic units. They are not used for entertainment purposes. All content has an educational component and a 'G' rating.

Class Names

Each class has a "signature" name decided upon by the classroom teacher. Classes are not described by grade level.

School Communications

Cancellation of School/The Parish School Alert System

In the event of bad weather or flooding during the night or early morning before school, the School Alert System will be used to communicate with families. **Please be sure that your telephone number(s) and email address(es) are current.**

Information regarding school closings or emergency information can also be accessed by listening to the message on the main number for the school. In the event that unusually severe or threatening weather develops during school hours, we generally do NOT close school early if there is not time to notify the parents by telephone to come get their children. We will activate our own emergency procedures at school to see that everyone is in a safe shelter if sudden weather conditions warrant special attention. A weather band radio is available in the office and all classrooms will be notified in that event.

Change of Address, Telephone Numbers and Email

Parents are responsible for notifying the Administrative Manager in writing about any changes of address, phone numbers and email that occur during the year. A change of address/phone/email number form is available in the school office. This is especially important for emergency situations.

Communication from Home to School

Parents are asked to communicate with the school via the Good News Book, email or telephone when someone will pick up a child other than the parent or authorized person that day. Authorization must be in writing, see section on Authorization to Pick Up a Child.

When parents will be out of town or when their child will be in the care of someone else, the dates of their absence, how we can reach them, information regarding who is in charge of the child, where that person can be contacted, and any deviation we should make from our general procedures in case of emergency must be provided in writing.

When there is some change or stress being experienced in the family, let the teacher or Director of Student and Family Services know so we may support the student appropriately.

When The Parish School becomes aware that a student has been diagnosed with a “communicable disease,” communication regarding attendance and illness related information will be sent home. A complete list of communicable diseases may be found on the Texas Department of Health website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/schools_childcare/resources.

Parent/Teacher Communication

At the beginning of the year, staff members create a personal work schedule to share with parents. Hours outside the personal work schedule are “quiet hours,” during which staff does not respond to parent emails or phone calls. For example, a teacher’s personal work schedule may be from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. during the workweek. During those hours, the teacher may be sending emails or making phone calls to parents. After 5 pm, the teacher is not communicating with parents for the remainder of that day. The purpose of maintaining a personal work schedule including “quiet hours” is to create a healthy balance between work and personal life.

Email

Email is used as an integral tool to share information between parents and school. Please provide your teacher with your email address. Elementary and preschool teachers will write detailed individual updates on a monthly basis.

Emails to teachers should include the entire educational team (teacher, paraeducators, SLP, and the Director of Preschool or the Director of Elementary), as well as other members of the child's team (Student & Family Services, OT, outside therapist), if applicable. Lead members of the instructional teams in preschool and elementary classes will respond to parent emails within 24-48 hours during the workweek.

Phone Calls

Phone calls will only be made from campus phones and during the hours of the personal work schedule created and communicated to parents. Staff members are not to share their personal cell phone numbers with parents as an added measure for confidentiality and work/life balance.

Newsletter

Elementary and preschool teachers send a monthly newsletter to parents, highlighting areas of focus in academic subject areas. The newsletter also includes information from the SLP or Early Childhood Educator (depending on level).

Blog/Private Social Media Accounts

Many teachers use classroom blogs and/or private social media accounts to share photos, happenings at school, and suggestions for language extension activities that can be done at home. At this time, maintaining a classroom blog or private social media account is optional for teachers.

Good News Book

The Good News Book is used to share information between home and school and between parent and teacher. This applies to all levels of the school.

The teacher, paraeducator or the student will write in the book on a daily basis. This information will describe the student's participation in the classroom and any "news" that he/she will share.

The parent is expected to participate in this important part of the school day by writing or helping the student to write in the student's Good News Book every evening. Each child's Good News Book is read every day by the teacher or by the child in sharing with the class.

Thematic units and classroom activities are shared via email. In elementary, homework assignments are placed in the Good News Book.

If parents have questions, concerns or information that they would like to share with the teacher, they can write a note and place it in the front pocket or send it in an email. Teachers respond in the same fashion.

The Parish School will use the Good News Book as a means of sending home important information to the parents.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) uses this book as a means to distribute information to the parents. Parents can, in turn, use the Good News Book to send information to the office. Please be sure to address correspondence to the appropriate person.

Communication with the Media

Members of the Leadership Team serve as the official spokespersons for the school and speak to persons and organizations interested in the school. Please refer all media inquiries to a representative of the Leadership Team.

Parent Communication for Divorced/Separated Parents

When there is a divorce or legal separation, we are obligated to send educational information (i.e. contracts, treatment plans, newsletters, field trip information, items regarding school functions and parent conferences) to the custodial and non-custodial parent/guardian, unless otherwise stipulated in the custody agreement.

The Parish Post

The Parish School publishes a newsletter in the fall and spring to share news and upcoming activities with parents and the community. This newsletter is distributed through the U.S. Postal Service.

E-Newsletter

An electronic newsletter is sent from The Parish School via email every other Wednesday during the school year.

Reporting Progress to Parents

The Parish School teachers and SLPs collaborate to measure student progress in a variety of ways. A baseline of student performance is established upon enrollment. This is used to develop a Therapy Care Plan (TCP). The TCP is an individualized roadmap used to target essential language and academic skills.

Progress is assessed throughout the year. It is formally shared through parent conferences in October and February. Written reports are provided in October, February and May. In addition, standardized assessments are routinely administered to measure growth.

Informal assessments are also important in measuring a student's progress. These measures can include: ongoing observation and documentation of student performance; a portfolio assessment that includes examples of the child's work, checklists, and pictures showing academic, language, social progress and daily teacher-parent communication.

