



THE PARISH SCHOOL



Don't just grow  
*Thrive!*

2025-26 Parent Handbook



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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 empower children who have communication delays and learning differences, to thrive through whole-child education, innovative therapy and access to nature.

## Core Values

- **Creativity:** Be brave and bold. The Parish School approaches ideas and situations with an open-mind – being flexible, resourceful and innovative in all we do. We inspire creativity in our students and in each other, collaborating to create conditions for others to thrive.
- **Nurture:** The Parish School inspires a love of lifelong learning in our students and each other. We care for and educate the whole child, as well as the whole family. We empower children to discover and grow their strengths, affirming their uniqueness.
- **Passion:** We approach each day and everything we do with passion, going above and beyond to demonstrate dedication and commitment in our work to serve others.
- **Ethical:** We act in the best interest of each child at The Parish School.
- **People:** We look differently at differences. The Parish School believes in the intrinsic value and potential of every human being. Every person has the right to communicate and connect – to tell their story, to share their feelings, to have their voice.

## 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 reach their language and communication goals.
- 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 differentiated to meet each child’s unique learning needs.

### Resilience

Specific strategies infused throughout the day guide the development of emotional self-regulation and 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, Conscious Discipline, and elements of other social emotional curricula as needed. 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.

The Margaret Noecker Nature Center was established in 2013 in memory of Margaret Noecker, former Head of School, who inspired The Parish School with her love of nature and her belief that a child's delight in nature animates learning and development.

## Accreditation

Cognia 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 Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for developing procedures to carry out the policies of the school and clinic. The executive leadership team consists of:

#### Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for all academic, therapeutic 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

In addition to the executive leadership team, the leadership team also consists of:

### **Director of Admissions**

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

### **Head of Early Childhood**

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

### **Head of Elementary**

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

### **Director of Special Projects/Assistant to the Head of School**

The Director of Special Projects/Assistant to the Head of School serves as a key strategic planner, advisor, decision-maker, and problem solver for the Head of School managing special projects and leading key initiatives. The primary goal of the role is to function as an extension of the Head of School ensuring strategic vision and operational initiatives are planned and executed on time, with high fidelity organization wide.

### **Director of Student and Family Services**

The Director of Student and Family Services is responsible for program oversight and staff of the Student and Family Services Department, including the delivery of social-emotional and behavior support, short-term counseling services to students and families, and social-emotional training to staff and families.

### **Director of Arts and Sciences**

The Director of 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.

## 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:

### **Administrative Manager**

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

### **Administrative Coordinator**

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

### **Admissions Assistant**

The Admissions Assistant supports the Director of Admissions in the initial phases of the admissions process. This includes responding to inquiries, disseminating admissions information to interested families or professionals, collecting required admissions documents and information, conducting school tours, and maintaining admissions files.

### **Admissions Specialist**

The Admissions Specialist assists the Director of Admissions throughout the admissions process, including reviewing files, conducting informal screenings, and making recommendations to families.





### **Advancement Associate**

The Advancement Associate manages the school's donor database 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, and student enrollment contracts.

### **Communications Manager**

The Communications Manager supports the Director of Advancement and is responsible for internal and external school communications, event materials and promotions, marketing and advertising, publications, Parish and Carruth branded items, photography and media relations.

### **Community Engagement Coordinator**

The Community Engagement Coordinator cultivates and maintains strategic partnerships and relationships 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.

### **Early Childhood Coordinator**

The Early Childhood Coordinator assists the Head of Early Childhood in program administration, including serving as a liaison, conducting staff training, providing classroom support, and supervising paraeducators.

### **Elementary Coordinator**

The Elementary Coordinator assists the Head of Elementary in program administration, including serving as a liaison, conducting staff training, providing classroom support, and supervising paraeducators.

### **Elementary Curriculum Specialist**

The Elementary Curriculum Specialist provides direct support to the elementary staff in the areas of daily classroom routines and schedules, curriculum implementation, academic intervention, and professional development. This role collaborates closely with the Head of Elementary to research, design, and implement curriculum for children who have learning differences, including ongoing assessment of efficacy and fidelity

### **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.

### **Facilities Manager**

The Facilities Manager is responsible for the maintenance of all buildings and grounds on campus, the alarm system and assists the Events and Volunteer Coordinator as needed.

### **Health and Safety Coordinator**

The Health and Safety Coordinator is responsible for medication administration, overseeing any health issues, health emergencies, transportation to hospital, scheduling of state-mandated screenings, and the planning, conducting and documenting of school wide safety drills. The Health and Safety Coordinator reports hearing and vision results to parents. The Health and Safety Coordinator is responsible for the annual health and safety procedure training of staff and annual health reports to the state.

### **Human Resources Manager**

The Human Resources Manager 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.





### **Accounting Coordinator**

The Accounting Coordinator assists the Human Resources Manager and is responsible for processing payroll.

### **Social-Emotional Support Specialist**

The Social-Emotional Support Specialist facilitates the delivery of social-emotional support to students and families enrolled at the school. The Social Emotional Support Specialist 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.

### **Technology Manager**

The Technology Manager supports the Director of Finance & Operations and oversees all aspects of technology duties. This includes, but is not limited to, Help Desk support, Administrator and Support for all of the Parish and Carruth software and hardware systems.

