

St. Stephen's Episcopal School  
Family Handbook  
2015 -2016



**St. Stephen's Episcopal School**  
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## **St. Stephen's Episcopal School**

### **History**

Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church moved onto the current property in Wimberley in the early 1970's. The beautiful mission was built as a replica of San Francisco de la Espada in San Antonio. Over the following years the parish added a Parish Hall and a Log Cabin to be used for Sunday School rooms. During a study of the goals of the parish in the mid-1980's, an interest in a school for young children emerged. Funding was established for a building, and the process began. Bishop Earl McArthur, The Rev. Ted Hervey, The Rev. Phil Parham, The Rev. Ted Knies, The Rev. George "Mac" Keeble, The Rev. Dr. Patrick Gahan, and now the The Rev. Sandy Casey-Martus have all had opportunities to add to this outreach of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church.

With the funding and support of the Burdine Johnson Foundation, the doors of St. Stephen's Episcopal School opened as a parish day school in September of 1989. As the School looks forward to the celebration of its 25th Anniversary in the fall of 2014, classes are offered from PreK3 to 6th Grade. Through the vision and determination of the church and school community, we seek to provide an exceptional education for children from Wimberley and surrounding communities whose families choose our school.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of St. Stephen's Episcopal School is to develop each student to his/her full potential academically, spiritually, morally, and physically. Through educational experiences in a Christian community, each student will grow in grace and become a responsible and ethical leader.

### **School Creed**

I believe in God above, I believe in Jesus' love. I believe His Spirit too, comes to teach me what to do. I believe that I should be kind and loving, Lord, like thee.

### **School Honor Code**

St. Stephen's Episcopal School strives to provide a loving, secure, and consistent environment for children and adults. We are expected to speak and behave in a courteous and appropriate manner.

The School's Honor Code is: *"As a member of the St. Stephen's Episcopal School community I accept personal responsibility for my actions and their impact on other members of the community. At all times, I will exhibit academic integrity, cultivate a safe and respectful environment, and encourage all others to do the same. Specifically, I will not lie, steal, cheat or use language or behavior that is harmful to others."*

The SSES Honor Code is to be signed in chapel by all students beginning in Kindergarten. The Honor Code is to be discussed with PreK students in conjunction with the School Creed.

## **Core Values**

### **Spirituality**

We are an Episcopal school that focuses on an ongoing relationship with God. We provide daily worship and the opportunity to develop Christian values. We promote respect for all faiths.

### **Community**

We are dedicated to transforming the lives of our students, families, faculty and staff. We provide an educational community that is safe, nurturing, and joyful. We foster an innovative and creative experience committed to educating the whole child, where each child is known and allowed to pursue self-discovery.

### **Character**

We believe we are all created in God's image and likeness. We promote the moral values of respect for self and others, responsibility, integrity, tolerance and compassion. We believe that contentment, a good sense of humor, recognition of self-worth and physical well being reflect a healthy, developing child.

### **Balance**

We provide a structured environment of challenging academic, artistic, athletic and extracurricular programs and partner with families in the development of their children with an emphasis on individual learning.

### **Stewardship**

We teach our students the value of utilizing their gifts and talents for the greater good and benefits of others. We encourage students to do their best each day for personal growth, and to give back to the school, the larger community and the environment through hands-on experiences and applied knowledge.

## **Community Expectations**

It is the philosophy of St. Stephen's Episcopal School that we enroll not just students, but whole families. Both school and family must participate fully in the academic, spiritual, social, and physical education of the children for whom they are mutually responsible.

As an Episcopal school, St. Stephen's embraces the values of honor, tolerance, and intellectual curiosity. We strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. We are called to show forth God's love and grace in all that we do. The administration, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees of St. Stephen's Episcopal School will model these values for our students in all aspects of our daily lives. Reinforcement of these values, both at home and in the school environment is critical.

St. Stephen's Episcopal School students are to be polite and respectful at all times, show concern for the welfare of others, and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. If we expect this of our students, we also expect this of the adults in our community. Faculty, staff, parents, and trustees are to embrace the same code of conduct while on school property, attending school-sanctioned events, or accompanying students off-campus. Graciousness, humility, and self-control are expected at all times. Arrogance, rudeness, and bullying are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Further, parents are not to reprimand students while on campus unless that student is engaging in behavior that could bring immediate harm to the child or anyone else present.

When parents choose to enroll their child in an independent school, they agree to: embrace the school's mission; share its core values; support its curriculum, faculty, and staff; follow its rules; and abide by its decisions. Trust and mutual respect are the underpinnings of any effective parent/school relationship. For matters large and small, the proper channel to raise an issue or register a complaint is to go to the most direct level first: i.e., to the teacher, coach, or staff member most closely related to the issue and capable of addressing it. If not satisfied at that juncture, a parent should contact the Head of School. Any decision of the Head of School is final. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with faculty and staff through appropriate channels, and we welcome debate of the issues, but we insist that this be done courteously, in a spirit of respect and humility, with a willingness to listen to and learn from one another. Efforts to undermine the authority of relevant decision makers will be seen as counterproductive and inappropriate.

We believe that a positive and constructive relationship between St. Stephen's Episcopal School and a student's parents or guardians is essential to the fulfillment of the School's mission. Thus, St. Stephen's Episcopal School reserves the right not to continue enrollment or not to re-enroll a student if St. Stephen's Episcopal School reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent or guardian would make such a positive, constructive relationship impossible, or otherwise seriously interfere with St. Stephen's Episcopal School accomplishment of its educational purposes.

## **Board of Trustees**

St. Stephen's Episcopal School Board of Trustees is responsible for setting the policies and organizational structure of the School in order that proper management and fiscal

responsibility are provided. In addition, it is responsible for hiring the Head of School, who then serves at the discretion of the Board. The Board is comprised of ten to thirteen members including the Rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and the Head of School. The Head of School is a non-voting member of the Board. The Board delegates the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the school to the Head. Board meetings are open meetings unless an Executive Session is required. Dates of meetings will be posted in the school office. During the first open session of each meeting, visitors may make comments or suggestions that will be heard by the Board and referred to the appropriate committee for response or action. It is recommended that the Head of School be contacted at least a week in advance of a scheduled board meeting so that an issue can be placed on the agenda for the open session.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Admissions Policy**

St. Stephen's Episcopal School admits students regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin. All students wishing to attend SSES must complete an Application for Admission. Upon receipt of the application, supporting materials, and a non-refundable application fee, an assessment visit is scheduled. Following the assessment visit, the Admissions Committee reviews the application and all supporting materials and makes a recommendation to the Head of School who determines acceptance or denial. Supporting materials can include all previous school transcripts, the SSES assessments, and all other information provided by parents or the sending school. The St. Stephen's Admissions Process is designed to ensure the best possible fit between student and school.