Progress reports are sent home only if all student account fees are current.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are designed to include the parents' input into their child's educational plan. Individual conferences are scheduled in October and February. Conferences will not be held if the family is not current with all school and Carruth Center fees. Conferences are 45 minutes in length to ensure all families have sufficient time to discuss their student's individual progress. Parents may be assigned a time or may be asked

to choose a time on one of the two days available. Confirmation of assigned or chosen times are sent home prior to conference days. Prompt arrival and wrap up times ensure all families will be able to attend their meeting at their scheduled time, as well as assist the staff who have very full conference day schedules, to manage each student's meeting time most effectively.

Conferences to discuss other situations and/or concerns are available on an as-needed basis, and can be requested by parents or the teacher at any time during the school year. Children may not be brought to the conference or left unattended in the car or on the playground during parent conferences. Childcare arrangements can be made for conferences by signing up prior to your conference time.

The progress reports and TCPs are sent home 2 days before the conference. Parents are encouraged to review it and prepare questions or comments to be discussed during the conference.

Conference dates are available to parents at the beginning of the year on the published school calendar. Canceled conferences can be made up over the phone and at the teacher's convenience, but cannot be done during class time.

In the case of divorced parents, all information will be sent home to the custodial parent via the Good News Book. TCPs and any formal reports will be sent home to both parents. Information generated from the office will be e-mailed by the office to the non-custodial parent. Teachers are responsible for informing the non-custodial parent of special events that are not listed in the monthly announcement letters. **ONLY ONE CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED AND BOTH PARENTS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.**

Telephone Conferences

Telephone conferences can also be helpful to parents and teachers. Teachers' home phone numbers are not given out to families. The teacher may contact the parents and let them know when they will be free to accept calls during the day. The parents may also contact the school to set up a time for a phone conference.

Portfolios

Families are able to view their child's portfolio during classroom observation time between October and February conferences. Portfolios are sent home in May.

Observations

Parents and outside professionals working with a student are encouraged to observe in the classroom or via our one-way mirror. However, due to limited space, issues of confidentiality, and the scheduling of prospective parents, all appointments must be scheduled by calling the office at least one day in advance. Appointments are booked for one-hour time slots. All visitors must come into the office to sign in and receive a visitor's tag. A staff member will escort all visitors to the classroom.

Classroom Events, Parties and Birthdays

Donuts with Dad

This day is designated for breakfast with Dads. It allows fathers to be with their children in the classroom and view the portfolio and other work that their child has done. If a Dad is not available to attend, a male family friend, uncle or grandfather may serve as a substitute.

Morning with Mom

This day is designated for breakfast with Moms. It allows mothers to be with their children in the classroom and view the portfolio and other work that their child has done. If a Mom is not available to attend, a female family friend, aunt or grandmother may serve as a substitute.

Class Parties

We have two school-wide parties each year. There is a Winter Holiday and End of the Year Party.

The objectives of Parish School classroom parties are:

- To provide an opportunity for classmates to interact in a special activity outside of the usual school routine.
- To develop a sense of school community.
- Provide an enjoyable event for the class.

The room parent plans and organizes each party with input from the classroom teacher in regard to the day, time, games, activities and refreshments. Room Parent: please consult with your child's teacher regarding dietary needs of any student.

- All parties should be SIMPLE in regard to food served and activities planned.
- If you want to include a party favor, select either goodie bags OR balloons (not both).
- Party favors are not required to be given to students at the parties.
- Parents are not required to attend parties, but are highly encouraged to attend at least one.
- Classrooms will have individual class parties for each of the two designated parties.
- Parties involving the entire cottage are not allowed due to the nature and complexity of planning and executing an event with 30 or more students.

End of the Year Party

Parties will be held on campus and will be simple in nature. Inflatable waterslides and inflatable bouncers are not permitted.

No additional cost to the classroom parents is required or permitted. Room parents are responsible for providing and organizing the refreshments, games and activities for this party, as with other parties.

Room Parent: please consult with your child's teacher regarding dietary needs of any student.

Parents are not required to attend end of the year parties, but may do so if they wish.

Off-campus end of the year parties are permissible if a parent wishes to organize an additional event, this should be scheduled during off school hours.

Invitations for non-TPS, off-campus end of the year parties should be sent via the post office or email (not through The Parish School).

Staff may be invited to these gatherings as a personal guest, but not on behalf of The Parish School.

Commencement

Upper elementary students leaving The Parish School participate in a commencement ceremony and reception.

Recognizing Individual Birthdays

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) provides a special birthday gift for each child to receive on his/her birthday. Summer birthdays are also celebrated. These Party Packs consist of birthday T-shirts and a crown to be worn. The Party Pack may vary each year at the discretion of the PTO.

In addition:

- Parents may send a birthday cake, cookies or cupcakes for the class.
- Goodie bags or balloons should not be sent.
- Please be aware of any dietary concerns in the class.
- Parents do not attend birthday parties.

Invitations for birthday parties that are held off-campus on a weekend may be sent via the Good News Book IF all students in the class are being invited. Parents may purchase a book for The Parish School library in honor of their child's birthday.

Placement, Contracts, Transitions and Financial Assistance

Student Placement

During the placement process, the entire team, consisting of the teachers, speech-language pathologists, paraeducators, the Director of Preschool or the Director of Elementary, the Director of Student & Family Services, the Director of Admissions, and the Head of School work together to place students in classes for the upcoming school year.

During this process, many factors are considered including; class make-up, gender, developmental age, chronological age and strengths and needs of the class as a whole. Consideration is also given to the strengths and needs of each child in the class, as well as the extensive knowledge the teachers have about each child.