## **The Instructional Team**

### **Art Educator/Art Therapist**

The Art Educator/Art Therapist leads art classes which provide opportunities for students to interact with a variety of materials that encourage self expression and appreciation of the artistic process.

### **Digital Instruction Educator**

The Digital Instruction Educator develops students' digital technology skills to provide them with the most up-to-date computer abilities and to use the computer as a tool for learning.

### **Drama Educator**

The Drama Educator supports whole child development through teaching drama activities and theater skills.

### **Early Childhood Occupational Therapy**

The Early Childhood Occupational Therapist or Occupational Therapy Assistant works with students in large and small groups. This role collaborates with teachers, parents, and campus administrators to improve students' gross and fine motor skills, sensory regulation, as well as activities of daily living.

### **Educators and/or Speech-Language Pathologists**

These educators and speech-language pathologists are the child's "learning facilitators." He/she is responsible for making the learning experience an exciting and rewarding adventure for each child. They are responsible for coordinating the professional team working with the child, including communication with the parents, outside professionals, Head of School, Heads, and other employees to provide continuity in the educational process.

### **Elementary Reading Specialist**

The Elementary Reading Specialist works with students for small group and one on one intensive reading intervention. This role collaborates with teachers, parents, and campus administrators to improve students' reading and language skills.

### **Librarian**

The Librarian is responsible for overseeing all library functions for the school.

### **Music Educator/Music Therapist**

The Music Educator/Music Therapist leads group music experiences which promote nonmusical skill development, as well as the learning of basic music concepts.

### **Nature Studies Educator**

The Nature Studies Educator leads group lessons with an emphasis on outdoor learning and exploration through hands-on experiences with nature.





### **Paraeducators**

These individuals are responsible for carrying out teacher-directed activities during the school day. The paraeducator is a critical member of the classroom team, helping to provide an individualized program for each child.

### **Physical Education Educator**

The PE educator leads the students in activities to enhance their gross motor and pragmatic skills in a fun and safe environment.

### **Student Teacher**

The Student Teacher collaborates with a mentor teacher to learn firsthand the craft of teaching. Student teachers will assist in classroom instruction and case management while pursuing a teaching certification.

## The Carruth Center Team

### **Office Manager/Office Assistant**

The Office Manager and the Office Assistant support the Director of Finance and Operations and Clinic Director, as well as respond to intakes 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. These clinical professionals include speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, play therapists, music therapists, social learning clinicians, and psychologists.

## Camp Acorn

### **Camp Acorn Coordinator**

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

### **Camp Acorn Manager**

The Camp Acorn Manager is responsible for overseeing the program's administration.

## Adventure Play

### **Adventure Play Manager**

The Adventure Play Manager assists the Director of Adventure Play with program oversight and staff of the Adventure Play program.

### **Adventure Playworkers**

The Adventure Playworkers provide students age 6–12 an afterschool outdoor learning experience Monday through Thursday, 3:15–5:30 p.m. This is a fee-for-service program.

### **Director of Adventure Play**

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



## Optional Programs

Each optional program is available at an additional cost. Enrollment information is available on the school website and coordinated through the business office.

### Adventure Playground

Adventure Play is one of a few adventure playgrounds in the U.S., open to Parish and community children ages 6-12, Monday-Friday. On the playground, children have time, supplies and adult support to imagine, design and build their own play space. The site is staffed by adults trained in playwork, a profession unique to adventure playgrounds.

### 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 7:00–7:40 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.

### Extended Day Program/Club Zenith

Extended Day is designed to assist parents when the standard pick up time is not convenient. Care is provided for all ages by a third party, Zenith Learning, until 6pm Monday – Friday. **For more information or to register, please contact Zenith Learning [www.zenithlearning.org](http://www.zenithlearning.org).**

## General Information/Policies/Procedures

### Code of Civility

At The Parish School, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for every child, staff member, and family. Each of us plays a vital role in maintaining the standards and values of our school community. Therefore, The Parish School requires that we communicate (faculty and staff, students, parents, guardians and members of the community) in the following manner:

#### **Treat each other with courtesy and respect:**

- Listen actively and allowing others to express their viewpoints.
- Use calm and respectful language, even in times of disagreement.
- Avoid disruptive behavior on campus, in meetings, or during school events.
- Address concerns directly with the appropriate person and following the school's communication channels.
- Maintain confidentiality and discretion in all matters related to other students and families.
- Refrain from using social media or other public platforms to air grievances or post negative comments about the school community.
- Refrain from threats, including but not limited to causing property damage or bodily harm



### **Cooperate with one another:**

- Follow school policies, procedures, and protocols as outlined in this handbook.
- Respect each other's time including responding to communications in a timely manner.
- Notify one another when we have information that affects student safety or success.
- Understand that compromise is key.
- Support the school's efforts to promote a positive, inclusive, and safe learning environment for all children.

## **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**

8:00 a.m.–3:15 p.m. Monday–Thursday

8:00 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 they have reached the appropriate marked drop-off spot. Please refer to the Carpool Procedures and Map document for specific drop off procedures. 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 family bids in the online auction fundraiser at the beginning of the school year 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.



**Please do not block the path to The Carruth Center to allow families going to The Carruth Center to pass through the pick-up/drop-off line.**

See [Carpool Procedures and Map](#) document for more specific drop-off instructions.