Students who would be a good match for our program but for whom space is not available will be placed in a Waiting Pool and offered a space should one become available. Please see the Admissions Priorities below.

Students must be potty trained to enter the PreK program. Students who are unable to attend an in-class visit will be considered for provisional acceptance until an in-class visit can be completed.

Each spring, pre-registration is held for the currently enrolled students who are current on all tuition and fee payments, and are recommended by the Head of School for re-enrollment.

### **Admissions Priorities**

A child may be pre-registered for entrance to St. Stephen's as early as parents wish with return of an Application and the non-refundable \$150 Registration Fee. The child's name will be placed in the School's Waiting Pool for the appropriate school year. Such pre-registration will be honored by date subject to the following admissions priorities:

First Priority: Students already attending St. Stephen's during the regular August to May school year;

Second Priority: Siblings of active St. Stephen's students;

Third Priority: Children of St. Stephen's current faculty or staff members;

Fourth Priority: Children of active communicants of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church; and

Fifth Priority: Children of former St. Stephen's students.

**Re-enrollment contracts** for the upcoming year sent to currently enrolled students must be returned by the deadline stated and be accompanied by a **non-refundable re-enrollment fee**. A signed contract and accompanying fee not received by the deadline will result in the student being placed in the Waiting Pool for the upcoming school year. A currently enrolled student will have priority over other students in the Waiting Pool should a space become available.

Prior to the school year of entry, when an opening becomes available, the child with the next priority in the Waiting Pool will be scheduled for an assessment visit. Should the School and the child be found to be a “good match,” an enrollment contract will be issued. This contract must be returned by the deadline stated, and a **one-time non-refundable campus use fee** must accompany a signed contract in order to secure the child's place in a class.

### **Required Entering Age of Students**

Students must have had a birthday before September 1st and be of the appropriate age for their class. To enter the PreK class as a three year old, a student must be three on or before September 1st of the entering year. Likewise, to enter Kindergarten a student must have turned five on or before September 1st of the entering year.

### **Accreditation**

SSES is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES) and the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES). SAES is an official accrediting/membership agency and is recognized by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Attendance/Absences**

In order to ensure the success of your student, regular attendance is expected at St. Stephen's. There is no substitute for a student's presence, listening, questioning, and participation. Attendance will be documented daily. If a student misses more than a total of 16 days in one year, credit for that class or classes may be denied. Parents should discuss with the Head of School all unusual circumstances requiring unforeseen or frequent absences.

Absences are excused for illness, family emergencies, or religious exercise. Parents should call or email the school office by at least 10 a. m. of the day in question to report an absence. A student whose absence is excused will be allowed at least one day for each day absent to make up any school work missed. No student is to be penalized for excused absences if the assignments are returned on time. If the absence is unexcused, the student must complete the assignment missed before a report card will be issued. Zeros are given for work missed during an unexcused absence.

If a parent wishes to travel with a student on school days, the parent may request that a teacher give work to be completed during the absence. Forty-eight hours notice must be given to the teacher in order for the student to receive upcoming work. It is at the teacher's discretion to decide if work can be given ahead of a planned absence.

If a student arrives late to any class, he or she is considered tardy. Tardies will be excused if they are scheduled or deemed an emergency.

### **Emergencies**

Our staff members take First Aid and CPR courses every two years. The school will immediately call EMS as needed if your child has been seriously injured. Parents will then be notified as well. It is important that you keep the information current on the Emergency Information Form maintained in the School Office, especially as to your child's physician and any hospital preference. If you have changes in any information, you are responsible for notifying the school.

### **School Funding**

St. Stephen's Episcopal School is funded through a combination of tuition, fees, Annual Fund gifts, and fundraisers. An excellent educational program cannot exist without support, both financial and spiritual. St. Stephen's is a non-profit organization and accepts donations, memorial gifts, estate gifts, and endowments. These are essential to the success of our School. All of these gifts are tax-deductible and extremely appreciated.

### **Fundraising**

St. Stephen's Episcopal School recognizes the existence of many worthwhile activities and needs that require the raising of funds either by the sale of merchandise, tickets, or the direct requests for money. Because of the need to limit distractions to our primary purpose of educating students, and to be certain that a fundraising project is compatible with the School's mission, goals, and general community expectations, the School limits fundraising activities to those that have the approval of the Head of School and the Executive/Finance Committee. The following Fundraising Approval Process has been created in an attempt to coordinate fundraising activities to limit demands of time and money placed on our students and families. All funds raised on behalf of St. Stephen's Episcopal School must be deposited in the School's general account and be allocated at the discretion of the Executive/Finance Committee of the Board of Directors.

#### Fundraising Approval Process:

1. All proposed fundraising projects must be submitted in writing at least six weeks prior to the date of the proposed project or event.
2. No fundraising project may be started until approval for the project is granted.
3. The proposal must demonstrate that the purpose of the fundraiser will: directly benefit the School as a whole and not be intended for the benefit of individual students; and meet a need that cannot be obtained through some other means (such as the School budget or grant funds).
4. The timing of the fundraiser must be viewed in light of the current fundraising calendar to avoid overlap in terms of time and effort.
5. The Head of School and Executive/Finance Committee may waive the above criteria after careful consideration of the circumstances. The approval of the Board of Trustees must be sought.

#### Fundraiser Requirements:

1. Prior approval must be sought from the Church Administrator if a portion of the Church facility is to be considered for a fundraiser.
2. All campus facilities used for the purpose of a fundraiser, must be returned the condition in which it was found.
3. All funds received in response to a fundraiser must be deposited in the School's general operating account within 48 hours of its receipt.
4. A written report of the results of each fundraiser, including expenses and revenue, is required by the person assuming responsibility for the fundraiser. This result must be provided to the School Office within 30 days of the completion of the event.

#### Special Annual Fundraising Events:

The following are annual fundraising events that the Board of Trustees recognizes as necessary to meet the School's budgetary demands; take priority over all other fundraisers; and must be calendared first: the Annual Fund/Annual Giving Campaign; the Fun Run 5K Event; the Extravaganza; and the Golf Tournament.

#### **Tuition**

Tuition may either be paid in full or paid in installments through the School's tuition management company, Smart Tuition. Tuition payments must be kept current in order for your child to continue in school. No student records, including report cards will be released unless tuition payments are current.

#### **Re-enrollment**

Annual student re-enrollment begins in February. Current students are required to submit a re-enrollment fee of \$150 along with their contract by March 31<sup>st</sup> to secure placement for the upcoming school year. Payments will be made directly to St. Stephen's. Application for financial assistance may be made through Smart Tuition Aid and will be due by April 1<sup>st</sup>. All necessary documentation must be submitted to Smart Tuition for a recommendation for the Financial Aid Committee's consideration. All financial aid information is held in strict confidence as per the St. Stephen's Privacy Policy.

