



Parent Handbook 2019-2020



THE PARISH SCHOOL



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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.

Our Beliefs

- Every individual has the right to communicate and connect—to tell their story, to share their feelings, to have their voice.
- Creativity and collaboration create conditions for students to thrive.
- Students thrive when education is focused on the whole child, which encompasses the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and talent development of children.
- Children learn best through multisensory teaching and experiences.
- Parents are valued partners in their child's education.

Objectives

- Provide a supportive educational environment for children who struggle in traditional settings.
- Teach an experience-based curriculum integrating communication, social competence and academic preparedness.
- Provide a positive, nurturing environment to build self-confidence, independence, self-advocacy and resilience.
- Group children according to their strengths and needs by using multi-age groupings in each classroom.
- Develop Therapy Care Plans 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.

Elements of a Successful Learner

The Parish School adopted the Elements of a Successful Learner to answer the question, "What will a child ready to transition from The Parish School look like?" We believe the following six elements are key for a child to find success in school and in life. These elements are integrated into the interactions, experiences and curriculum at The Parish School.

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 early childhood 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) addresses needs through Michelle Garcia Winner's 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.

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 education for children with 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.

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 Administration

Executive Team

The Executive Team is responsible for developing procedures to carry out the policies of the school and clinic. The Executive Team consists of the Head of School, the Director of Advancement, the Director of Finance and Operations and the Director of The Carruth Center.

Head of School The Head of School is responsible for all academic, therapy and financial programming for the school and The Carruth Center.

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

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

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

Leadership Team

Director of Admissions 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 Early Childhood The Director of Early Childhood is responsible for all program and instructional staff oversight for the early childhood program.

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

Director of Student and Family Services 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 Social Learning at The Parish School 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.

Director of Integrated Arts and Sciences The Director of Integrated Arts and Sciences meets weekly with the teachers in this department. The director is responsible for scheduling arts and sciences classes and the evaluation of department staff.

Director of Adventure Play The Director of Adventure Play is responsible for program oversight and staff of the Adventure Play program.

Director of Camp Acorn The Director of Camp Acorn is responsible for developing procedures to carry out the policies of the camp and for developing and ensuring the follow-through of the curriculum and the philosophy of The Parish School.

Director of Social Learning Camps The Director of Social Learning Camps oversees all social learning camps provided through The Parish School. This includes the marketing, enrollment, budgeting, hiring of counselors, scheduling, lesson planning and teaching at camps.

The Administrative Team

The Administrative Team is responsible for implementing the procedures developed by the Leadership Team. They provide active support of the school's mission. The Administrative Team consists of the Administrative Manager, Administrative Coordinator, Accountant, Business Office Coordinator, Communications Manager, Human Resources Manager, Healthcare Coordinator, Advancement and

Communications Assistant, Events and Volunteer Coordinator, Campus Maintenance Supervisor, and Camp Acorn Manager.

Accountant The Accountant supports the Director of Finance and Operations in financial related activities.

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

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

Advancement and Communications Assistant The Advancement and Communications Assistant manages the school's donor database, is the school's graphic designer, and provides administrative support to the advancement department.

Business Office Coordinator The Business Office Coordinator supports the Director of Finance and Operations in finance-related activities, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, financial assistance, student contracts, etc.

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

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

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

Community Outreach Coordinator The Community Outreach Coordinator cultivates and maintains strategic partnerships with other traditional and special schools, speech-language and medical professionals, referral sources and organizations, as well as individuals in the community, to raise awareness of The Parish School and The Carruth Center.

Events and Volunteer Coordinator 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.

Human Resources Manager 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.

Healthcare Coordinator 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 staff and annual health reports to the state.

Instructional Support Specialist The Instructional Support Specialist provides direct support to elementary staff in the areas of classroom design and daily classroom routines, curriculum implementation, academic intervention, case management and professional development.