**Early Childhood drop-off:**

Runs from 8:45–9:00 a.m.

**Elementary drop-off:**

Runs from 7:40–8:00 a.m.

**Late Arrivals Are to Be Avoided**

Elementary students are tardy after 8:00 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. Instruction and therapeutic services may be affected if a child does not arrive at school on time. The circular drive is blocked off after 8:00 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 follow the pick-up procedures listed in the [Carpool Procedures and Map](#) document for specific instructions.**

**Emerging Language pick-up:** 12:00pm Monday-Thursday

**Preschool/Pre-Primary pick-up:** 1:00pm Monday-Thursday

**Elementary pick-up:** 3:15pm Monday-Thursday

**All school dismisses at 12:00pm on Fridays**

**Early Childhood** (Emerging Language, Preschool, Pre-Primary)

Children will be picked up in front of the administration building Monday–Thursday. Emerging Language class dismissal will begin at 12:00 p.m. Monday–Thursday. Preschool and Pre-primary class dismissal will begin at 1:00 p.m. Monday–Thursday. All classes will dismiss at 12:00 p.m. on Fridays.

**Elementary (Primary, Lower and Upper Elementary)**

Children will be picked up in the circle drive under the overhang. Dismissal will begin at 3:15 p.m. Monday–Thursday. Friday dismissal will begin at 12:00 p.m.

**All Students**

Please keep your carpool tag visible in your rear-view mirror. A staff carpool caller uses your tag with number to call your child to your car. Once you are at the front of the line, wait for your child to be brought to your vehicle. Once your child has arrived, immediately load your child into the car and see that they are properly buckled. If your child is older elementary and does not require assistance to buckle, you may stay in your vehicle. ANY student that does not promptly buckle or requires assistance MUST have a caregiver assist. All early childhood families and younger elementary students who have a 5-point harness MUST assist their child into the car. **Staff will NOT be entering vehicles to assist.**



### Late Pick-Up

Parents are expected to be on time when picking up their child from school or from any optional program (Adventure Play, 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 invoiced monthly.

## 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. For information about absences due to illness, please refer to the Illness Policy. Students missing three or more consecutive days may be asked to provide a doctor's note for absences.

## Allergies

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 instructional 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. If your child has allergies or a specialty diet, when a food activity (including celebratory snacks) is planned in class, you will be contacted by your child's teacher to make a plan for how your child can participate. Any food related activities or snacks must be approved in advance by Parish School staff and families within the class. **No food items may be served without prior approval.**

## Snack, Lunch and Lunch Containers

Snack time is an important time to learn about nutrition and practice pragmatic and self-help skills. Parents are responsible for providing an individual daily morning snack for their child. If they are participating in programs outside of the typical school day, an afternoon snack will also need to be provided by the parent. Your child's teacher will make more information about this available.

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/> or by scanning the QR Code.



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, as there is not a microwave available for heating.

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.

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

## Smoking/Illegal Drug Free Campus

In the interest of the health and welfare of students, employees, and the public, smoking and tobacco use is prohibited on The Parish School and Carruth Center properties. This smoke-free policy prohibits use of any tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, pipes, dip/chew, and any other smoke producing or smokeless tobacco products. Distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited on The Parish School and Carruth Center grounds.

## Telecommunication Policy

Students will not be allowed to use personal telecommunications/electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, smart watches, ear buds, etc.) during the school day. Only school-issued technology devices will be permitted to be used during the school day. We define the school day as the time from arrival to dismissal.

Exceptions may be made for medical reasons where the device is used to support the student's medical needs. In these circumstances, a written request must be provided to, and verified by, the school nurse.

Any telecommunications/electronic device brought on campus must be kept in the student's backpack during the school day and should be set on "silent," "do not disturb," or an equivalent setting.

Recording or listening devices to record or transmit classroom activities is not permitted. Tracking devices, which do not transmit speech may be permitted if incorporated into a student's individual safety plan.

## Backpacks

All children should have a backpack large enough to hold their Good News Book/3-ring binder, 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. On Fridays, students have the option to wear a Parish School spirit shirt. Gently used uniforms and spirit shirts 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. Post earrings rather than hoop or dangle 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 clothes of their choice that do not distract from the learning environment. 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.

## Media

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.

## Tutors on Campus

Families may elect to engage outside professionals to provide academic tutoring on campus. Tutoring arrangements are made between the family and the professional directly. Should a family elect to pursue these arrangements, the family is required to complete the appropriate documentation with the school before services are initiated on campus. Space for tutoring sessions will be made available, however, it is not guaranteed that the space will be private and/or indoors. Teaching staff will collaborate with any outside professionals but will not change classroom schedules and routines to accommodate individual tutoring sessions. Students participating in outside therapies during the school day may miss work/activities presented in class during the scheduled sessions.



Families may also elect to engage in private tutoring outside of school hours with a Parish School employee. Tutoring arrangements are made between the family and the professional directly. Should a family elect to pursue these arrangements, the family is required to complete the appropriate documentation with the school before services are initiated on campus.