A family's financial account must be current on August 1st for the student's place to be held. A student will not be allowed to start school in the fall with a delinquent account. Only families who begin school after the First Quarter will be allowed to pro-rate tuition. No tuition refunds are available for students/families who sign contracts, unless contingent on receiving a financial aid award.

No tuition refunds are available for students who leave during the academic year. No student records, including report cards, teacher reports and letters of reference, will be released until all accounts are settled with the St. Stephen's Business Office.

#### **The Shirley B. McArthur Memorial Scholarship**

The Shirley Beth McArthur Memorial Scholarship is awarded to current St. Stephen's students in Grades 3-6 who demonstrate financial need, a good academic record, and the social demeanor representative of our School's honor code and core values. This scholarship is designed to promote promising scholars and leaders in the St. Stephen's community.

McArthur Scholars are expected to embody the principles of servant leadership as exemplified by the life of Shirley Beth McArthur.

McArthur Scholars are expected to maintain a “B” or better grade point average and daily demonstrate the school’s mission statement. Recipients are expected to be actively involved in the life of the school and to exercise positive leadership in and outside the classroom. Currently, McArthur Scholarship recipients are chosen by the Financial Aid Committee.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

St. Stephen’s Episcopal School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship program, and athletic or any other school-administered program.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **School Day**

7:45 - 8:00 a.m.	Normal arrival time for students
8:00 a.m.	School starts for all students
8:05 a.m.	Students are considered tardy
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal for PreK (3:10 p.m. to Extended Care)
3:10 p.m.	Dismissal for Kindergarten – Grade 6 (3:20 p.m. to Extended Care)

### **Student Arrival and Dismissal**

Morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up take place in the circle drive area at the main playground gate by the Pavilion. Parents may also park in designated areas to accompany children to the classroom. A staff person will greet morning carpool from 7:45 a.m. to 8 a.m. each morning. Students may not enter their classrooms before 7:45 a.m. Children who arrive before 7:45 a.m. must be accompanied by an adult to Morning Extended Care in Classroom 1. The school entrance closest to that classroom will be unlocked at 7:15 a. m. for Extended Care.

\*\*It is very important that students arrive no later than 7:55 a.m. each morning. The Music in the Morning Program will begin at that time, and the Pledge of Allegiance and the School Creed will be recited at 8:00 a.m. On Tuesday (all students), Wednesday (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>), and Thursday (all students), students will leave for Chapel no later than 8:05 a.m. The safety of every child is of paramount importance to St. Stephen’s School. The Pavilion doors will be locked at 8:05 a.m., and parents must park and escort their children to the School Office to be signed in before taken to class or Chapel.

Students should be picked up at their dismissal time (3:00 for PreK; 3:10 for K – Grade 6) at the entrance to the main playground. Students who are not picked up by 10 minutes past their dismissal time will be required to attend Extended Care, and parents will be charged through Smart Tuition according to the current Extended Care Fee Schedule. Afternoon Extended Care will be held in Room 3. If special circumstances such as pick-up schedules for siblings at other schools create a daily issue, arrangements for abbreviated Extended Care fees may be discussed with the Head of School.

The increased number of students participating in the Extended Care and Extracurricular Programs at St. Stephen's has necessitated the need to no longer allow students to remain on the large playground (even when accompanied by a parent or other adult) after 3:20 p.m. This rule helps to insure that Extended Care and Extracurricular employees can properly supervise the students under their care.

Should students need to leave before dismissal time, parents should come to the School Office to sign them out. A staff person will go to the classroom and accompany the student to the Office.

Students will only be released to adults listed on their Emergency Information Forms maintained in the School Office. Carpools and unique circumstances should be discussed with the homeroom teacher.

Please drive in a safe manner. The campus speed limit is 10 mph. **No parking is allowed in the student drop-off/pick-up line.** Please drive very slowly, use extra caution, watching carefully for other students who are loading, unloading, or crossing with a parent to or from the parking area. Students should not exit vehicles on the left side of their vehicles. Please do not cross coned-off or gated areas which indicate pedestrian and extracurricular activities.

### **Tardy Policy**

Any arrival after 8:05 a.m. will be considered tardy. To assure student safety, tardy students MUST be accompanied by a parent up the stairs through the red doors to the School Office (or into Chapel on Tuesday – Thursday) after 8:05 a.m.

Tardiness is a serious matter as it affects not only the tardy student, but also all other students whose learning may be interrupted by late arrivals. Late arrivals often feel lost because they have missed important information including assignments and goals for the day ahead. The parent/guardian is responsible for seeing that their child arrives on time to be in their classroom by 8 a.m. Tardies will be noted on the Report Card, and when the number warrants, may be reflected in the Social Development/Social Skills grade. Students who are chronically late shall be referred to the Head of School, who will contact the parents to discuss an improvement plan.

### **Daily Chapel Schedule**

Tuesday & Thursday	PreK – Grade 6	8:05 – 8:25	Chapel
First Wednesday of Month	Grades 1 – 6	8:10 – 8:45	Chapel(Eucharist)
All other Wednesdays	Grades 1 – 6	8:10 – 8:35	Chapel

Chapel is a very special time at St. Stephen's and parents are encouraged to attend on any day but especially on Wednesdays when Chapel is led by the Rector or Assistant Rector of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church. Each first Wednesday of the month, the School will celebrate Holy Eucharistic.

PreK & Kindergarten classes attend chapel on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:05, and Kindergarten will begin to attend Chapel daily in the second semester.

### **School Calendar**

The published School calendar lists important dates, conferences, and holidays. The upcoming school year's calendar is to be published in printed form and on the school website before the close of the current academic year.

### **Lost and Found**

A lost and found box is kept in the School Office. Please check for missing belongings there as well as in your child's classroom. At the end of each semester unclaimed items in the lost and found box will be given to a local charity, and unclaimed clothing will go to the "swap closet."

### **Lunches**

All children need to bring a nutritious sack lunch and drink from home daily. We provide water in dispensers and students are encouraged to bring a non-glass bottle with their name on it. Lunches should be well balanced, nutritious and have low sugar content. Please avoid foods and drinks with high fructose corn syrup. Candy, sodas or foods of minimal nutritional value are not allowed for snacks or lunches at St. Stephen's. No gum is allowed on campus. Lunches should be packed in a manner easy for children to open by themselves. Please do not send glass bottles or jars.