Written requests by parents for a specific classroom placement or a specific teacher will not be considered. However, parents may submit a written list of teacher qualities and classroom attributes that you feel would benefit your child.

In order to provide the optimal learning environment for each child, adjustments may be made to student placement for class leveling and for moving children within their stated curriculum level. These decisions are made at the sole discretion of the school.

Contracts for Returning Students

Contracts for returning students are mailed out after the February conference. Contracts and registration fees are due by the date indicated on the contract. If the contract and fees are not returned by the date indicated, that child's space will be released to new applicants.

Student/Family Transition Process

The Student/Family transition process supports a student and their family when the child's team and/or parents feel that it is appropriate and best meets the child's needs.

Discussion of a student's transition to a new school setting can occur at any time during the school year, at the request of the parent, or at the recommendation of the instructional team.

If the instructional team and parents feel that the child is ready to transition, it is typically discussed well in advance, preferably during the year prior to their final one at The Parish School. This allows parents to begin looking at schools and have an entire year to do so.

A transition packet is provided to parents, which contains guidelines to follow once the transition process begins. It includes helpful checklists and questions to ask when visiting other schools.

Teachers and directors work alongside parents in selecting potential schools that would be appropriate for the child. Once the list of schools is narrowed down to three schools, Teacher/Director/SLP may visit the school with the parents when requested or necessary.

Once the family applies to another school, The Parish School teacher/administrator typically fills out a recommendation form.

After a release of information is obtained, The Parish School student records are sent on request.

Personnel from other schools may come and observe the student in our school setting as part of the transition process.

The Parish School teacher provides written accommodations, modifications and strategies that the student will need in the new setting.

Children Who Transition During the School Year

On occasion during the year, it may become apparent that The Parish School setting is no longer meeting a student's needs. In this instance, multiple meetings including the parents and professionals working with that child are held to determine the next steps. If it is recommended that a child transition during the year, the parents have been well informed of this possibility. A transition recommendation would be provided to support the family as they seek a more appropriate fit for their child's therapeutic and/or academic needs.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance may be available to students who would otherwise be unable to attend The Parish School. Applications should be made through the FAST (Financial Assistance for Student Tuition) program online. Interested parties should contact the Director of Finance

and Operations for details. The Financial Assistance Review Committee, appointed by the Board of Trustees, will review completed applications.

Divorce or Custody Issues

We require a copy of the current, signed, custody agreement. State guidelines will be followed. Please be assured that your information will be kept confidential. We must have in writing the individuals who may pick up your child from school, make classroom observations and go on school sponsored field trips. If there are divorce or custody rulings that differ from state guidelines, parents must provide copies of these rulings as well.

All communications generated by the school will be distributed to the custodial parent, stepparent(s), and the noncustodial parent alike. Similarly, both parents (as well as stepparents) will be granted permission to visit the student on school grounds or during school-sponsored trips. However, given the unique legal situation of each family, the school may make exceptions to the policy. In particular, the removal of the student from the school campus by the noncustodial parent will be addressed through the authorization to pick up a child form.

Authorization to Pick Up a Child

It is imperative that the parents return the completed Carpool Information Form, Form D (even if the child will not be in a carpool), and the Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention Form, Form A, before the first day of school. Your child may be unable to remain at school if form A is not on file. The school needs information regarding the child's afternoon carpool only.

A student will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than immediate family or carpool or those listed on Form A unless a written note is received by the teacher and/or the office.

For the safety of the student, this note must include the driver's name, relationship to child, driver's license number and the model, make and color of the car. A driver unknown to the staff must go to the office for verification the first time he/she picks up the student.

Please inform drivers of this verification process. All students must go to the office with the parent or caregiver when arriving late or leaving early to be signed in or signed out.

The Parish School will not release children to a person who is visibly impaired due to alcohol consumption, substance abuse, prescription drugs, or other like substances. In the event the parent or legal guardian is impaired, a member of The Parish School administration will call the persons designated on the Authorized Release section of the child's application or make alternative transportation arrangements.

Conflict of Interest and Unethical Practices Policy for The Parish School/Carruth Center Staff

Employees of The Parish School/Carruth Center are expected to give their undivided loyalty to the organization, measured by the highest standards of compliance with laws and ethics.

While employed by The Parish School/Carruth Center all employees must remain free of any potential influence, interest or relationship that might conflict with the interests of The Parish School/Carruth Center or may conflict with their ability to exercise sound judgment in the interest of The Parish School/Carruth Center. Although it is impossible to list all situations whereby a conflict of interest situation may arise, below is The Parish School/Carruth Center's guideline that must be adhered to by each staff member of The Parish School/Carruth Center.

It is considered a potential conflict of interest for the staff member to give or receive gifts of more than limited value (generally \$50 or less unless occurring on a continuing and frequent basis) which are in any way connected with school and clinic business relationships; to accept compensation from outsiders for services or time for which they are being paid by The Parish School/Carruth Center; use or reveal outside The Parish School/Carruth Center (without appropriate and/or specific authorization) confidential information concerning The Parish School/Carruth Center, including its clients or services; to speculate or deal in securities or acquire an interest in a firm with which The Parish School/Carruth Center, to your knowledge, is negotiating or contemplating negotiating a business relationship; to do business within The Parish School/Carruth Center, directly or indirectly, on terms different than those offered to all employees; to be a giver or receiver of a bribe, kick-back or pay-off; to take an active interest in, or be employed by, any outside school related business while an exempt employee of The Parish School, without proper approval. These situations may not occur without prior disclosure to the Head of School, The Parish School.