While The Parish School discourages families from hiring staff personally for duties such as childcare, housesitting, etc., the school understands certain levels of trust are established over time between staff and families. Should families hire Parish School employees directly for personal reasons, they acknowledge and agree this relationship is independent of the established relationship with the school and/or clinic. The family agrees to waive, release, hold harmless and further agrees to indemnify The Parish School, its trustees, Head of School, administration, faculty, volunteers, parents, students and patrons (together the "Releasees"), from any and all claims, charges, demands, causes of action, expenses of litigation, and any other liabilities of any kind, which may arise in connection with the private agreement between the family and staff member. This waiver, release, or indemnification does not serve to release, waive, or indemnify any claims against the staff member who performs services for a family independent of the relationship with school or clinic.

## School Communication

### Emergency Communication/ The Parish School Alert System

Families are encouraged to download the Kaymbu for Families App which delivers emergency, event, and reminder communications from the school's alert system, Kaymbu. In the event of an emergency on campus or a school closure, Kaymbu will be used to communicate with families. Once downloaded, parents have the option to receive notifications via text message, email, and push notification. In the event of an emergency, those who have downloaded the app will receive messages in all three manners. For more information on the app, please go [here](#). Refer to the section on School-Wide Social Media Policy of this handbook.

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. 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 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 and communicate through our school alert system with a text, email, and push notification.

### 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, zip code roster, and so much more. The system also allows you to complete your enrollment contract and annual student forms 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 number/email form is available in the school office. This is especially important for emergency situations.

Parents should also update emergency contacts and provide an alternate contact should the main point of contact be unavailable.





Families may also update this information in the Parish Portal. When logged into the Parish Portal, select your name from the top right corner of the webpage. From the drop-down that appears, select Profile. This directs you to your personal Contact Card, where you may edit your family's information. You may also make these changes on the Family Profile Update form that goes out in July.

## 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 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.

## Good News Book

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

The teacher, paraeducator, or the student will write Good News that is shared via Kaymbu. This information will describe the student's participation in the classroom and any "news" the 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. 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.

At times, the school and/or the teaching team may share information with families through the Good News Book. 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.



## Parent/Teacher Communication

Hours outside the business day are “quiet hours,” during which staff does not respond to parent emails or phone calls. The purpose of maintaining “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 (educator, paraeducators, speech-language pathologist and the Head of Early Childhood/Elementary, as well as other members of the child’s team, like Student & Family Services, other therapists, etc.), if applicable. Lead members of the instructional teams in early childhood and elementary classes will respond to parent emails within 24 hours during the workweek.

### Phone Calls

Phone calls will only be made from campus phones and during business hours. As an added measure for confidentiality and work/life balance, staff members are not to share their personal cell phone numbers with parents.

## 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.

## Communicating Questions and/or Concerns

The Parish School maintains an open-door policy so that families feel free to ask questions, express concerns, and make positive contributions.

If a question or concern arises, please seek an answer or solution by contacting your child’s teacher first and then the Head of Elementary/Early Childhood. If the question or concern is not satisfactorily resolved, you are encouraged to contact the Head of School.

## Incident Investigations Policy

At The Parish School, we strive to create a safe, caring, and respectful environment where every child can learn and grow. When issues arise that require a closer look—such as conflicts between students, concerns about safety, or other school-related incidents—the school may conduct an internal investigation to understand what happened and respond appropriately.

### How Your Child May Be Involved

If your child is part of a situation being reviewed, we may need their assistance to understand what has occurred. We may need to talk with your child regarding any school-related incidents. Parents will be invited to join their child during any investigation.





### How Parents May Be Involved

In the case of an internal investigation involving your child, you may be contacted by an instructional team member or administrator. Your involvement might include:

- Attending a meeting with school staff
- Helping your child share what they remember or understand about the situation
- Sharing helpful context from home that could support the school's understanding
- Partnering with us to follow up with your child after the situation is resolved

### Respect and Confidentiality

In the event of an incident investigation, the School will always strive to maintain a respectful environment that values the confidentiality of all individuals involved while still seeking to understand all sides and reach a resolution. Therefore, we kindly ask all families to:

- Cooperate with school staff in a respectful and timely way
- Understand that we will only share information with you that directly involves your child
- Respect the privacy of other students and families by keeping any information we share with you confidential

### Conclusion of an Investigation

At the conclusion of an investigation that concerns your child, we will share with you information as appropriate under the circumstances. While we will strive to provide you information sufficient to ensure all involved that appropriate measures may be taken in response to an investigation, please understand that there may be legal and privacy concerns that limit the information the school is permitted to share. If you have any questions, please contact school administration.

### Supporting Your Child

We know that school investigations can sometimes be stressful for young children. Our educators, Student and Family Services team, and administrators are here to provide emotional support and reassurance during the process. We will do our best to conduct an inquiry in a developmentally appropriate manner, making sure your child feels safe and heard.

### Outside Agency

If a situation requires the involvement of outside authorities (like child protection services or the police), we are required by law to cooperate with them. In such cases, the school will follow all legal guidelines, and we may be limited in what we can share with families during the process.

If you ever have questions about an investigation involving your child, please reach out to the school administration. We value our partnership with parents and are committed to working together in the best interest of every student.