### **Morning and After School Snacks**

Students are allowed to eat snacks at designated times during the day. Please check with your child's teacher to see if parents contribute "group" snacks (generally only PreK) or if you need to pack a snack in your child's lunchbox. Extended Care students receive a small after-school snack. For students attending any after school extra-curricular activities, we encourage you to pack an extra snack. Snack items might include fruit, popcorn, peanut butter and crackers (if we have no one with a nut allergy), granola, and pretzels. Because of an increase in students with food sensitivities and food allergies, and because many parents are concerned about their child's intake of sugar and gluten, all-class snacks are limited to birthdays and special events celebrated school-wide. Please let your teacher know of any foods your child should not have. **The school must be given a list of specific foods to which your child is allergic.** \*\*If you do not want your child to have a snack provided for these situations, please provide a number of alternate snacks for the classroom teacher to have on hand.

### **Birthdays**

The homeroom teacher will recognize each student's birthday in the classroom and in Chapel unless otherwise instructed. Parents may furnish small, simple individual birthday snacks (fruit, frozen fruit bars, mini cupcakes, or mini muffins) to their child's class, provided they confer with the teacher **in advance**. **The School is concerned about students' consumption of sugary snacks, and urge parents to bring healthy birthday snacks only. No balloons or party favors are permitted at School birthday recognitions. PreK and Kinder may celebrate**

birthdays at lunch or at the end of the day. First – Sixth Grade may celebrate at lunchtime only. **\*\*If you do not want your child to have a snack provided by others**, please provide a number of alternate snacks for the classroom teacher to have on hand. Invitations to a private birthday party may not be delivered at school. To avoid hurting a student’s feelings, please consider inviting the entire class when most other students are being invited.

As part of our School’s tradition, we suggest that you consider purchasing a book for use in the classroom or Library to honor their birthday. Teachers are happy to provide you with a list of suggested materials. These gifts can be enjoyed by all again and again, and the donations will be blessed at the appropriate chapel service; students’ birthdays are recognized each week in Chapel.

### **Class Parties**

The Parent & Friends Organization (PFO) is in charge of all-school parties for Halloween and the End of School. Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and Easter parties will be handled by each class. All all-school and classroom parties will be held during the last hour of the school day (2:00 – 3:00 p.m.). Teachers may have a party sign-up sheet available for parents during Meet the Teacher night or at fall conferences. Planning for classroom parties should involve the Room Reps, the teacher, and those parents who have signed up for a particular party. These parties should be kept very low key with nutritious treats. The presence of siblings or any non-St. Stephen’s members at class parties must be approved by the teacher.

### **Community Spiff-Up Days**

One of St. Stephen’s Core Values is Stewardship, and we stress being good stewards of our environment including our own School grounds. Two school workdays (one in the fall and one in the spring) will be scheduled by the Head of School. These allow the community to come together to work on the physical appearance of the School as well as major bi-annual work needed on the Discovery Garden. We encourage all community members to participate in these all-School events.

### **Distracting Objects**

Bringing toys and unessential items to school is not allowed. A small cuddle toy for naptime in PreK and items related to study topics are acceptable. All items should be identified by student name in case they are misplaced. No toy guns, knives, war toys, or weapons are allowed at School.

### **Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills will be held monthly throughout the school year. A map indicating the appropriate evacuation route for emergencies is posted in each room on the campus, and all faculty and staff are familiar with the routes. A flip chart of emergency situations and the correct responses and procedures is posted in each room on the campus by the designated emergency exit, and is reviewed monthly with students by teachers and other staff.

### **Extended Care Program**

A staff person will be available for supervision of students in the Extended Care Room from 7:15 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m. Please see the annual Extended Care

Fee Schedule for current charges. **Please note that all children must be picked up by 5:50 p.m. or a late fee of \$5 per minute will be charged per student.** Extended Care fees will be billed through the School's tuition management company, Smart Tuition. If you have questions or concerns about charges for the Extended Care Program, they should be discussed first with the Office Manager and then with the Head of School.

### **Extracurricular Programs**

The Extracurricular Program is defined as any school activity that regularly takes place before 8 a.m. or after 3:15 p.m. These classes are taught by both St. Stephen's faculty and others. The Extracurricular Program includes two seasons, Fall and Spring with sign-up prior to each. Fees for the Extracurricular Program will be billed through the School's tuition management company, Smart Tuition. "Clubs" are defined as non-competitive activities and "Teams" are defined as activities that include a competitive schedule.

### **Field Trips**

A school field trip is defined as a student or a group of students leaving the School campus under the sponsorship of the School and under supervision of School employee(s) to extend educational experiences consistent with specific curricular goals and objectives of the School program. These trips are to be designed by faculty to stimulate student interest and inquiry and to provide opportunities for educational growth and development which can be appropriate extensions of the classroom while keeping disruption of other classes to a minimum.

All field trips must be approved by the Head of School at least a month in advance and must be related to the curriculum of the school to be approved. A permission slip will be sought for each student participating in the field trip at least two weeks prior to the trip. The parent/guardian will be notified of any significant change in plans prior to the School trip. School trips may be cancelled when necessary by the Head of School. The school cannot guarantee reimbursement when such a cancellation occurs.

Teachers will arrange for field trip drivers. When privately owned vehicles are to be used for transporting students other than their own children, the parents/guardians of the students are to be notified; and the owner of the vehicle and the parents must acknowledge in writing that they have received notice that the school's liability insurance does not cover the use of private vehicles to transport students for school activities.

Parents or guardians interested in driving students (other than their own child) on a field trip must be approved and listed on the approved driver list in the school office. They are required to allow the school administration to review driver's records provided by the Department of Motor Vehicles and to submit to the school office a copy of their driver's license and verification of liability insurance two weeks in advance of the trip. It is strongly suggested that these documents be submitted at the beginning of each school year. A driver's record must be free of any violations in order to drive any student other than his/her own child.

The teacher's permission must be granted before a sibling may attend a field trip.

Teachers will provide each driver with the trip's planned itinerary and map to the destination/s. **For fairness to all students, drivers must not make stops (unless for emergencies) outside of the planned itinerary. The class should return to campus together and follow end of school day procedures.** All arrangements for drivers with their own children to depart for home directly from the field trip destination must be discussed with the teacher in advance.

Overnight trips require the prior approval of the Head of School and the Board of Trustees. No trip will be approved unless it provides a unique educational opportunity that directly relates to the curriculum or a co-curricular activity. If the trip includes multiple locations, all components of the trip must meet these requirements. For overnight school trips that include male and female students, there must be male and female chaperones. All parents chaperoning a field trip are charged with the responsibility of assisting St. Stephen's faculty and staff, thus ensuring the safety of all children. All overnight field trip volunteers must complete the Safeguarding God's Children in-service offered periodically at the School and at other Episcopal schools and churches.

It is the policy of SSES that all students participate in all school field trips and wear the St. Stephen's dress uniform. Students remain subject to all school policies and rules of conduct, including disciplinary consequences, during school trips.