If a potential conflict of interest relates to matters applicable to the Head of School, a written concern must be submitted to the HOS. If inadequate or no action is taken, the written concern should be forwarded to the Chair of the Head of School Committee and the President of the Board of Directors. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Safety on Campus

Procedures for fire drills, severe weather drills, disaster, and stranger on campus drills are posted by the door of your child's classroom.

A map of the fire exits and the route and destination the class is to take in the drills is also posted. There is one scheduled fire drill each month as well as periodic emergency response drills.

Individual Carruth Center clients will be picked up and returned to class by the therapist. Both an alarm system and surveillance cameras placed strategically on campus monitor The Parish School and Carruth Center.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

In accordance with The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), TPS and CC personnel are required to report any and all instances of suspected child abuse or neglect to DFPS directly.

The law states that a child whose physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect be reported to designated authorities.

Educators, mental health professionals, medical professionals, and childcare workers (among others) are considered Professional Reporters and have the legal obligation to report to DFPS within 48 hours of identifying a concern. By law, Professional Reporters may not delegate their duty to report to another person such as a coworker or family member. The Professional Reporter to receive firsthand knowledge of the situation to must be the primary reporter to contact DFPS. TPS is not required to notify parents that a report has been made. Likewise, parents are not notified if DFPS visits to observe or interview the child on campus.

The report of alleged child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in “good faith” and “without malice”.

In “good faith” means that the person making the report took reasonable steps to learn facts that were readily available and at hand. “Without malice” means that the person did not intend to injure or violate the right of another person. If in accordance with these two conditions, the Professional Reporter will also be immune from liability if asked to participate in any judicial proceedings that may result from the report.

Any doubt about reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is to be resolved in favor of the child. DFPS is available for consultation and such consultation is encouraged. TPS is solely responsible to report and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is responsible to investigate allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

TPS policy requires that the Professional Reporter notify the Director of Student and Family Services or another member of the Administrative Team as soon as possible. It is required that the Professional Reporter be accompanied by the Director of Student and Family Services or another member of the Administrative Team to witness the call to DFPS. School policy cannot conflict with or supersede the state law that mandates reporting the suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to DFPS.

Health and Emergencies

Each student’s health and safety are matters of utmost importance.

School Forms

All medical forms, immunization record/waivers must be completed and returned to the school office BEFORE the beginning of school. Students will not be able to attend the first day of school without the completed forms.

The ruling by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is that **NO STUDENT MAY BE ADMITTED TO SCHOOL WITHOUT COMPLETED FORMS.**

Immunizations and Tuberculin Test Waiver

State law requires that all children receive certain immunizations. Tuberculin test results must be provided as well for each child upon first entry into the school.

If you do not wish your child to receive any or all of the required immunizations, you must provide The Parish School with a signed and notarized official affidavit form from the state in lieu of the immunization records. Copies will not be accepted. This form is available through the Texas Department of State Health Services, Immunization Branch (www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/public.shtm). Your child's healthcare provider should also be a resource regarding exemptions. Additionally, if you have chosen to modify your child's immunization schedule, you must provide a statement from your child's healthcare provider outlining the revised schedule and reason for the revision.

Affidavits are valid for two calendar years and physician statements are valid for one calendar year.

Vision and Hearing

In compliance with Texas regulations, vision and hearing screenings are performed at school for all children who are four years or older by September 1 of the school year. These screenings will be completed by January 30 of the school year.

Acanthosis Nigricans

The State of Texas mandates that school nurses screen and report evidence of Acanthosis Nigricans and weight-related risk factors for 1st, 3rd, 5th and 9th graders.

The procedure for screening is simple and is done so by looking at and gently running a hand on the back of the child's neck.

Scoliosis Screening

According to state law, all students in grades 5 and 8 or 6 and 9 must receive spinal screening. The purpose of the screening is to detect the signs of abnormal curves of the spine at their earliest states so that the need for treatment can be determined. The Parish School will screen all students who began or turned 10 years of age during the current school year. Parents will be notified prior to screening so that proper attire is worn to school. The screening is done in the presence of two adults.

Communicable Diseases

Parents are asked to notify the school office immediately if their child contracts a communicable disease so that the Healthcare Coordinator or Administrative Manager can prepare the appropriate information to be dispersed within the school community. See the complete list of communicable diseases here: www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/schools_childcare/resources.

Dispensing of Prescribed Medicine

Dispensing of prescribed medicine will be done by the school for life threatening situations (i.e., for insect bites, seizures, asthma) or for physician-prescribed maintenance medication that is necessary on a continual basis throughout the school year.

For each medication, the student's physician must complete the Physician's Medication Form and return it to the school office. The parents must also complete the Medication Record and Permission Form and return it to the school office.

All medication must be in its original container with the prescription label. It will be kept under lock and key and must be delivered to an adult by an adult. Medication may not be sent with the child or in the child's backpack. No medication should be sent to the school for the student to take on his/her own.

The administering of all medication is recorded daily as to dosage and time given and who administered the medication.

Medicine taken on a temporary basis should be sent to school in its original container labeled with the student's name. The parents must also complete the Medication Record and Permission Form and return it to the school office. Procedures for getting it to the school are the same as above.

Illness

A child will be sent home from school and must be kept home if the child: has a fever greater than 100 degrees or has had one during the previous 24-hour period, has a heavy, colored nasal discharge, has a constant cough, is fussy, cranky, and generally not himself/herself and, therefore not benefiting from being at school. Because rest at such times may prevent development of serious illness, children will be sent home who have eyes that are pink and watery or have a discharge, have lice or nits, very loose stools or vomiting, or who have another "communicable disease" to prevent the unintended spread of the illness.

Before a child may return to school after being out for an illness, they must have been fever free for the previous 24 hours, without the aid of any fever reducing medication. The same guideline applies for loose stools/diarrhea or vomiting to ensure the virus has past the infectious stage.