## 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](http://www.kaymbu.com).





Additionally, The Parish School uses several forms of social media as part of their communications and outreach programs. Your child's picture may be included in social media posts unless you have provided a written request directed to the Head of School not to share their image with others. Your child's image will not be used from the date of the written request moving forward but will not be applied to any historic uses or social media posts. Due to the nature of social media, posts made by The Parish School may be re-posted by others without our knowledge or consent.

## Communication with the Media

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

## The Parish Post

The Parish School publishes a magazine twice a year to share news and upcoming activities with parents and the community at large.

## E-Mail Blasts

An electronic newsletter is sent from The Parish School every other Wednesday and an update from the head of school is sent weekly via email during the school year. These emails contain important information, reminders and dates. Additionally, individual event reminders and updates are shared with families regularly.

# Measuring and Reporting Progress to Parents

The Parish School instructional team collaborates 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.

In addition to assessments completed by The Parish team, ongoing consultation with outside professionals is key to monitoring and assessing student progress. To ensure that a student's intervention plan is most effective, it is required that student's receive psychoeducational testing upon entry into the Elementary program and maintain updated testing every three years. The school may request updated testing at any time should more information be needed to inform the student's treatment plan.

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. Conferences may be held in person or via video conferencing. 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.

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 by video conference or 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 made available to parents on the Parish Portal. Information generated from the office will be emailed by the school's advancement team to all parents, including the non-custodial parent. Teachers are responsible for informing parents (including non-custodial) of any special classroom events. **Only one conference is scheduled and both parents are invited to attend.**

## Telephone/Video Conferences

Telephone/video conferences can also be helpful to parents and teachers. Teachers' personal 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/video conference.

## Observations

Parents and outside professionals working with a student are encouraged to observe 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, receive a visitor's badge, and sign an agreement regarding student privacy. A staff member will escort all visitors to the classroom. Out of respect for the privacy of our students, photos, videos, and video conferencing are strictly prohibited during observations.

Please note, while outside therapists may observe your child's classroom, we cannot support an outside therapist providing services on campus on a regular basis.



# Classroom Events, Parties and Birthdays

## Pastries with Parents—Elementary Program

This day is designated for breakfast with parents and/or guardians 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 for part of their child's day.

## Lunch with Littles—Early Childhood Program

This day is designated for a brown-bag lunch with parents and/or guardians in their child's cottage. It allows parents to be with their children in the classroom and view work that their child has done. Early childhood students may go home with parents after the 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

- Any goods (food, activities, materials needed) provided for parties are to be simple and contribution is optional.
- Any food related activities or snacks must be approved in advance by Parish School staff and families within the class. **No food items may be served without prior approval.**
- Though a party favor is not required, please select either goody bags OR balloons (not both).
- Parents are not required to attend parties but are encouraged to attend at least one.
- Siblings are not permitted to attend class parties with the exception of immobile, nursing infants.
- 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 any additional refreshments, games, and activities. Any goods provided for parties are to be simple and contribution is optional.
- Donations of goods can be made at any time.
- Inflatable water slides and inflatable bouncers are not permitted.
- Off-campus parties 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 may be distributed by the classroom teacher only if all students in the class are invited.
  - 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

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 Head of School provides a special birthday gift for each child to receive on his/her birthday. Gifts may vary each year at the discretion of the Head of School. 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. **Any celebratory food treat must be submitted in advance to the teacher for approval.** Without prior approval, celebratory snacks will not be served until all families within the class have an opportunity to provide consent.
- Goody bags or balloons should not be sent.
- Please be aware of any dietary or allergen concerns in the class.
- Parents do not attend birthday parties.

Invitations for private parties that are held off-campus may be sent via the Good News Book IF all students in the class are being invited. See Party Guidelines above for more information.

# Placement, Contracts, Transitions and Financial Assistance

## Student Placement

During the placement process, the entire team, consisting of the teachers, speech- language pathologists, paraeducators, the Head of Early Childhood or the Head 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 **“Blackbaud Tuition Management System.”** 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. Tuition Management System 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.

## Blackbaud Tuition Management

Tuition payments are handled through a third party, Blackbaud Tuition Management System (TMS). It is very important that families are familiar with the information shared by TMS through the welcome letter. In addition, it is crucial to understand the “Blackbaud Terms & Conditions.” Both are available by email and may also be viewed in the TMS Portal under notifications.

## Delinquent Account Policy

If a family’s tuition account balance has been delinquent greater than 60 days, the student(s) will not be allowed to return to The Parish School until the balance has been brought current. All record requests will also be withheld from the family until balance is current. If the family’s account balance has not been paid in full by the end of the school year, the child(ren) will not be allowed to re-enroll in the next school year.

## 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 or if the student is not eligible to return to The Parish School due to age. Transition to another school setting will be recommended for students who have turned 12 before the start of the school year.

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. 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.

The instructional team and administration work alongside parents in selecting potential schools for the child. Once the list of schools is narrowed down to three or less, the teacher/head/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. In addition, written accommodations, modifications, and strategies may be provided to the parents and/or the receiving school upon request. The Parish School and Carruth Center employees do not write letters of recommendation for admission to other schools, however will complete any recommendation or admissions forms that are sent from a school.

After a release of information is obtained, The Parish School student records are sent to the requesting school/party. Also see **Records Request**.