A student may be excluded from a field trip should, in the opinion of the Head of School after consultation with all of the students' teachers, the student's behavior on such trip would be a distraction to his/her classmates or is unsuitable for such trip. Before the field trip the Head of School will hold a conference with the student and his parents or guardians.

Non-school Sponsored Trips: A non-school sponsored trip is defined as a trip organized by a school employee acting as an independent agent without the sponsorship of the school.

### **Health, Illness and Medications**

If any of the following conditions occur, parents will be notified and instructed to pick the child up from the School. The teacher will consult with the Head, if possible, prior to making this decision.

1. Fever over 100.1 degrees
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. Head Lice
5. Infectious skin or eye disorders, such as impetigo, ringworm, pink eye

**Note: Children who have had fever, have been vomiting, or have had diarrhea are required to have been fever free, free of vomiting and free of diarrhea, as the case may be (without the aid of medicine, such as Tylenol), for at least a minimum of 24 hours before returning to School.**

St. Stephen's policy regarding head lice includes the following:

- When necessary the school will have periodic head checks conducted for lice by School Office personnel.
- If a child appears to have head lice, the parents will be informed immediately and asked to pick up their child from School to obtain treatment.
- Please consult the child's physician for treatment advice at once.
- A child may not return to School until he/she has received treatment for head lice. Upon return to School, students must report to the office accompanied by their parent. School office personnel must inspect the student's head to ensure the absence of live lice and nits before the student may return to class.
- No child excluded from attending class due to lice infestation will be readmitted to class until all lice and nits have been removed from the child's hair.
- Upon re-admittance to class the student's head will be checked every other day for the two-week period following the initial lice infestation.
- Upon recommendation of the Texas Department of Health, the classrooms will not be sprayed with chemicals to treat for head lice.
- In extreme conditions, and only where warranted, the School may close the facility for one day in order to ensure all lice have been without a host for a 24-hour period.
- All head checks may only be performed in the School Office.

In the event of a medical emergency, and if a parent cannot be reached by phone for instruction, the School has written authorization, given annually on the Emergency & Release Information Form, to contact the student's physician, a person listed on the Emergency Contact section of the form, and the named hospital. If none is noted, the School will call Wimberley EMS and the student will be taken to the closest medical facility if necessary. EMS is to be called immediately if a child has been seriously injured. Parents will be notified.

Contagious disease incidence must be reported to the county health department.

All medications sent from home must be stored and administered in the School Office and dispense pursuant to an Authorization for Dispensing Medication Form signed annually by parents.

Prescription medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, a date, the prescribing physician's name, and complete instructions as to dosage times and quantities. For epinephrine or antihistamine medications to be given as a result of an allergic reaction, A Food & Other Allergy Action Plan must be on file signed by the physician and parent.

For medications to be dispensed daily, a standing order needs to be in writing from the child's parent/guardian. This order will be kept in the School Office. School personnel must administer the medication as stated on the label directions and shall not administer medications that have expired. A log is kept of all medications given with the date, time and person administering the medication.

All non-prescription medications which may need to be taken during class hours must be sent to the School Office in the original container and labeled with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the school. **The child's parent must bring the medication to the School Office, fill out a medication form, and indicate when the medication should be administered.** School personnel must administer it according to label directions. For the student's safety, unused medications will be released at the end of the school year to a parent/guardian only.

### **Health and Immunizations**

Under Texas law, the School is required to maintain current proof of state-required immunizations for every student. Pursuant to the law, if a current immunization record is not on file, the School may not allow the student to attend school. **At SSES, beginning with students enrolled after September 1, 2015, exemptions from State immunization requirements will be accepted for medical reasons only and with proper documentation** as required by the State of Texas (the official exemption affidavit can be found at [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us) or [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com)). If an official outbreak of contagious disease is publicly declared in Hays County or in any of its surrounding counties (Travis, Comal, Blanco), the School may require students who are not fully immunized to stay home from school for an extended period of time for their own protection and for the safety of others in the school community.

### **Library**

The Lynda McCrocklin Library is a collection of books and resources designed for children. All students and families may check out books from the School Library. Many families present a book to the Library in honor of their child's birthday or for Grandparents Day. These books are blessed in Chapel, labeled, and added to the collection. A Parents Section includes books for home use.

The cost of books that have not been returned to the Library by the last day of school will be billed to the family along with an additional \$10 processing fee. No school records will be released until Library accounts are paid in full.

### **Material from Outside Organizations and Activities**

All materials from outside organizations and activities must be approved by the Head of School before being sent home in the students' backpacks. Parents and interested parties are not to ask teachers to send home information, flyers, or notices of activities outside St. Stephen's in backpacks. Such requests should be made through the Head of School. Most outside material will be kept in the School Office, and they will be mentioned in the Head Lines for those who are interested.

### **Multimedia**

For the purposes of this policy, multimedia is defined as music, music recordings, moving and still film, cameras, cell phones, digital media, e-book readers, and the internet. All multimedia used at St. Stephen's must be approved by the Head of School, be curricular, and with a "PG" (parental guidance) or "E" (everyone) designation for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades and "G" for Pre-K to 2nd grade. Exceptions to this policy must be curricular-related and have the

approval of the Head of School as well as being forewarned to the parents in the form of a written permission slip and with the option of an equivalent curricular plan. All multimedia items brought by students to the School or used on fieldtrips must be curricular-related and approved by the teacher and Head of School. Students are prohibited from using any of the aforementioned items on the campus during school hours. Any use of these items without consent will result in their confiscation.

### **Outdoor Learning Centers**

Outdoor learning areas are designed to be as safe as possible and promote creative use of St. Stephen's 52 area campus. Children are not permitted on the outdoor learning centers at any time without adult supervision, and they must follow all rules as set by St. Stephen's. The growth of the School's Extended Care and Extracurricular Programs has necessitated the need to close the main playground after school to students who are not participating in Extended Care or an Extracurricular Class.

### **PFO Room Representatives**

At the annual Back to School Meet the Teacher event, the PFO will have sign-ups for various volunteer activities, including Room Representative. The Room Rep will assist the teacher with special occasions, field trips, telephoning, etc.

### **Playgrounds**

- PreK students may use the Log Cabin playground or the main playground.
- K – 2nd Grade students use the main playground.
- Grades 3 - 6 use the playground between the gym and the main church.
- Adult supervision is required at all times on all St. Stephen's playgrounds.
- The growth of the School's Extended Care and Extracurricular Programs has necessitated the need to close the main playground after school to students who are not participating in Extended Care or an Extracurricular Class.

### **Playground Rules**

1. Sand and rocks should be kept in their respective areas.
2. Students may swing either on their bottoms or on their stomachs – no standing on the swings.
3. Students may use riding toys only on the concrete paths.
4. The concrete paths are one-way.
5. All balls should be returned to the ball storage area at the end of playground/outdoor learning time.
6. Students may not stand or sit on top of the monkey bars.
7. Students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade are allowed on the main playground for special events or extended care only.