Social Emotional Support Specialist The Social Emotional Support Specialist facilitates the delivery of social emotional support to students and families enrolled at the school. Works closely with the Director of Student and Family Services, instructional teams, students, families and outside professionals to develop and ensure that appropriate interventions are in place.

Carruth Center Team

Office Manager The Office Manager supports the Director of Finance and Operations and Clinic Director, as well as responds to intake and billing inquiries from families.

Clinical Professionals The Carruth Center clinicians conduct individual and group therapies and assessments, and maintain records of therapeutic activities. The clinical professionals at The Carruth Center develop and implement individualized plans for assigned clients to meet individual needs, interests and abilities.

Optional Programs

Adventure Playground

Adventure Playground allows children to conceptualize and build their own playground with the supplies and tools available. This afterschool 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

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

Elementary Extended Day Program

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 staff member. This is not a tutoring after school program, but your child can work on homework if desired. This program is Monday-Thursday from 3:15-4:30 p.m.

Early Childhood Extended Day Program

Early Childhood Extended Day is designed to give your child additional learning and social opportunities beyond the regular school day. The program is led by Parish staff and is open to Parish early childhood students. This program is Monday-Thursday from 1:00–4:30 p.m. for preschool and pre-primary students; 12:00–4:30 p.m. for Emerging Language students.

Social Learning

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 a professional trained in the Social Thinking® methodology.

General Information/Policies/Procedures

School Hours

Emerging Language Class

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Monday–Friday

Preschool and Pre-primary Classes

9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Monday–Thursday

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Friday

Primary, Lower and Upper Elementary Classes

8:15 a.m.–3:15 p.m. Monday–Thursday

8:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Friday

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

Arrival

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 of 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. DO NOT DRIVE AROUND OTHER CARS. CELL PHONE USE IS PROHIBITED.**

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

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

Emerging Language Classes Drop-Off 8:45–9:00 a.m. Park in the front lot and check in at the front desk. You may be asked to provide a copy of your driver’s license the first time on campus. Once cleared, you may walk your child back to his/her classroom. Class begins at 9:00 a.m. Upon request, families may opt to participate in morning as described below.

Preschool and Pre-primary Classes Drop-Off 8:45–9:00 a.m. Follow the circular drive around 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 a.m.

Elementary

Elementary (Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary) Drop-Off 7:50–8:15 a.m. Follow the circular drive 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 a.m.

LATE ARRIVALS ARE TO BE AVOIDED

Elementary students are tardy after 8:15 a.m.

Early Childhood 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. The circular drive is blocked off after 8:15 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. 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 staff 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. Hang the tag on your rearview mirror so that it is easily 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 an injury or damages that may occur.

Early Childhood (Emerging Language, Preschool, Pre-primary Classes)

Children will be picked up in front of the administration building Monday-Thursday. Cars may drive to the front of the administration building and a paraeducator will escort children to the car.

For early childhood 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 (Primary, Lower and Upper Elementary Classes)

Same procedure 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 Dismissal

ALL school dismisses at 12:00 p.m. on Fridays

The Emerging Language classes dismiss from The Carruth Center porch. Both Preschool and Pre-primary classes dismiss from the north side of the administration building porch. Elementary students are picked up at the end of the circular drive.

Adventure Play

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

Late Pick-Up

Parents are expected to pick up their child on time from any optional program (Extended Day, Adventure Play, Social Learning, etc.) Picking up **beyond** 5 minutes of regular dismissal time is considered late pick-up. Parents will be given one 15-minute grace period after which they will be charged a late fee of \$15 for every 5-minute block they are late past the established dismissal time. Chronic late pick-up may lead a child to be dismissed from the optional program. Late fees will be included in the monthly invoice.

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. Students who miss school due to illness should be fever and symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Students missing three or more days may be asked to provide a doctor's note for absences.

No Peanuts Allowed

The Parish School implements a program that expressly prohibits peanuts or products containing peanuts. This practice has been implemented to address the needs of children attending 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.