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



## Children Who Transition During the School Year

Occasionally, The Parish School may no longer meet a student's needs during the school year. In this instance, concerns are shared with the family and the administrative and instructional team work collaboratively with them to determine the next steps. A transition recommendation will be provided to support the family as they seek a more appropriate placement for their child's 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 Blackbaud Financial Aid Management system. The financial aid application process can be accessed from The Parish School website under the following link: <https://parishschool.org/admission/financial-assistance/>. Please contact the Business Office Coordinator for details and questions @businessoffice@parishschool.org. The Financial Assistance Review Committee will review completed applications and make decisions on awards.

## 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 regarding 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 review the Carpool Procedures and Map** document shared in the August e-newsletters, (even if the child will not be in a carpool). They should also **complete the Authorized Pick-Up form** on the Parish Portal, before the first day of school. Your child may be unable to remain at school if this and other school 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.

**If a change to an authorized pick-up contact is permanent, the parent is responsible for updating the Authorized Pick-Up Form on the Parish Portal.**





If leaving early, the child's parent or authorized person may go to the office to request pick up. The student will be called to the front office at the time the parent or authorized person arrives.

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 utilizing the Standard Response Protocol
- Routine emergency drills for students and staff
- Surveillance cameras strategically placed across campus with video monitoring
- Controlled access to campus and for all buildings
- An internal safety committee, which meets regularly to review and update our security policies and procedures for all potential dangerous and emergency situations
- Consultation with a security expert
- Security Guard on campus during classroom hours
- Raptor Emergency Management Software

### VisitorSafe Visitor Management System by Raptor

This system, commonly referred to as Raptor, is utilized for checking all visitors into 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. All visitors must check-in at the front desk when visiting campus.

### Carruth Therapies During the School Day

If your child receives services at The Carruth Center during the school day or immediately before or after school, they will be picked up or returned to their classroom by their Carruth Center therapist following established safety protocols.

### Emergency Drills

The Parish School utilizes the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). This is a nationally-known set of actions and language that can be used by students, staff, and first responders in emergency situations. The SRP is designed to provide a consistent and clear way for everyone to communicate and take action during critical incidents.

The SRP and emergency evacuation maps are posted throughout campus and staff is regularly trained on emergency protocols. For more information regarding SRP, click [here](#). Throughout the year, several SRP 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. In addition to SRP drills, fire drills are conducted monthly and may include an obstruction that requires the occupants of the building to practice using a secondary exit.





## 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 report 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 Childcare 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 on the Parish Portal and/or to the school nurse on or before August 1.**

The ruling by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is that **no student be admitted to the school or allowed to attend the first day of 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. 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 Elementary program does not accept religious or conscience exemptions. However, per childcare licensing, students enrolled in the Early Childhood program may seek an exemption for reasons of conscience.

## 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. Vision and Hearing records are kept in the Parish Portal and the student's permanent file. Parents will receive a copy of the screens via Good News Books.

## 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](http://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 nurse.** The parents must also complete the **School Administered Medication Form** and return it via the Parish Portal.

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 **School Administered Medication Form** and return it via the Parish Portal. Procedures for getting it to the school are the same as above.

## Alternative Medications

A student will not be allowed to have on his/her person any drug, including natural remedies such as herbs, vitamins, dietary supplements, homeopathic medicines, or medications from other countries, without 1) a written order from a health care provider authorized to prescribe in the state of Texas, that includes the condition for which the product is being used; 2) a written request from the parent/guardian; 3) verification that the product and requested dosage are safe for the student (considering age, body weight, and condition); and 4) reasonable information about therapeutic and untoward side effects and interactions. Parents are welcome to come to the clinic to administer medicine to their children as they wish.

## Professional Judgement

In the event the school nurse, in the exercise of professional judgment, questions the administering of any particular medication as excessive or otherwise potentially harmful to the student, the nurse will cease to administer the medication and notify the parents and the physician. The nurse will consult with the Head of School and others as appropriate.

## 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 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 Health and Safety 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. Please refer to the **Cancellation of School/TPS Alert System** portion of this handbook, for communication about any recommendations being followed.

## 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 buses 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 a minimum liability coverage of \$300,000 bodily injury per person/\$500,000 bodily injury per accident and \$100,000 for property damage.

Due to liability and insurance complexities, faculty and staff are prohibited from transporting students in their personal vehicles. This includes transportation to and from school, as well as field trips or any other off-site school events.



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 enroute, 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. This is an adult only event. For families who join The Parish School mid-year, all orientation information will be shared through administration and the instructional team.

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.

## Homework

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.

## Student and Family Services

The school employs master's level licensed mental health professionals and counselors to facilitate delivery of social-emotional support to enrolled students through weekly social-emotional lessons, classroom support, parent and teacher consultations, and includes short-term services to address concerns surrounding child development, parenting, and family dynamics, if needed. These services are included with tuition. All short-term counseling services are treated as confidential and only shared with child's instructional team (and Carruth therapists, if applicable) on a need to know basis as outlined in the informed consent paperwork prior to starting services.