### **PreK/Bathroom Accidents**

The School is not equipped to change diapers, and all children entering PreK3 must be potty trained, be able to use the toilet independently, and wearing underpants (no diapers or “pull-ups”). We do realize that accidents occasionally do occur. Each PreK parent is asked

to provide an extra set of clothing for such times. The School also maintains extra clothing in the School Office.

The Head of School will be notified of frequent bathroom accidents and inappropriate toilet behavior. The Head, consulting with the teacher, will determine the appropriate means of handling any child who seems to have frequent bathroom accidents or exhibits inappropriate toilet behavior, including whether a meeting with the Head, Teacher and parents should be arranged. Other options the Head and Teacher may consider in this situation include decreasing the child's hours of attendance at the School, removing the child from the School until toilet training is successful (in this case, the parents must pay all necessary fees and tuition to keep the child's space at School), or having the child's parents come to the School to deal with each toilet accident.

### **Severe Weather Days**

St. Stephen's will close for severe weather if necessary. Determination for school closure will be made by the Head of School after dialog with Wimberley Independent School District, Hays ISD, and Dripping Springs ISD. Communication of school closure will be made by the Head of School to homeroom teachers, who will notify their assistants and Room Reps responsible for activating the class phone tree. School closures will be posted on the school website. Please listen to Austin television and radio broadcasts for a list of school closings. If the school must close after the school day has started, the school will contact each parent to secure transportation home. The school will notify parents regarding make-up days.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Curriculum**

Based on a strong Christian ethic, the curriculum of St. Stephen's Episcopal School is designed to reflect the philosophy and goals that, when attained by the students, will help them establish a strong intellectual, physical, moral, and ethical foundation for their lives.

The curriculum is based on the belief that early childhood development, through concrete hands-on experiences, provides a solid foundation for educational growth. Small classes, developmentally appropriate practices, and excellent instruction allow for optimum individual development. The core academics of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies are further enriched by special instruction in music, studio art, Spanish language studies, physical education, motor skills development, and technology. Students attend Chapel and Spiritual Formation and Growth Class weekly. Classrooms and play areas are designed and furnished to enhance self-initiated learning experiences, collaborative study, and discovery. All lessons and activities promote building a child's self-esteem, his/her ability to direct his/her own behavior, and development of good citizenship.

### **Grades**

PreK students will have a written assessment of skills in the fall and again in the spring. Kindergarten through 6th grade students have a nine-week evaluation cycle. A Progress Report is sent home at the midway point of each period. At the end of 9 weeks, a report card

is sent home to report the student's progress in various subjects, skill areas and conduct. Letter grades in core subjects begin in Kindergarten. Numeric grades begin in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. Report cards are sent home with students on the Tuesday following the end of the nine-weeks grading period with the exception of the last Report Card which is mailed home in June. All report cards are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the School the following week.

**Grading Scales**

Kindergarten uses the following marks for subjects and skill areas:

E	Exceptional - Consistently demonstrates & communicates a command of concepts beyond grade level standards and works independently;
S+	Above Average – Child is mastering 90-100% of the concepts and skills
S	Satisfactory -at grade level expectation; Child is mastering 80-89% of the concepts and skills
N	Needs Reinforcement – Child is mastering 70-79% of the concepts and skills
U	Unsatisfactory – Child is mastering less than 70% of the concepts and skills
I	Introducing
D	Developing
M	Mastered

Grades 1 - 4 use the following marks for subjects and study skills:

	Numeric % Equivalent
A+	99-100
A	92-98
A-	90-91
B+	88-89
B	82-87
B-	80-81
C+	78-79
C	72-77
C-	70-71
D	65-69 (Failing)
F	0-64 (Failing)

Grades 5 & 6 use the number grades.

Conduct grades will be given by the classroom teacher as well as specialty teachers for all students.

E	exceptional (unusual, reserved for the students who are exceptionally well-behaved, kind, and helpful)
S	at grade level expectation (S+ above expectation; S- below expectation)
N	needs improvement, significantly below grade level expectation
U	unsatisfactory; immediate improvement is needed

### **Late Academic Assignments**

- To receive full credit for an assignment, the work must be turned in on the date that it is due. Each day the assignment is late, 10 points will be deducted from the overall grade on the assignment (i.e., two days late = the highest grade available of 80). After three days the grade will be a zero. All work must be completed and turned in before the report card will be issued. Missed class work and tests need to be made up after school.
- A student whose absence is excused will be allowed at least one day for each day absent to make up any schoolwork that is missed depending on the length of time away. It is the student's responsibility to find out what assignments were missed.
- If the student is absent for an extended period (two or more days), assignments are to be picked up from the office at the end of the school day. Parents must call by 10:00 a.m. to give the homeroom teacher time to coordinate the student's work.
- No student will be penalized for excused absences if the assignments are returned in the allotted time.
- If the student is absent, assignments missed must be completed before grades can be issued. Zeros are given to work missed during unexcused absences. Extended periods of absence will be followed by a parent/teacher conference.

### **Achievement Testing**

The Stanford Achievement Test Series Tenth Edition (Stanford 10) is administered in April to 1st through 6th grade students. The results are one way that St. Stephen's measures the progress of students and programs. Test results will be sent to parents with the final Report Card in early June.

### **Academic Probation**

Academic probation is instigated for a student who fails two or more classes in a grading period. Academic probation status is used to heighten the urgency of an academic situation and to communicate that the student's grades must improve and that tenure at SSES may be at risk. Probationary terms may extend through a nine weeks grading period, with the classroom teachers meeting at the end of the nine weeks to make a recommendation to the Head of School as to whether: 1) the probationary status should be lifted, 2) the probationary status should be continued for another nine weeks, or 3) the student should be removed from the School for academic reasons. The recommendations made by the faculty are heavily influenced by the progress of the student during the probationary period. The final determination of probationary status is made by the Head of School. Tuition contracts are not voided for students removed from school for disciplinary reasons.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Communication with parents should be on-going. Two formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled annually, one in the fall and one in the spring. The conference dates are on the School Calendar. These conferences are intended to allow the teacher to discuss the student's academic progress with the parents/guardians.

A parent/teacher conference should be called at any time during the year when a teacher or parent finds that a student is experiencing difficulties that interfere with success in the

classroom. The Head of School should be notified and may attend the conference, if necessary. Recommendations for moving forward could include special/additional practice in the problem area, suggestion that a tutor be considered, and/or recommendation that educational testing be scheduled with a specialist. Teachers will present an academic plan for the student.