Snack, Lunch and Lunch Containers

Parents will provide an individual daily morning snack for their Emerging Language and/or Preschool child. Pre-primary classes share a community snack. A designated "snack helper" provides a snack for the class to share. Your child's teacher will make more information about this available. 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/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: <https://new.thesimplyfreshkitchen.com/>.

Children may also bring lunch to school. **Lunch containers 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 available for heating. **Refrigerators are not available.**

Teachers or paraeducators eat with the children in the building.

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 for parents to see what is being eaten.

Children may bring a bottle of water labeled with their name to drink throughout the day.

Car Seat/Seat Belt Guidelines

Texas motor vehicle law requires children under the age of 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 4'9".

Parish staff will not place a student under the age of 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 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. Gently used uniforms are available for free from our uniform exchange rack in the school lobby.

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

Students are permitted to wear jewelry, but it should be limited so that it is not a distraction to the learning process. Post earrings rather than hoop earrings are suggested, along with modest necklaces and bracelets. The Parish School is not liable for the loss of student-worn jewelry.

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

Classes or administration may decide on special occasions to have “Free Dress Day” for which children may wear regular play clothes. The teachers will let parents know when a “Free Dress Day” will occur. “Free Dress Day” passes are also available for purchase through the online auction fundraiser at the beginning of the school year.

All students should supply a complete change of clothes to remain at school in the event of an accident or spill. All items must also be labeled with the child’s name. They can be regular clothes (not uniforms). Gently used uniforms are available if a change of clothes is not available. Families may visit the lobby throughout the year for free, gently used uniforms for their child. Outgrown uniforms that are clean and in good condition may also be donated throughout the year.

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. Elementary students are responsible for their personal items. The Parish School will not be liable for misplaced items.

Toys

Toys should be left at home except for “show and share” 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.

Salutations

Students are not required to address their teachers by Miss, Mrs. or Mr. Established by The Parish School’s Founder, Robbin Parish, students address all staff and faculty by their first names. The use of first names is designed to give a comfortable, family-like feeling between students, staff and faculty.

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, *Kaymbu*, will be used to communicate with families. See [section on School-Wide Social Media Policy, page 21](#).

Information regarding school closings or emergency information can also be accessed on our school website or Facebook page. 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.

Parish Portal

The Parish Portal is The Parish School's online student information system where you'll have access to your child's classroom activities, progress reports, directory and so much more. The system also allows you to complete your enrollment contract online, quickly and efficiently. To access the Parish Portal, visit <https://parishschool.myschoolapp.com/app/parent#login>.

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. 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 [page 29 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, they should provide the following information in writing:

- Dates of their absence
- How they can be reached
- Information regarding who is in charge of their child
- Where that person can be contacted
- Deviations to be made from our general procedures in case of emergency

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 appropriately support the student.

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 at:

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 p.m., 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 early childhood teachers will write detailed individual updates on a monthly basis.

Emails to teachers should include the entire educational team (teacher, paraeducators, speech-language pathologist and the Director of Early Childhood or the Director of Elementary, as well as other members of the child’s team, like Student & Family Services, occupational therapist, other therapists, etc.), if applicable. Lead members of the instructional teams in early childhood 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. As an added measure for confidentiality and work/life balance, staff members are not to share their personal cell phone numbers with parents.

School-Wide Social Media

To ensure the protection and privacy of our students, families and staff, while also providing you with updates on your child's activities and learning progress while in our care, every classroom teacher uses an iPad-based application called **Kaymbu**, which allows teachers to capture classroom activities and strengthen relationships between home and school. Teachers use Kaymbu to record photos and video of classroom activities, and share them with families. Kaymbu is highly secure and not accessible through any public-facing sites. **Out of respect for other families, please do not download and post photos from Kaymbu on your personal social media sites.** Parents may opt-in to receive Kaymbu communications by email and/or text. For more information please see www.kaymbu.com.

Good News Book

The **Good News Book**, a binder provided to each student by The Parish School, is used to share information between home and school and between parent and teacher.