Accidental Injuries

In case of serious accidental injury, we will immediately attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot do so, we will call the student's physician and, if necessary, 911.

Until the arrival of a parent, the physician, or an ambulance, the Healthcare Coordinator or a Management Team member will be in charge and make decisions about the care of the student. The school will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision. It is a parent's responsibility to keep the school office current on telephone numbers, emergency contacts, and other pertinent information. If a hospital visit is deemed necessary, EMS will take your child to the nearest hospital.

Field Trips

Field trips can be an important part of the school curriculum.

If parents will be helping with the field trip, the teacher will provide the parent volunteers with complete plans and instructions for each trip.

Preschool field trips must have a 2-1 ratio of students to adults.

Children under 4'9" tall must ride in the appropriate child safety seat in personal automobiles. All children 7 years and under are required to use a booster seat and sit in the back seat of the vehicle.

Commercial or school busses do not have the same safety seat requirements as passenger vehicles and are therefore exempt from these guidelines according to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Field Trip Driver/Chaperones

Because field trips are perhaps a new experience for the parent and the child, it is important that all adults are aware of the same guidelines.

To be a field trip driver/chaperon, the driver must submit to the school office a copy of his or her driver's license and the declaration page for automobile insurance at least one week before the scheduled event.

The Parish School's insurance carrier requires that drivers have liability coverage of: \$300,000 bodily injury per person/\$500,000 bodily injury per accident and \$100,000 for property damage.

Always know and understand the directions to your destination. Make a trial run if necessary. Do not take short cuts. Please take the route as outlined by the teacher.

Take with you the phone numbers of the destination and the school (713-467-4696). If you have a cell phone, be sure to give the number to the teacher, other drivers and the school office.

Emergency information and field trip release forms for each child must accompany you in your car. The teachers will also have emergency information and a first aid kit. The parent helper is to be responsible for designated students and to be certain that those children are safe and under control at all times.

If you have an emergency while en route, please call the school office, if possible, and remain at your location until help arrives.

Siblings are NOT to accompany a parent chaperone on the field trip to ensure the safety of all students who are participating.

Parent Orientation

A New Family Social is held on a Saturday morning prior to the start of school.

An informational evening meeting is held in August for all new parents.

A Parent/Child Orientation/"Drop In" Day is held before the first day of school. On this day, parents and their child have an opportunity to meet the teachers, visit the classroom and receive information pertinent to their class and optional programs offered.

Curriculum Night is held in September to orient parents to the instructional program.

Student Assessment

Student achievement is measured in a variety of ways. Baseline performance is established upon enrollment. Our professional team develops an individual plan for each student to include a Therapy Care Plan (TCP) that targets essential language, and social skills, as well as an academic scope and sequence. The school administers a variety of standardized and non-standardized assessments to measure student growth in a quantitative manner. Performance-based and observational assessments throughout the year are also utilized.

Homework

Writing Good News is the most consistent form of homework across all of the levels at The Parish School. Its purpose is to highlight positive learning and communication experiences for the student, while also demonstrating that language can be written as well as spoken.

The goals of Good News can vary from level to level. In the preschool and early elementary classrooms, Good News is used to help teachers and parents communicate to each other positive aspects of the child's day, evening or weekend.

In lower and upper elementary levels, Good News is often used to help the students with writing thoughts down on paper, organizing information, constructing sentences, and creating paragraphs using punctuation.

In addition to Good News, teachers may send home additional homework for children to practice concepts they may have learned in class. Some other types of homework may include reading, math and spelling practice.

Homework for elementary children should take about 15-45 minutes per night depending on child's level.

Homework is given on an individualized basis and is something that the children should be able to complete with minimal assistance.

Student and Family Services

The school employs a master's level licensed clinical social worker to address issues surrounding child development, parenting and family dynamics. These services are free to all Parish families and generally are short term in nature. All counseling services are treated as confidential and are not shared with The Parish School personnel unless appropriate releases are secured.

Records Requests

Records Requests for information about students to be sent to another school or other professionals working with the student must be submitted to the school office. Only information originating from The Parish School can be sent in a record request, no third party testing may be released without parent authorization.

Information will be released only with a signed written authorization and assurance from the Director of Finance and Operations that all financial obligations have been met.

Requests for records require two weeks to process. When authorization has been received, the forms will be given to the teacher to complete. The report will then be returned to the Administrative Manager for approval. Reports are mailed from the school office to the requesting school or professional. They are not given to the parents for delivery. The Administrative Manager is responsible for release of all reports and information from the school. If records are requested for legal purposes, a fee may be assessed at The Parish School's discretion.

Curriculum

With a small student to teacher ratio, both the preschool and the elementary curricula are individualized to each child's areas of strength and areas of focus. A positive feeling of self-worth is encouraged on a daily basis. The curriculum focuses on teaching each child strategies and compensation in order to maximize his/her success in the classroom; this is a primary goal for every student. Teachers concentrate not only on what students learn, but how they learn.

All of The Parish School classrooms are "multi-age" with the exception of our youngest group of children. Classrooms are set up to include two or more developmental/academic levels. Research shows that multi-age programming has many advantages that promote learning in all areas of development.

Both preschool and elementary school incorporate music, art, drama, physical education, library, technology, nature, and play into the daily routine.

Visual Learning Support

Many students with communication delays or learning differences are visual learners, and for this reason all classroom instruction is supported with visual aids. This includes a print-rich classroom environment supporting language comprehension as well as a variety of pictures and written schedules.

Auditory Learning Support

Many students with communication delays and learning differences are either auditory learners, or demonstrate difficulty processing auditory information. Each instructional classroom is equipped with a specialized sound system that enhances the teachers' voices during group instruction to address both of these kind of learners.