Should educational testing take place, the School will attempt to implement all suggested accommodations. Should extensive academic services through a specialist be required, the School will make every effort to arrange a time and location during the school day for special tutoring. Teachers shall fully document the success of the recommended accommodations or tutoring, and parent communication should be frequent.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Classroom Discipline**

Each classroom will create a set of rules to be discussed and posted in the classroom. These rules will emphasize listening, communication, and mutual respect. The School's Creed will be at the center of the classroom expectations, and teachers will model conflict-resolution skills. Classroom misbehavior should be addressed first by the teacher. However, when inappropriate behavior continues, is repeated several times, or escalates, the student may be sent to see the Head of School. If the misbehavior rises to an unacceptable level, a Disciplinary Slip will be used to communicate and document disciplinary infractions, and it will be copied and mailed to parents.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

The following should be part of all classroom discipline plans:

1. Discipline and guidance will be consistent and directed to promote self-management and acceptable behavior.
2. Students with good behavior are recognized and encouraged.
3. Students will be taught by example through the use of fair and consistent rules, and discipline will be relevant to the behavior involved.
4. If necessary, brief and supervised separation from the group may be used.
5. The student will be asked to recite the classroom rule or Honor Code provision.
6. Continual disruption requires discussion among the teacher, student and parents.
7. Further difficulties will be referred to the Head of School. Disciplinary slips will be mailed home.
8. Parents will be asked to a conference with the teacher and the Head of School as needed, and will be notified of continued discipline problems.
9. Students with continued behavioral problems who do not respond positively to these discipline methods may be assigned to Disciplinary Probation status and ultimately asked by the Head of School to withdraw.

### **PreK Discipline**

There will be immediate consequences for hitting, kicking, or biting another classmate or teacher which include supervised removal from the group and notification to the child's

parent. The harmed student's parent shall also be notified. If injury to another child results, an accident report should be filed with the Head of School.

If this type of behavior continues, the parent will be asked to pick up his/her child, and as a condition of the child's return to school, the parent(s) must attend a conference with the teacher and the Head of School. If a child exhibits inappropriate behavior over an extended period of time, he/she will be subject to dismissal from the School.

### **The St. Stephen's Honor Code**

The Honor Code will be posted in each classroom in the School. At the beginning of the school year, the Honor Code will be discussed with each class by the Head of School. After indicating their understanding of the Honor Code, students in Kindergarten through Sixth Grade will be asked to sign the Honor Code Board that hangs in the School Office. This will take place in Chapel.

Honor Code violations include, but are not limited to: lying, stealing, cheating, fighting, and inappropriate language. Students will be sent to the Head of School, and parents will receive notice with a disciplinary slip when an Honor Code violation occurs. Recourse for Honor Code violations include, but are not limited to removal of student's name from the Honor Code for a one-week to a one-month term and assigned schoolwork in lieu of the next school sponsored trip. This assignment will be completed at school during the trip. The student's behavior will be monitored for progress and his/her named will be returned to the Honor Code Board when appropriate. Should progress not occur, Disciplinary Probation will be considered.

**The School does not permit nor condone any type of corporal punishment, including spanking or shaking, even with the consent of the parent.**

### **Disciplinary Probation**

Disciplinary probation status may be imposed only by the Head of School, who makes this decision after a recommendation from faculty. Disciplinary probation status is used to heighten the urgency of a disciplinary situation and to communicate that the behavior must change or tenure at St. Stephen's will be terminated. Probationary terms extend through each nine weeks grading period, with the classroom teachers meeting at the end of the nine weeks to make a recommendation to the Head of School as to whether: 1) the probationary status should be lifted, 2) the probationary status should be continued for another nine weeks, or 3) the student should be removed from the School. As in academic probation, the recommendations made by the faculty are heavily influenced by the progress of the student during the probationary period. The final determination of probationary status is made by the Head of School. Tuition contracts are not voided for students removed from school for disciplinary reasons.

## **DRESS CODE**

### **PreK3 and PreK4 Dress**

For safety, comfort, and range of motion the following guidelines should be followed:

Children should be able to handle their clothing independently when using the restroom. Shorts and pants with elastic waists are required because they are easier for the child to pull up. Girls wearing a dress/skirt must wear shorts or tights under it.

As a safety precaution, all shoes should be rubber-soled and **only** children who are proficient at tying their shoes should wear lace shoes. Closed-toed shoes with Velcro or zipper closures and rubber soles are recommended. No high tops, heels, and /or sandals are allowed.

Students must be toilet trained and fully out of diapers and pull-ups to enter our PreK program.

### **Kindergarten – Grade 6**

St. Stephen's Episcopal School desires to instill pride and a sense of community for our students with its uniforms. For this reason, simple uniform pieces have been chosen. The official **dress** uniform consists of a navy collared polo shirt with the St. Stephen's crest and khaki pants or shorts/skort. The official dress uniform, often called our "dress blues" is required on Wednesday Chapel days, special occasions, and field trips.

On other school days a student may wear a navy, red, or white polo or turtleneck shirt with the St. Stephen's crest and khaki or navy bottoms (shorts, slacks, skirts, skorts). A navy and plaid jumper along with a plaid skirt from Land's End are also permitted, to be worn with a navy, red, or white shirt. On Fridays ONLY, a St. Stephen's themed or connected t-shirt (any color) may be worn with blue jeans. Shirts must be tucked in for Chapel and other special occasions. Refer to the Land's End website for a complete listing of all SSES approved items.

Students with dress code violations will be sent to the School Office to change into a proper uniform using clothes from the uniform exchange. If no suitable substitute can be found, parents will be called to provide the proper uniform. When the number of dress code violations warrants it, the Social Development/Social Skills grade may be lowered.

### **Where to Purchase**

Land's End is the suggested uniform brand because for every purchase for St. Stephen's, Land's End will donate three percent of the net sales back to our School. St. Stephen's Episcopal School; Wimberley, TX has The Land's End school number of 900048372.

### **Un-uniform Day Policy**

As a fundraiser for special student projects, the School will promote a un-uniform or dress day for a small donation per student. On these days we ask that students dress with modesty in mind and specifically that clothing with advertisements, spaghetti straps, halter tops, bare midriffs, or exposed undergarments are worn. Students must always bring appropriate shoes for P.E.

### **Outer Wear / Winter Coats**

Only red, white, or navy sweaters, sweatshirts, or jackets with the St. Stephen's crest are permitted as indoor wear when in uniform. Fleece jackets or coats (crest not required) should

be worn when the crest sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket does not provide adequate warmth for outdoor learning. Undershirts, if worn, must be red, white, or navy.

