**A**

**Guide**

**To**

**Fourth Grade**

***To: 4th Grade Parents***

***From: Former 4th Grade Parents***

***ST. GILES SCHOOL***

September 7, 2016

Dear Fourth Grade Parent,

As parents, we know how important communication is to making a school year go smoothly. PTO believes that the parent-to-parent communication is an important link in the communication network.

This guide is PTO’s attempt at documenting parental helpful hints. Parents who previously had children in fourth grade have compiled these hints. We hope they provide you with an overview of the upcoming year, highlighting the differences from previous years.

Please keep in mind that this guide is to serve as an “unofficial” guide, please look for “official” details from the school and teachers. The communication tools used at the school, grade and teacher level remain the foundations of strong communication.

**School-wide** information on policies, rules, and regulations is in the **School Handbook** (the “Handbook”). A copy of the Handbook may be found on the school website at [www.stgilesschool.org](http://www.stgilesschool.org).

**Teacher-specific information** such as expectations, best ways to communicate with them, grading, etc. will be presented at **Curriculum Night**. The school website [www.stgilesschool.org](http://www.stgilesschool.org) and individual teacher webpages on the school site, found under “Teacher Pages,” have critical and current information including but not limited to curriculum, homework, field trips, special events, etc. Please check those resources daily.

**eNews** is your information lifeline to the school. All information will be delivered via e-mail to all parents. If you ever need a flyer or announcement included in the eNews, please forward a DIGITAL copy to enews@stgilesschool.org. All submissions due by noon Friday for publication on Sunday. All articles subject to approval.

**We hope this guide helps your student to have a happy and successful fourth grade!**

St. Giles PTO

**GENERAL**

The fourth grade year will bring some visible changes. Fourth graders have moved out of the Primary Corrigan Building and will now join the older grades in the Frawley Building. Girls uniforms change to the skirts and green shirts. The children will enjoy recess on the blacktop. When the school day has ended, they are released by their teachers without requiring someone to greet them. These kids are growing up…

# Daily Schedule

**Arrival/Dismissal**

School begins at **8:10 a.m.** with the entry bell. The **tardy bell is at 8:20 a.m.** 4th through 8th grade students must report directly to the school office where the tardy will be recorded and a classroom admittance slip will be given to the late student. Instruction begins at 8:25 a.m. School instruction ends at 3:00 p.m. and the school day ends at **3:10 p.m.** Students not picked up before 3:20 p.m. will be brought to the office and will need to be picked up there.

**Fourth graders enter the Frawley Building through the Linden Avenue doors.** Car pick-up after school is on the Columbian Ave. side, except if they are meeting younger children at the Corrigan Building. Remind your student that they must cross at the corners.

Refer to the Handbook for a complete description of the traffic and safety plan.

Take special note of the times and rules. The drive-up lines may be long, especially on rainy/snowy days. The process for the whole school is usually finished in 10-15 minutes, if everyone follows the rules. Be especially aware of the no parking areas. The Village of Oak Park will issue tickets. If you want to walk your student up to the school, you should park on one of the side streets. Do **NOT** get out of your car if you are using the carpool line!

**Absences**

Absences must be reported to the school office by 8:30 a.m. either by phone call to (708) 383-6279 or by e-mail to office@stgilesschool.org. Phone messages should be left on the main line voicemail any time before 8:30 a.m. **Note**: Parents may let teacher know of an absence, if desired, however, this is secondary to the office receiving notification of a student’s absence and does **not** replace school office notification.

**Switching of Classes**

Ms. Moskos teaches Social Studies to both homerooms. Ms. Byrne teaches Science to both homerooms.

**“Specials”**

Art – once per week (107 Wednesday, 108 Tuesday)

Music – once per week (107 Wednesday, 108 Wednesday)

Computers – once per week (107 Monday, 108 Monday)

Gym – Twice per week (107 Tuesday and Friday, 108 Thursday and Friday) - It may be helpful to leave a pair of gym shoes at school just for gym class. No one is allowed to participate in gym class without gym shoes. On gym day, girls usually wear blue or black shorts under their skirt.

Spanish – Once per week (107 Thursday, 108 Thursday)

Library – Students in fourth through eighth grades have the opportunity to visit the library with their language arts teacher to check out books at least once every other week.

**Mass**

Fourth graders go to the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Tuesdays. Parents are welcome to attend.

**Lunch**

Fourth graders go to recess from 11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. on the playground, followed by lunch in the classroom from 12:05 – 12:25 p.m. Lunch supervisors are assigned to each homeroom and are responsible for supervising the classrooms and playground.

Send food ready-to-eat, transfer hard to open food (e.g., oranges, fruit, etc.) to reusable containers. Healthy lunches are appreciated. If your fourth grader forgets his/her lunch, bring it to the school office marked with your child’s name and room number. It will be delivered.