Curriculum Focus Across All Classrooms

Communication – A variety of research-based approaches foster skills needed to be an effective communicator, including speaking, understanding and processing language, using words to get one's needs met, and sharing ideas and conversation. Both the preschool and elementary programs strive to equip children with the communication skills needed for academics, relationships and life.

Academic Preparedness – Curriculum across all classrooms is fully aligned to Texas state guidelines and standards. Instruction is individualized to meet each child’s unique learning needs.

Resilience – Specific strategies infused throughout the day guide the development of emotional competence, perseverance and adaptability. We teach children to measure success by the effort, not the outcome. Children are encouraged to work through disappointment, find another way, and to keep trying.

Independence and Self-Advocacy – Teaching methods and reinforcement aid children in learning how to increasingly care for their own needs, recognize when to ask for help or clarification, initiate with others, and problem solve.

Social Competence – A variety of techniques are used to help children gain skills needed for developing friendships and positive relationships, play, perspective taking, self-regulation, and conflict resolution. The Parish School’s Social Emotional Language Learning Program (SELLP) address needs through Michelle Garcia Winner’s program Social Thinking® and elements of the Nurtured Heart Approach®. These approaches are integrated into all classrooms, adding richness to our therapeutic program.

Self Confidence – Children are empowered through thoughtful, dynamic intervention, which facilitates the development of a strong sense of self. Within a nurturing environment, students begin to recognize and utilize tools and strategies that help them learn best, increasing their confidence in themselves and their capabilities.

Preschool Program

Our early intervention program is guided by best practices as outlined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and is aligned to Texas Early Learning and Prekindergarten Guidelines. The Parish School’s preschool uniquely addresses the needs of children by integrating four core components in our curriculum: speech and language therapy, pre-academic readiness, social emotional learning, as well as purposeful play and the arts.

- Designed to meet the needs of individual learners through specialized services that uniquely support and teach to a child’s lagging skills, our program builds upon strengths. We recognize every child’s potential and seek ways to foster development in order to create a strong foundation for future learning.
- The Parish School utilizes The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, which features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills. Fully-aligned with the Texas Early Learning Guidelines and Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, it is comprehensive, developmentally appropriate and designed to be adapted and individualized to each child’s learning needs. Areas of development and learning include: Social-Emotional, Physical (gross and fine motor), Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, The Arts, and when appropriate English Language Acquisition.

- Speech-language pathologists serve as lead preschool teachers who facilitate and integrate communication development into all areas of the curriculum. As specialists in speech, language and social development, they plan and implement individual therapy care plans for each child that encourages growth of essential developmental skills.
- Children receive approximately 15 hours of group speech and language therapy per week. These services are included in the cost of tuition.
- Children are supported by a multi-disciplinary team, which includes an Early Childhood Educator who prepares the way for academic readiness and a life long love of learning.
- Small ratios create an atmosphere of focused learning. Class size is capped at 10 students with teacher-student ratios that range from 1:3 to 1:5.
- Children explore creativity and expression through an integrated arts and sciences program, which includes music, drama, art, library, physical education and nature learning.
- Throughout the day, children engage in purposeful play as a means of exploring and researching the world around them. We believe that child-centered, multisensory experiences and play create a pathway toward meaningful learning, which fosters curiosity and wonder. Through structured and unstructured play, both indoor and out in nature, children build important skills for life and learning.

Elementary Program

Our elementary academic program is aligned with the standards developed by the State of Texas and follows best practices as outlined by the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA).

- Designed to meet the needs of individual learners through specialized services that uniquely support and teach to a child's lagging skills, our program builds upon strengths. We recognize every child's potential and seek ways to foster development in order to create a strong foundation for future learning.
- Elementary curriculum incorporates a wide range of research-based approaches tailored specifically for the needs of each child.
- Lead teachers use multiple techniques to enhance classroom success.
- Speech-language pathologists provide approximately 6-8 hours of group language and social therapy per week.
- Systematic and comprehensive instruction accelerates language, social and academic skills.
- Small ratios create an atmosphere of focused learning. Class size is capped at 10 students with teacher-student ratios that range from 1:3 to 1:5.
- Children explore creativity and expression through an integrated arts and sciences program, which includes music, drama, art, library, physical education and nature learning.
- Throughout the day, children engage in purposeful interactions as a means of exploring and researching the world around them. We believe that child-centered,

multisensory experiences and play create a pathway toward meaningful learning, which fosters curiosity and wonder.

Specialized Curriculum and Instruction

Reading – Sequential and multi-sensory approaches are utilized for those “learning to read.” Literature-based reading instruction is employed for those “reading to learn.”

Spelling – Lessons leverage phonetics, rule-based instruction and sight word learning methods. Spelling words correlate with reading programs.

Written Expression – A variety of systematic approaches teach the mechanics of handwriting and composition skills.

Math – Curriculum meets both national and state standards. Activities are designed to develop the language and application of math skills.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving – Critical thinking and problem solving strategies assist students in recognizing problems and generating solutions.

Science and Social Studies – Direct instruction and learning centers target vocabulary development and communication skills with a focus on environmental and world knowledge.

Social Development – A social-cognitive approach builds upon the curriculum taught in the preschool program. This approach facilitates understanding the perspective of others and relationship development.

Self-Advocacy – Students use learning strategies to complete tasks independently and to advocate for their individual learning needs.

Executive Functioning – Organizing work, planning ahead, and managing time are an integral part of the school day.