The teacher, paraeducator or the student will write in the book daily. 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 GNB every evening. Each child's GNB is read every day by the teacher or by the child in sharing with the class.

Thematic units and classroom activities are shared via The Parish Portal and/or 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 Executive 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 Executive 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 noncustodial parent/guardian, unless otherwise stipulated in the custody agreement. This includes putting both parents on email correspondence when communicating significant educational information.

The Parish Post

The Parish School publishes a newsletter in the winter and summer to share news and upcoming activities with parents and the community. This newsletter is distributed through the U.S. Postal Service and is available for download online.

E-Newsletter

An electronic newsletter is sent from The Parish School via email every other Wednesday during the school year. This email contains important information, reminders and dates.

Reporting Progress to Parents

The Parish School teachers and speech-language pathologists 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 skills. Academic progress reports are created to assess key academic skills at each level.

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 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 emailed 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.

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

Pastries with Parents—Elementary Program

This day is designated for breakfast with moms and dads in their child's cottage. It allows parents to be with their children in the classroom, view work that their child has done and participate in a class activity.

Lunch with Littles—Early Childhood Program

This day is designated for a brown-bag lunch with moms and dads in their child's cottage. It allows parents to be with their children in the classroom and view work that their child has done. Children may go home with parents after event concludes.

Class Parties

We have two school-wide celebrations each year. The Winter Holiday and End-of-Year Parties.

The objectives of Parish 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.
- To 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 parents, please consult with your child's teacher regarding dietary needs of the class.**

Party Guidelines

- Party should be SIMPLE in regard to food served and activities planned.
- Though a party favor is not required, select either goody bags OR balloons (not both).
- Parents are not required to attend parties, but are encouraged to attend at least one.
- 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.
- Room parents are responsible for providing and organizing the refreshments, games and activities.
- No additional cost to parents is required or permitted, though donations of goods can be made.
- Inflatable water slides and inflatable bouncers are not permitted.

- Off-campus are permissible if a parent wishes to organize an additional event, this should be scheduled during off-school hours. The Parish School and its employees will not be held liable for any injuries or damages incurred at any class party held off-site.
- Invitations for non-TPS, off-campus 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.

Staff Gifts

Parents are allowed to extend gifts to staff, but they may not exceed \$50 in value per family, per school year.

Commencement

Lower and Upper Elementary students leaving The Parish School participate in a commencement ceremony and reception at the end of the school year.

Recognizing Individual Birthdays

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) provides a special birthday gift for each child to receive on his/her birthday. Gifts may vary each year at the discretion of the PTO. Summer birthdays are celebrated on a class-by-class basis and at the discretion of the teacher.

In addition:

- Parents may send a birthday cake, cookies or cupcakes for the class.
- Goody 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 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.

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 Early Childhood 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.

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

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 accessed on the Parish Portal after the February conference. An email will be sent out to notify parents when available. Within the Parish Portal is a student account management system called "Smart Tuition." This is the system used for paying tuition. It allows you to pay either by ACH debit from your bank account or by credit card, alleviating the need for paper checks. Smart Tuition can be found under the "Resources" tab of the Parish Portal. Contract and deposit are due by the date indicated in the system. If the contract and fee are not complete by the date indicated, that child's space would be released to new applicants.

Student/Family Transition Process

The Student/Family transition process provides support when the child's team and/or parents feel that it is appropriate and best meets the child's needs to move from The Parish School to a different learning environment.

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 the year prior to their final one, allowing parents to begin looking at schools for an entire year.

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 for the child. Once the list of schools is narrowed down to three, the teacher/director/speech language pathologist may visit the school with the parents when requested or necessary.

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

After a release of information is obtained, The Parish School student records are sent to the requesting school/party. Also see [page 38, "Records 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 to the parents and/or the receiving school.