### **Shoes / Socks / Leggings**

Shoes are required at all times unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Athletic shoes are recommended because of the many outdoor activities each day. No particular brand or color is required of an athletic shoe. However, all other types of shoes or boots **MUST** be solid red, white, navy, black, or brown with closed toes and rubber or leather soles. Children unable to tie their own shoes must wear shoes w/Velcro or zipper closures. Please practice shoe tying at home. Only white, red, or navy solid, polka dotted, or striped socks, tights, or leggings are allowed.

### **Belts**

Solid black, brown, or navy belts may be worn but are not required. Buckles should not contain emblems or images.

### **Hats**

No hats are permitted at school in the Chapel, classrooms or hallways but may be worn for outside activities, especially on hot or cold days.

### **Hair**

Hair must be a natural hair color. Any hairstyle that causes a distraction during class time is not permissible. All hair accessories must be red, white, or navy in a solid, polka dot, striped, or plaid design.

### **Jewelry**

Students may wear a necklace, watch, and/or bracelet that is appropriate and may wear one ring on each hand. Girls may wear one set of post earrings (one in each ear). Boys are not permitted to wear earrings. No other jewelry is permitted.

### **Teams/Other Organizations**

Scouts and Brownies may wear their uniforms on their meeting day unless the meeting day is Wednesday or field trip day. (It must be a full uniform. No partial uniforms are permitted.)

### **General Expectations**

- Appearance should reflect common sense, neatness, and safety.
- Clothing should be clean and in good condition with no missing buttons. No torn or faded clothing is permitted.
- Shoes must be tied at all times.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Parent Communication**

In all cases, the Teacher and/or the Head will be the contact persons regarding a child's classroom situation. When there are concerns, observations, and questions, the Teacher and/or Head is to handle any exchange with parents. The Teacher will keep up a regular dialogue and consultation with the Assistant regarding all of the children in the classroom, but the Teacher is the sole bearer of any communication with the parents.

### **Questions and/or Concerns**

Parents are asked to first contact their child's teacher if there is a problem the parents wish to discuss. This contact can take the form of an e-mail, phone call, or a written note. The teacher will attempt to resolve the problem with an e-mail, phone call, or written response. If the concern is of a serious nature, the Head of School shall be notified. If the problem/concern is not resolved through parent/teacher communication, a conference should be requested with the Head of School.

In the event that a problem cannot be resolved, there is a grievance policy and hearing procedure to be used (see below).

### **Regular Teacher/Parent Communication**

Monthly newsletters, mid-period Progress Reports, and Nine-week Report Cards ensure systematic communication. However, letters, notes, stickers, phone calls, emails, etc., are also encouraged to further good communication between the teacher and parents.

Homeroom teachers will provide parents with a daily classroom schedule at the beginning of the school year. They also produce a monthly newsletter that includes teacher contact information (e-mail and phone) and a chronology of curricular themes, major assignments, special activities, and classroom news.

### **Official School Communication**

Official school communications will be handled by the weekly Head Lines, standard mail, email, and information placed in the Tuesday Folder taken home by students. This includes notices of field trips, testing, and school events. In addition, emails from the school office will be sent regarding announcements, changes in schedule, events, and other necessary news items.

### **Tuesday Folder**

Every student will come home with a Folder in their backpack on Tuesday that will have the student's classwork, teacher communications, including field trip forms, and all-school communications. The oldest sibling in the family will have copies of all-school communications in his/her Folder only. These Folders should be reviewed each Tuesday after school and all communication that needs to be returned to school should be placed in the Folder for return on Wednesday.

### **Grievance Process**

A grievance is a complaint by a parent about any aspect of the curriculum, procedure, policies or operation of the School as well as relationships with the Head of School, School Board, other parents, teachers, other employees or students. The grievance should be one that

lies within the power of School management to resolve. The aim of the grievance procedure is to enable parents to have grievances heard and addressed in a timely, orderly, and appropriate manner. It is intended that grievances should be settled quickly and fairly, and that all persons involved take the process seriously and respectfully.

If parents have a concern with a classroom situation, they are required to first contact their child's teacher to discuss the matter. This contact can take the form of an email, phone call, or a written note. The teacher will attempt to resolve the problem with either an email, phone call, a written response, or a conference. If the problem cannot be resolved in this manner, then either the parents or the teacher may request that a conference be scheduled with the Head of School. Should there be no satisfactory resolution of the concern at this informal stage, the formal grievance process described below should be followed.

### Stage 1

The parent should personally present the grievance to the Head of School, either orally or in writing or both. The Head of School should normally meet with the parent to hear the grievance and attempt to give a response, either interim or final, within seven days, or as soon thereafter as reasonably practicable under the circumstances.

The initial response of the Head of School will be to develop a plan to address the problem and to encourage the parent to continue to work with the teacher for a satisfactory resolution. If the grievance is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction within 30 days of the formal complaint, the parent may appeal the grievance to Stage 2. If the parent's grievance is against or involves the Head of School directly, the parent may skip Stage 1 and begin the grievance at Stage 2.

### Stage 2

This stage will be heard by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees by the presentation of an oral and/or written complaint by the parent to the Chairman of the Committee. If the Chair and the parent cannot resolve the complaint within seven days of the initial presentation of the complaint to the Chair, the Chair should schedule a hearing for the parent before the full Executive Committee. The Executive Committee should hear the complaint within 30 days of the receipt of the grievance complaint by the Chair of the Committee. If the complaint is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction by the Executive Committee, the parent may appeal the committee's decision to the Board of Trustees for resolution under Stage 3.

### Stage 3

This stage will be commenced by the presentation of an oral and/or written complaint with the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the Chair and the parent cannot resolve the complaint within seven days of receipt of the complaint by the Chair, it shall be the prerogative of the Chair to schedule a hearing before the full Board of Trustees at a special or regular meeting of the Board. In either event, the decision made at Stage 3 by the full School Board shall be final.

### Hearing Procedure

Stage 1 shall be conducted informally between the parent and the Head of School. Stages 2 and 3 hearings shall be conducted under such guidelines and procedures as shall be promulgated by the hearing panel. Prior to the beginning of the hearing, the hearing panel shall advise all parties of the procedure that it intends to follow.

If a time limit or deadline for action provided herein falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or on a school holiday or national holiday, such time limit or deadline for action shall be extended to the next school day during the school year or to the next regular business day during the summer recess.

Parents should recognize that answers to some complaints may be obtainable only by reference to others outside of the School and that grievance resolution could be delayed beyond normally expected time limitations. At any stage of the grievance process, the parent may be accompanied by a friend, attorney, or other advisor. Likewise the Head of School, Executive Committee, or Board of Trustees may, at any stage of the grievance procedure, seek the advice of, and be accompanied by the School Chancellor or other attorney or appropriate advisor.

## **POLICY CHANGES**

The policies outlined in the Family Handbook are subject to change during the school year. Any such changes will be communicated promptly to teachers, parents, and students.