Nature Studies

Outdoor learning experiences facilitate language, social skills, creativity, curiosity, physical well-being and the love of nature and the outdoors. All classes spend time outside each day building developmentally appropriate play schemes. In addition, we have adopted an environmental education program. The campus provides playgrounds, a sport court, classroom porches, an outdoor learning center and nature trail for this purpose.

Social Learning at The Parish School

Social Learning at The Parish School helps children to “think socially” and develop the social and language skills needed to form fulfilling friendships and to interact successfully with peers and other people in academic or social settings.

We teach children specific social “skills,” why we use those skills, how to apply those skills appropriately, and how to read what other people are thinking and feeling in response to what we are doing.

The Parish School utilizes the Social Thinking® framework. Weekly lessons are provided to all levels as is developmentally appropriate.

Integrated Arts and Sciences Program

Drama Class – Students have multiple opportunities to pretend, role-play and strengthen communication and learning concepts. Drama performances are an avenue to find and develop talent, while building self-confidence and increasing public speaking skills.

Art Education – Students experience enjoyment, creativity and emotional development through drawing, painting and sculpting. Children interact with a variety of art media that encourages artistic design and teaches appreciation of the process. Their artwork becomes a bridge to verbal expression.

Music Education – Students engage in musical expression through listening to music, singing, playing instruments and dancing, with opportunities for creativity and stress release. Students learn performance skills, practice audience listening skills, develop self-confidence, and improve teamwork strategies through solo and group performances.

Physical Education – Motor skills, coordination, muscle strength and endurance are essential for the health and growth of all children. Group games and introduction to sports develop cooperation, teamwork, social skills, communication competence and sportsmanship.

Library – A positive and nurturing library experience helps children acquire and develop a joy for reading. This part of our curriculum reinforces literacy and listening skills, while fostering responsibility and respect for books. Library time also helps develop student-initiated searches for information.

Digital Learning – Technology use reinforces a child’s educational experience. Specific software and applications are selected to improve students’ keyboarding skills and enhance academic, language and social learning. Our teaching and learning environment integrates interactive SMART boards, iPads and laptops to prepare students for success in the digital world.

Nature Studies – Hands’ on outdoor environmental education provide students the opportunities to learn pre-academic and academic concepts in a natural setting, while cultivating an awareness and appreciation for the world around them. The students will have the opportunity to participate in developmentally appropriate outdoor lessons that integrate classroom concepts with real world experiences.

Behavior Management

Philosophy

The Parish School philosophically believes that children, regardless of their behavior, should be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. A child’s strengths are identified and utilized to enhance self-awareness, coping skills, self-regulation and ultimately self-actualization. All staff at The Parish School endorse positive behavioral support strategies, not a punitive approach to managing undesired behaviors.

If use of an alternative behavioral approach is requested which differs from our philosophy, it is up to the discretion of the Head of School as to whether The Parish School, its employees, staff or other personnel accept or refuse implementation of other behavioral approaches. Refusal to implement additional behavioral approaches does not invalidate the signed contract with the school.

School Expectations

The purpose of school expectations is to provide a framework in which children learn to act responsibly towards themselves, others and their environment. The Parish School emphasizes positive behavior support techniques and helps children with problem solving skills.

Students will:

- Maintain a safe body at all times by refraining from adverse physical contact with other students and adults.
- Maintain honesty in their schoolwork and interactions.
- Use appropriate language.
- Be respectful of teachers or other adults or students.
- Be respectful of school property or personal property of another student.
- Maintain a safe school environment; specifically by NOT bringing into the classroom or onto the school grounds anything that could be considered a weapon.

Behavior Support Strategies and Procedures

The Parish School uses a variety of techniques and strategies to manage a child's behavior. These include: structuring the physical environment, providing a visual daily schedule, modeling, scripting, role-playing, providing choices, problem solving, purposeful ignoring, praising, allowing natural consequences, presenting social stories and making behavior contracts.

Clearly defined rules and expectations for students' behavior in relation to self, to others, and to the environment are clearly defined and directly taught. Children are encouraged and rewarded with positive reinforcement for following the rules.

The Social Emotional Language Learning Program was developed specifically for our student population. It incorporates portions of The Nurtured Heart Approach® and Social Thinking® at The Parish School to support students in their efforts to recognize how their actions impact those around them, while still allowing them to build inner wealth through improved self awareness and awareness of those around them.

Disagreements among children are handled by bringing the students together to identify and talk about their feelings. Teachers and staff work with the students to express themselves in a better way. We help students understand how behavior affects others and encourage them to take responsibility for their behavior.

If a child is causing harm to himself or herself, to another child or to a staff member or to the property of The Parish School, he/she must be removed from the situation. A staff member from the administration office may be called to assist.

If behavior concerns are chronic, parents are notified. The parents will be encouraged to observe the child in class. If no improvements are observed after specific interventions are implemented over a specified period of time, a parent meeting(s) will be held to discuss the situation. The school reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student whose conduct is detrimental to the best interests of the student and the group.

Parent Education

Philosophy

Parent education is part of the total experience at The Parish School. We believe that parent education is essential to the growth and development of every child. Parents are required to attend a minimum of two parent education sessions and two social events throughout the year and are highly encouraged to participate in more as your schedule permits. These include, but are not limited to regularly scheduled parent education meetings, classroom observations, viewing an educational DVD, reading a resource book from the Parish parent library, participating in parent counseling sessions.

Daytime parent education sessions are divided into topics relevant to preschool and elementary families. Children/siblings, may not attend these sessions in respect for the speaker. Evening sessions cover topics related to our general parent population and free childcare is provided with RSVP.

Because we believe parents also learn from each other when supporting the school, active participation as a PTO Chair also counts toward parent education.