## Record 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 in writing. 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. All record requests will also be withheld from the family until the balance is current. 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 the 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. If you have questions about the privacy or security of information kept in your child's speech-language or other medical records **please contact The Parish School and The Carruth Center's Privacy Officer, Mimi Branham, at (713) 935-9088 x 1138 or mbranham@carruthcenter.org.**

## Curriculum

With a small student-to-teacher ratio, both the early childhood and elementary curricula are individualized to each child's areas of focus and strengths. A positive feeling of self-worth is encouraged on a daily basis and supports learning as discussed in the SELLP portion of this handbook. The curriculum focuses on teaching strategies and compensation to maximize each child's 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 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 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, Conscious Discipline, and elements of other social emotional curricula as needed. These approaches are integrated into all classrooms, adding richness to our therapeutic program, and discussed in more detail the SELLP portion of this handbook.

### 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 emerging 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 the SELLP portion of this handbook.**

## **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 or assistant promotes development of sensory, gross motor and fine motor skills through in-class support and group lessons.

## **Arts and Sciences**

Full-time specialists lead weekly classes for children to explore creativity and expression through music, drama, art, library, and nature studies.

# **Elementary Program**

Our elementary academic program is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) 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 developing skills, our program builds upon student’s strengths. We recognize every child’s potential and seek ways to foster development to create a strong foundation for future learning. Our systematic and comprehensive instruction accelerates language, social and academic skills.

Small teacher-student ratios, ranging from 1:3 to 1:5, create an atmosphere of focused learning.



## **Educators and Speech-Language Pathologists**

Lead educators use multiple techniques to enhance classroom success. Lead educators develop academic objectives following the school's adopted curriculum guidelines. In addition, lead educators conduct ongoing informal and formal assessments to track student progress. Speech-language pathologists provide classroom-based group language and social therapy weekly. In addition, speech-language pathologists offer assessments to children to help develop the student's therapy care plan and determine strengths and needs. Up to 7 hours of group services are provided each week.

## **Arts and Sciences**

Children explore creativity and expression through an arts and sciences program. Full-time specialists lead weekly classes including music, drama, art, library, physical education, and nature learning.

## **Recess**

Elementary students have two recess periods a day: one mid-morning and one before or after lunch. We believe recess breaks from the classroom are essential to student learning as a whole-body way to synthesize and personalize instruction. For this reason, recess is never taken away punitively.

## **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-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 the SELLP portion of this handbook.

# Arts and Sciences Program

Specialized instructional activities can identify extraordinary hidden abilities, boost self-esteem, and promote self-expression. The arts and sciences classes 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 integrates a variety of technological platforms 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. In elementary, library classes are led by a professional with a Master's qualification from an ALA accredited program.

## Music

Our program is 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 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, and sportsmanship.

## Drama

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.

# 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 Conscious Discipline®, Social Thinking®, and elements of other social emotional curricula 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.

# 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, or behave, 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

The Parish School uses a variety of techniques and strategies to help a child manage their 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 actions and 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, the least restrictive intervention (the safety intervention that is a last resort, reasonable, and proportionate to the risk) shall be utilized to provide safety for the child, others, or property. While verbal and environmental non-restrictive interventions will be the primary intervention utilized, at times physical contact and other more restrictive safety interventions may be required to provide safety for the child, others, and property. A staff member trained in the use of crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques, and in the use of restraint (CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®) may be called to assist. Should personnel called upon to use restraint in an emergency who have not received prior training, they will be required to receive training within 30 school days following the use of the restraint. If a restrictive safety intervention is utilized, a good faith effort will be made to notify parents the same day of the event.

Please note that restraint does not include physical contact or appropriately prescribed adaptive equipment to promote normative body positioning and/or physical functioning; limited physical contact with a student to promote safety (e.g., holding a child's hand), prevent a potentially harmful action (e.g., running into the street), teach a skill or provide comfort; limited physical contact or appropriately prescribed equipment to prevent a child engaging in on going, repetitive self-injurious behaviors; seat belts or other safety equipment used to secure children during transportation.

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 Injury Report will be completed.
- 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.

## Response to Problematic Sexual Behavior

Problem sexual behavior is defined as: a single incident that indicates a child has a knowledge of adult sexual behavior beyond his/her age and developmental level; a pattern of sexual behavior, which, although may be normal or within developmentally appropriate age range, does not respond to correction by adults; sexual behaviors that are atypical for the child's developmental age or suggest that a child is preoccupied with sexual matters; sexual behaviors that do not involve other students but are a problem for a student himself/herself and interfere with social or educational development; and sexual behaviors that bother, harass, or seriously disturb other students. While some sexual behaviors 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 an incident of inappropriate sexual behavior occurs:

- Staff will respond to students involved in the sexual behavior incident separately and will document the incident.
- Staff will alert the Director of Student and Family Services and Head of Early Childhood/Elementary.
- The parents of children involved will be notified of the incident.
- If sexual behavior falls outside of the normal range of sexual behavior for the developmental age of the child, or if normal sexual behavior is not responsive to correction by the instructional team, the team may:
  - Consult a child's mental health professional (with parents' written consent) or refer for assessment/treatment.
  - Develop a Safety and Support Plan with parents (or legal guardian), Director of Student & Family Services and Head of Early Childhood/Elementary, and other professionals as appropriate.
  - Report the incident to the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services if there is concern for child abuse or neglect.

# 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/Guardians are required to attend at least four (4) of the scheduled adult education meetings and two (2) school activities a year. We also encourage a minimum of two classroom observations. Parents are asked to self report the educational opportunities they have taken advantage of through a survey each year.