Children Who Transition During the School Year

Occasionally, The Parish School is no longer meets a student's needs. In this instance, multiple meetings including the parents and professionals working with that child are held to determine next steps. If it is recommended that a child transition to another environment during the school 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 placement 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 current, signed, custody agreements. State guidelines will be followed. Please be assured that your information will be kept confidential. All communications generated by the school will be distributed to the custodial parent, step parent(s), and noncustodial parent alike. We must have in writing the individuals who may pick up your child from school, make classroom observations and attend school-sponsored field trips. This form must be signed by both parents. If there is a permanent change in those who are authorized to pick up the child, make classroom observations and attend sponsored field trips, a new authorization form must be completed and signed by both parents. The school will uphold what is outlined within the decree in regards to possession, including, if specified, the right for each parent to designate a competent adult to pick up the child on their day of possession. If there are divorce or custody rulings that differ from state guidelines, parents must provide copies of these rulings. Given the unique legal situation of each family, the school may make exceptions to this policy.

Authorization to Pick Up a Child

It is imperative that parents return the completed “Carpool Information Form”, (even if the child will not be in a carpool), and the “Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention” Form, before the first day of school. Your child may be unable to remain at school if these forms are 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, their designated carpool, or those listed on the carpool or emergency forms. If someone other than those listed on the authorization form is picking up the child, a written note must be made to the teacher and/or the front office prior to pick up. 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 front office for verification the first time he/she picks up the student.

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.

Safety on Campus

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance to us. Some of our security efforts are visible, while many others are intentionally unseen and behind-the-scenes. These are a few of the measures we have in place:

- All-staff participation in safety and security trainings
- Routine emergency drills for students and staff
- Annual security audits and upgrades
- Cameras across campus with video monitoring
- Shatter-proof window glazing in each cottage safe zone
- An internal safety committee, which meets regularly to review and update our security policies and procedures for all potential dangerous and emergency situations

Raptor System

V-Soft Raptor Visitor Management System (commonly called Raptor) is also utilized for checking all visitors in to the campus. Raptor enables schools to produce visitor badges, monitor volunteer hours and electronically check all visitors against the registered sexual offender database. The goal of this system is to increase the safety of our school.

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 The Carruth Center.

Safety Drills

The door of your child's classroom posts procedures for fire, severe weather, disaster, and stranger on campus drills. A map of the fire exits and the route and destination the class is to take during emergencies and drills is also posted. Throughout the year, several types of drills are conducted for all staff, students and visitors to The Parish School and The Carruth Center. As required, these drills are always unannounced to help better prepare everyone for an actual emergency. Teachers process the experience with students, as needed. The following drills are practiced:

Fire drill conducted monthly and may include an obstruction that requires the occupants of the building to practice using a secondary exit.

Severe weather drill conducted every three months.

Lockdown drill conducted every three months or more often if additional training is needed. During this short drill, visitors will not be allowed in or out of the

building. A note will always be placed on the door to alert visitors of a drill in progress.

Outdoor Animals on Campus

Due to the campus's extensive outdoor learning space, wild animals sometimes are seen during school hours. It's the school's policy to treat wild animals as co-habitants. The Parish School has a no-kill policy toward these animals. If an animal becomes an excessive nuisance or a threat, the animal will be relocated by authorized personnel.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

In accordance with The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), The Parish School and The Carruth Center 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 co-worker or family member. The Professional Reporter with firsthand knowledge of the situation must be the primary reporter to contact DFPS. The Parish School 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 Leadership 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. [The local licensing Office: 713-940-3009; DFPS: 1-800-252-5400; DFPS website \[www.dfps.state.tx.us\]\(http://www.dfps.state.tx.us\).](#)

Health and Emergencies

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

School Forms

All medical forms, immunization records/waivers must be completed and returned to the school office on or before August 1. 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 be admitted to the school without completed forms.**

Immunizations

State law requires that all children receive certain immunizations. For the health and safety of our community, parents are required to provide a current record of all state-required immunizations upon enrollment to The Parish School each year (effective June 6, 2019). To claim an exclusion for medical reasons, parents must present an exemption statement to the school dated and signed by the child's treating physician (MD or DO). The physician should be properly licensed and in good standing in any state in the United States. 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.