Parent Resource Library

Many of our families commute to The Parish School from all over the greater Houston area and may be unable to attend sessions in person. For our parents' convenience, The Parish School has a Parent Resource Library located inside the administration building, full of books and DVDs for self-study that can be checked out at the front desk and counted toward Parent Ed credits. Resources are limited and items are checked-out on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parish School Parent Teacher Organization includes all current parents, as well as interested grandparents.

All parents are members of the PTO. The PTO distributes information regarding participation in the activities of the PTO. The PTO supports The Parish School mission statement and provides many wonderful ways to become involved in the school.

The PTO President is the parents' representative on The Parish School Board of Trustees.

Participation in PTO by chairing or co-chairing a committee is encouraged and welcomed. The Parish School PTO meetings are held monthly, normally the first Wednesday of the month at 9:15 a.m. at the school.

At The Parish School, many special events are scheduled for the benefit of the school. Both the PTO and The Parish School hold fundraising events throughout the year.

Advancement Department

The Parish School is an independent non-profit school. Funds are raised each year to supplement tuition income. Annual giving, grants, bequests, fundraising events and matching gifts are all part of the Advancement Department.

The Advancement Department coordinates these efforts and welcomes discussions about ways to continue the development of the school.

In the event that families wish to make an in-kind donation either to the school or to a particular classroom, please do so through the Advancement Department.

After any type of donation is made, you will receive an acknowledgement letter for tax purposes. In this way, the family, the school, and inventory control will have a record of the donation.

Volunteering

At The Parish School, we consider our dedicated group of volunteers as one of our greatest assets. There are a number of ways for families and friends to get involved. IF you are interested, please email advancement@parishschool.org or look for volunteer sign-up opportunities in the bi-weekly eblasts.

Fall:

Seeds for Growth: Our Seeds for Growth campaign helps fund the actual cost to educate a child at The Parish School. You can participate by assisting with fundraising and marketing of the campaign. This is our most important campaign to participate in at any capacity.

New Family Social: Come to the campus and network with other new and returning families. Help plan refreshments, activities or answer questions.

Uniform Exchange: Please donate all gently used uniforms. Also, sign up to help organize, sort and hang uniforms for uniform exchange dates.

Fall Luncheon: Volunteer to help plan and host an important fund and friend raiser for the school. There will be position chairs to oversee different aspects of the event.

Poinsettia Fundraiser: (September – October) Volunteer to help with sales, sorting flowers for carpool, or delivering flowers to major corporate purchasers.

Auction Party: Help plan “Parent Sociables” for the Auction Party. Solicit and pick up donations, decorate, and support the Advancement Department for this daytime drop-in and online event held at The Parish School.

Garden Work Day: Come out to the campus on a Saturday in the fall to help spruce up The Parish School gardens.

Preschool Winter Performance: Help the Integrated Arts and Sciences team and teaching staff create a winter wonderland in the Library.

Spring:

Gala: Help is needed throughout the school year to prepare for our largest fundraising event of the year. Be a part of the fun by joining one of several committees including set/up teardown, silent/live auction, decorations, underwriting and more!

Houston Marathon: Support, run or volunteer at this year's Run for a Reason Campaign. This is The Parish School's ninth year participating in the Chevron Houston Marathon. Come join the fun!

Garden Work Day: Come out to the campus on a Saturday in the spring to help spruce up The Parish School gardens.

Elementary Musical: Support the Integrated Arts and Sciences program and teaching team by creating props, designing scenery, selling DVDs and passing out pamphlets for the biggest performance of the year!

Year-Round:

Library: Volunteer to help the Library Chair and our Librarian, Jill Wood, by sorting through returned books and general library organization.

Party Packs: Sign-up to make someone's day! Volunteers gather at the beginning/end of each month to help stuff and distribute party packs for children's birthdays.

Yearbook: Help take pictures of school and classroom events. For volunteers with design experience, we would love your help with the layout of the yearbook.

Uniform Exchange: Sift through and organize donated Parish School uniforms for our "Uniform Exchange" program.

Parish Parents/New Parent Social: Become a "Buddy Family" for our new families by acting as a "mentor" and guiding families through the ins-and-outs of The Parish School; assist/attend with the New Family Social event.

Office Support: Assist with tasks such as data input, updating the bulletin boards, answering phones, bulk mailings and more.

Parent Handbook Signature Page

Student Name:

Please initial each of the following items.

_____ I have read The Parish School's Parent Handbook for 2016-2017 and am aware of the Policies and Procedures outlined therein.

_____ I understand my responsibility to read and sign the Day Care Information. (Applicable for Parish parent whose child is under 4 years old) and provided under separate cover.

_____ I understand that I am to provide meals for my child while he/she is at school and that I am responsible for the nutritional value of said meals and for meeting the child's daily food needs.

_____ I understand that The Parish School campus prohibits peanuts or any product containing peanuts. This practice is implemented to address children who have a life-threatening allergy to peanuts or peanut oil.

_____ I understand the importance of prompt arrival. Teaching begins the moment the child enters the class. Children who are late miss important class time and often have difficulty adjusting if the class is in progress when they arrive.

_____ I have read and understand The Parish School policy regarding illness. Children must be symptom-free for 24 hours without the aid of any symptom reducing medication in order to return to school.

_____ I understand that The Parish School publishes a school-wide directory. If I do not want my or my child's information published, I will provide a separate signed and dated letter. I understand that this information is to be used for personal use only and not for commercial reasons or any solicitations.

_____ I hereby agree to release, defend, hold harmless and indemnify The Parish School and its employees from any and all liability and damages incurred by me or my child as a result of The Parish School staff placing my child in his/her car seat or my own agent's automobile.

Parent Signature:

Parent Printed Name:

Date:

RETURN to Administrative Manager by Tuesday August 16, 2016