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/Online Adult Education Sessions

Our Adult Education series is free and open to the public. We welcome parents, grandparents, alumni, community members and professionals. We believe in nurturing a love of lifelong learning not only in our students, but also in each other and the community. Educating adults is essential to the growth and development of every child.

Daytime and evening adult education sessions are offered throughout the year. In some cases, sessions may be recorded and can be viewed on the school's **YouTube** channel at anytime. For upcoming events, please visit [our website](#).

## Adult Education Resources

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 with materials 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 publishes 10 episodes each school year. Listen online at [www.parishschool.org/unbabbled](http://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 welcome to become involved.

The Parish PTO supports the school's mission to empower children who have communication delays and learning differences. 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
- deepening the connection of families to The Parish School
- volunteering

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

Meetings are held regularly throughout the school year. Please see the online calendar for more information.

## 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 on 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](mailto: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](mailto:advancement@parishschool.org) or look for volunteer sign-up opportunities in the bi-weekly eblasts.



# Advancement Department

The Advancement Department focuses on outreach, community-building, alumni relations, marketing, communications, volunteerism, and fundraising. The team works closely with the board of trustees, Parish parents, grandparents, alumni parents, community volunteers, corporate and professional partners, and friends to advance the mission of the school.

## Fundraising

Since our inception in 1983, The Parish School has been a beacon of hope for children aged 2-12 facing communication delays and learning differences. At the heart of our mission lies a commitment to empowering every child and every family, nurturing them through personalized education, innovative therapy, and immersion in nature.

At The Parish School, we believe in the potential of every child. Through our holistic approach to learning, we provide a transformative, life-changing education. Our innovative curriculum and therapy programs are individualized to address each child's unique needs, fostering growth and development in communication, social skills, independence, and the arts. This education is not just interventions; it is a pathway to unlocking each child's full potential, propelling them into the next stages of their lives with confidence and capability.

As we continue our mission of empowering children and families, we invite you to join us in transforming lives. Your support ensures that every child at The Parish School has access to the personalized education and therapy they need to thrive. Whether you are able to give a little or a lot, your contribution makes a meaningful impact on the lives of Parish students and their families.

Our biggest and most important fundraiser of the year is called "The Parish Fund," the school's annual fund program. Donations to The Parish Fund make a difference through:

- **Scholarships and Financial Assistance:** Your donation helps us provide scholarships and financial assistance to families in need to overcome financial barriers that prevents their children's access to a Parish education.
- **Enhanced Curriculum and Therapy Programs:** Your support enables us to expand and enhance our innovative curriculum and therapy programs, providing children cutting-edge interventions that can change the trajectory of their lives.
- **Enrichment Opportunities:** With your generosity, we can offer enrichment opportunities such as nature-based learning experiences, technology, art programs, and extracurricular activities, enriching the lives of our students and fostering their love for learning.
- **Retaining and Sustaining an Exceptional Staff:** Our staff is the heart of our program. They nurture and unlock the potential in our students and embrace our families with guidance and hope. Your donation will support their needs with access to professional development and help provide competitive salaries and benefits.

Parish alumni, parents, grandparents, 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 past several years, 100% of staff and board members give to The Parish Fund, and the majority of parents give back this way.

In addition to The Parish Fund, the school also solicits gifts from foundations, corporations, the community, and alumni families to support the school. Major donors and grant makers often take into consideration how our immediate community supports the school prior to making an investment. Therefore, parent participation in the annual fund can lead to greater gifts. We also hold fundraising events (Luncheon, Gala and Cyber Auction) throughout the year that raises money to enrich programs like Financial Assistance. In addition to the annual fund, the school also seeks funding for capital improvements,



endowment, and more. As a way to celebrate our most generous donors, individuals and families who donate \$1,983 or more annually to The Parish School through all fundraising endeavors will be inducted into the 1983 Society. **For more information, please refer to the school's "Guide to Giving and Getting Involved," which is distributed early in the school year and is available online on the school's website.**

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of children facing communication delays and learning differences. Your gift to The Parish School, whether it is made with gratitude for the impact the school has made on your own family or is an investment in the future, empowers children to reach their full potential and become confident, capable individuals who will make a positive impact on the world. Let us transform lives together!

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Parish School is committed to being a community in which diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued and actively supported. Diversity is a broad concept that encompasses all the differences that children bring to school or therapy, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity and culture, religion, disability, gender identity, family structure, and linguistic background. Equity is about ensuring fairness and respect. It means that every effort is made to support each child and family to be able to access and engage in all aspects of the Parish experience. Inclusion means intentionally promoting for each child and family a sense of welcome and belonging, with assistance as needed to participate fully in all school-related activities. In order to support the achievement of these expectations, The Parish School has a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. The committee meets regularly to provide guidance and assistance to the school in its efforts to be inclusive in its communications, its visual representations of diversity, its curriculum and learning resources, and its celebrations and special events. The Parish School endeavors to promote culturally competent teaching, and to welcome families to share their cultures and experiences, as well as providing feedback about any concerns in these areas.

## Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones

### For Child Care Centers

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 private schools and day care centers and includes areas within 1000 feet of The Parish School. 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.**