Unless it is written in the statement that a life-long medical condition exists, the medical exemption is valid for one (1) calendar year. The school does not accept religious or conscience exemptions.

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 starting 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 5th and 8th or 6th and 9th grades 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 the Healthcare Coordinator or Administrative Manager can prepare the appropriate information to be dispersed within the school community. A complete list of communicable diseases can be found at:

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 for the following reasons:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees
- Fever during the previous 24-hour period
- Thick, colored nasal discharge
- Constant cough
- Fussy, cranky, and generally not himself/herself and not benefiting from being at school
- Pink and watery eyes with discharge
- Presence of lice or nits
- Loose stools or vomiting
- Any “communicable disease”

A child must be fever-free for the previous 24 hours, without the aid of any fever reducing medication in order to return to school. The same guideline applies for loose stools/diarrhea or vomiting.

Accidental Injuries

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

The Healthcare Coordinator or a leadership team member will be in charge and make decisions about the care of the student until the arrival of a parent, the physician, or an ambulance. 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.

Extreme Weather Conditions

In the event of extreme weather conditions (i.e. extreme heat, cold, wind chill, severe storms, flooding, etc.), The Parish School will follow the recommendations from the Harris County Office of Emergency Management.

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.

Early Childhood 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 8 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/chaperone, the driver must submit to the school office a copy of his or her driver's license, the declaration page for automobile insurance and his/her social security number at least one week before the scheduled event.

The Parish School's insurance carrier requires that drivers have as minimum 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 shortcuts. 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 your 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 a field trip to ensure the safety of all students who are participating.

Parent Orientation

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

A Parent/Child Orientation/Meet the Teacher Day is held before the first day of school. On this day, parents and their child have an opportunity to meet the staff, 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 early childhood 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. Additional assignments may be shared through The Parish Portal.

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

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

Also see [page 21, "Good News Book"](#).

Student and Family Services

The school employs master's level licensed mental health professionals and counselors to address issues surrounding child development, parenting and family dynamics. These services are free to all Parish families and are short-term in nature. All counseling services are treated as confidential and are not shared with Parish 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 early childhood and 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." 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 early childhood and elementary programs 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 kinds 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 early childhood 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) addresses needs through Michelle Garcia Winner's Social Thinking® methodology 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.

Early Childhood Program

Children born with any developmental delay are at risk for falling behind academically. That is why early intervention is so important. At The Parish School, we're experts in providing a strong foundation for your young learner. We develop the communication, academic, social and behavioral skills needed to succeed and thrive in school and in life.

Our early childhood program addresses the needs of children as young as 2 years of age, and is guided by best practices as outlined by the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children](#).

Classes, with ratios ranging from 1:3 to 1:5, are designed to uniquely support and teach to a child's lagging skills while building on individual strengths. We recognize every child's potential and seek ways to foster development in order to create a strong foundation for future learning. Students benefit from a masters-level, multi-disciplinary team that includes an early childhood educator and occupational, art and music therapists.

Pre-Academic Curriculum - The Creative Curriculum®

Aligned to Texas State Early Learning Guidelines and individualized for each student, The Creative Curriculum® uses a studies approach, which features hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences to teach pre-academic and readiness skills across all major areas of development and subjects—including reading and math.

Speech and Language Therapy

Speech-language pathologists serve as lead early childhood teachers who integrate communication and language therapy into all areas of the curriculum. They plan and implement a therapy care plan for each child that encourages growth of essential communication skills.

Social-Emotional Language & Learning Program (SELLP)

This whole-child approach is a school-wide model of support that incorporates intervention strategies that build skills across developmental areas and promote successful group learning, self-regulation, independence and resilience. ([See page 44.](#))

Purposeful Play

Children play as a means of exploring and researching the world around them. We believe that child-centered, multi-sensory experiences through play fosters curiosity and wonder, and builds important skills for life and learning.

Nature-Based Learning

Daily nature-based learning opportunities facilitate children's intellectual, social and emotional development through direct, hands-on engagement with our environment.

Occupational Therapy

An occupational therapist promotes development of sensory, gross motor and fine motor skills through in-class support and group lessons.

Integrated Arts and Sciences

Full-time specialists lead weekly classes for children to explore creativity and expression through music, theater, art, library and nature studies. ([See page 42.](#))

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 early childhood 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.

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

Specialized instructional activities can identify extraordinary hidden abilities, boost self-esteem and promote self-expression. Students attend each of our arts and sciences classes at least once per week. These programs are fully integrated with our classroom studies and are designed to:

- Foster self-awareness
- Identify and explore feelings
- Develop coping skills
- Initiate verbal expression
- Work on fine and gross motor development
- Reduce anxiety
- Build confidence
- Develop unique learning strategies
- Provide children another safe and enjoyable outlet for self-expression

Art Art is led by a licensed art therapist and allows students to interact with a variety of materials that encourage self-expression and appreciation of the artistic process. We work with a variety of mediums that facilitate growth and learning, including drawing, painting, sculpting and mixed media exploration.

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 integrate interactive SMART boards, iPads and laptops to prepare students for success in the digital world.

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. Library time also helps develop student-initiated searches for information.

Music Led by a board-certified music therapist, students engage in musical expression through listening to music, singing, playing instruments and dancing, as well as 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.

Nature Studies A certified nature studies educator leads a weekly nature studies class. Our nature curriculum is integrated with each classroom's current theme or project and supports each student's learning goals. This class provides our students with opportunities to engage all of their senses, resulting in a deeper understanding of academic content and social concepts, as well as an opportunity to explore and develop an appreciation for the natural environment.

Physical Education PE is a key part of children's multisensory learning. 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. Many children are body smart and find a place to excel through PE.

Theater Students have multiple opportunities to pretend, role-play and strengthen communication and learning concepts through integration of classroom themes and goals. Drama performances are an avenue to find and develop talent, while building self-confidence and increasing public speaking skills.

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 endorses 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.

Social Emotional Language and Learning Program (SELLP)

The Social Emotional Language and Learning Program was developed specifically for our student population. This whole-child approach is a school-wide model of support that incorporates intervention strategies that build skills across developmental areas and promote successful group learning, self-regulation, independence and resilience. It incorporates portions of The Nurtured Heart Approach® and Social Thinking® 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.

In addition, 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.

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, 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.

Physical Injury to Another Policy

Physical injury includes scratching, biting, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping which leaves a mark, bruise or breaks to the skin. While some of these actions may be a natural developmental stage that many children go through, the safety of children at school is our primary concern. Therefore, the following steps will be taken if a physical injury incident occurs:

- The parents of both children will be notified of the incident and an Accident/Injury Report will be filled out.
- If the child causes a second injury to another, a behavior plan will be made with the parents and staff to address the situation.

If the child causes a third injury to another, the child may be asked to leave the program.

Adult Education/Parent Community

Philosophy

Parent education and a feeling of community is part of the total experience at The Parish School. We believe that parent involvement is essential to the growth and development of every child. Parents are highly encouraged to attend a minimum of 5 activities annually: Curriculum Night in September, then one adult education session, one social event and two others of your choice (adult education or social event) held throughout the year. We also encourage a minimum of two classroom observations.

Because we believe parents also learn from each other when supporting the school, active participation by volunteering through the advancement office/PTO counts toward satisfying these requirements.

In-Person Adult Education

Daytime and evening adult education sessions are offered throughout the year. Children/siblings may not attend the morning sessions out of respect for the speaker. Free childcare is provided with RSVP for the evening sessions.

At-Home Adult Education

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 Adult Education credits. Resources are limited and items are checked out on a first-come, first-served basis.

Additionally, The Parish School has a podcast titled "Unbabbled," that is published the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Listen online at www.parishschool.org/unbabbled or subscribe to Unbabbled for free in any podcast player, such as Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts or Spotify.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) of The Parish School provides a platform for relationship building, support and volunteering. All parents of Parish students are members of PTO. Grandparents and other adult family members are also welcomed to become involved.

The Parish PTO supports the school's mission to educate children who have communication delays and learning differences, empowering them with the tools to succeed. It does this by:

- enriching the experience of children and families at The Parish School;

- encouraging parent involvement;
- supporting the advancement of the school through outreach, fundraisers and community-building;
- and deepening the connection of families to The Parish School; and
- volunteering.

PTO leadership is comprised of a president, vice president and several chairs of various volunteer and fundraising initiatives throughout the year.

Meetings are typically held the first Wednesday of the month at 9:15 a.m. at the school.

Online Community

Because families commute from across the Houston area to attend The Parish School, it can be challenging to meet other parents and find support. We created the Parish Parents' Forum in Facebook to fill this gap. Moderated by the PTO President, this closed group is for current Parish parents and grandparents. The group's purpose is to provide support and advice for parents experiencing similar issues, as well as a space to share resources, arrange playdates and outings, and more. For questions, contact pto@parishschool.org. Join by searching "Parish Parents' Forum" on Facebook.

Volunteering

At The Parish School, we consider our PTO and 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.

Advancement Department

The advancement department includes outreach, community-building, alumni relations, marketing, volunteerism and fundraising. This team works closely with the PTO, community volunteers, the board of trustees, Parish parents and more to “advance” the mission of the school.

Fundraising

The Parish School is an independent nonprofit school. Funds are raised each year to supplement tuition income. All parents at The Parish School benefit from at least \$11,000 in “tuition assistance,” as tuition only covers about 70% of the actual cost of a Parish education. The remaining amount needed to support our students is obtained through fundraising.

Our biggest and most important fundraiser of the year is called “Seeds for Growth.” It is an annual campaign that raises much-needed operating support to fill the gap between tuition revenue and the actual cost to run The Parish School.

Parish alumni, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, board and friends generously give back to the school through this fund, which has an immediate and meaningful impact on students. We ask that all parents give to the school through this annual campaign. It is not the dollar amount of that gift that matters, but that a gift is made. For the last several years, 100% of staff and board members give to Seeds for Growth, and 96-97% of parents give back this way.

In addition to Seeds for Growth, the school also solicits gifts from foundations, corporations, the community and alumni families to support the school. We also hold fundraising events throughout the year. In addition to fundraising for operations, the school also raises money to enrich programs like Financial Assistance, the Margaret Noecker Nature Center, capital improvements and more.

New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones

For Child Care Center

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your childcare operation or copies may be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know about where the gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or courthouse for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does this mean for my daycare center?

A childcare center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized crime activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

When do I have to comply with the new requirements?

The law is already in effect, so providers should begin sharing information regarding gang-free zones immediately. Licensing staff will offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance until rules are proposed and adopted, which is estimated to occur in March 2010. In the meantime, providers should update their operational policies and procedures to include providing the information mandated by this law to the parents or guardians of the children in care.

For further information please contact you licensing representative or your local licensing office.

Parent Handbook Signature Page

Student Name _____

I have read The Parish School's Parent Handbook for 2019-2020 and am aware of the Policies and Procedures outlined therein.

I understand my responsibility to read and sign the Daycare 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. Excessive absences may interfere with the child's ability to move to the next level. Students missing three or more days may be asked to provide a doctor's note for absences.

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.

Mother's/Legal Guardian 1's Name	Mother's/Legal Guardian 1's Signature	Date
Father's/Legal Guardian 2's Name	Father's/Legal Guardian 2's Signature	Date

RETURN to Administrative Manager by August 14, 2019