* **Nut Free Policy -** The only food items that may be served at classroom or school events are pre-packaged food items with complete ingredient lists so that potential food allergens can be screened at the event. Foods sent in for an individual student’s snack or lunch should be carefully checked to make sure they are peanut/tree-nut free.
* **Zero Waste policy** – Students will have designated bins to dispose of trash and recyclable items. This policy will be reviewed with students, classroom teachers and monitors.
* **Fun Lunch** is a PTO sponsored fundraiser. It consists of hot lunch meals delivered twice each month from local fast food restaurants. The meals are pre-paid/pre-ordered. Most kids participate in the fun lunch program. Ordering for the program is available in early September and January for each semester. A link to the ordering platform is available on the school website at <https://stgilesschool.hotlunches.net/admin/>, and reminders are sent through eNews. Payment through PayPal is preferred. If parents prefer to pay by cash or check, remit payment to the Fun Lunch Mailbox in the Office in an envelope labeled with the student’s name and classroom, and reminders will be sent through eNews.
* **SmartLunches** - A representative from Smartlunches.com will be at the PTO coffee hour to talk with parents about our new daily lunch program at St. Giles Smartlunches. The representative will again be at Curriculum Night in the Corrigan building lobby with a display of the different lunch box sizes & to answer any questions.

SmartLunches will be dropped off in the student's building and given to the student in a box clearly marked with their name, grade and room number. Parents can order these lunches up to 48 hours in advance.

Log onto Smartlunches.com and you can order a lunch for your child(ren) almost everyday school is in session. The SmartLunches calendar has some dates blocked out that coincide with school holidays or our PTO Fun Lunch. To order SmartLunches, log onto <http://www.smartlunches.com/>. This is a service provided to our students that does not require the help of our fabulous parent volunteers.

**Uniform**

The Girl’s Uniform for Grades 4-8 will consist of a black watch plaid skirt, short or long sleeved green banded polo with St. Giles logo. Undershirts worn under polo must be WHITE only. Refer to the Handbook for a complete description of the uniform code including restrictions for “out of uniform” days. A copy of the Handbook is available on the school website.

# Homework

**Assignment Notebook**

Students are responsible for writing all assignments down in their assignment notebooks. At Curriculum Night, teachers will explain their requirements regarding parental signatures on assignment notebooks.

A parent may want to check the student’s assignment notebook daily and discuss time management with his/her child. Do not use the assignment notebook to communicate with the teacher. Homework is also listed on the teacher webpage.

**Homework Assignments**

As expected, homework is increased from third grade. For some subjects, homework may count as part of the student’s grade.

As was the case in third grade, no written homework is given on the weekends, except for extended projects or work that needs to be made up. Teachers encourage and reward outside reading, especially during weekend time.

**Homework during Absence**

If you want a teacher to prepare your child’s homework assignments during an absence, you must call the office no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence to pick up the homework after school on the table in the foyer just outside the school office. Remember that homework assignments are also listed on the teacher’s webpage at [www.stgilesschool.org](http://www.stgilesschool.org).

**Projects**

A few longer-term projects may be assigned this year. This is a good opportunity for students to see how a large project can be broken down in to smaller pieces. Students may need some parental assistance to stay on target.

**Extra Help Sessions**

Teachers are often available before or after school for extra help by appointment. Please contact Ms. Moskos at amoskos@stgilesschool.org and Ms. Byrne at sbyrne@stgilesschool.org.

# STUDENT’S PROGRESS

**Progress Reports**

Progress reports will be distributed mid-trimester to all students. If you believe your child is having difficulty, you may want to communicate with the teacher prior to receipt of the progress report.

**Daily Progress Reports**

**Your child’s grades will now be accessible through PowerSchool.** The web address is <https://archchicago.powerschool.com/public/home.html>. Returning families can access the grade page by using the Log In and Password they set up last year. New families will receive log in information the week of September 7. Please check PowerSchool regularly.

**Letter Grades**

Students will receive letter grades in all subjects, with the exception of some of their specials classes.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

In November, parents meet only with the homeroom teacher. Sign ups begin at Curriculum Night, and can be scheduled through the school secretary at a later date. If needed, a separate conference with other teachers can be scheduled at a different time. If you have a few specific areas you would like to discuss, send a note to the teacher in advance. Optional parent-teacher conferences with any teacher are offered in March.

**Teacher meetings** can be arranged at a mutually agreed date and time via email. Meetings can be especially helpful since conferences are held so early in the year.

**Tutoring**

A child’s need for tutoring may be mutually discussed between the teacher and parents. The actual request for tutoring must be parent initiated. There are several teachers in the school who will provide tutoring. The arrangement must be made with the approval of the principal and tutoring fees paid by parents/guardians for at-school tutoring must be paid directly to the school in the school’s name. The teacher will be paid by the school through the school’s regular payroll system.

**SPECIAL DAYS AND EVENTS**

**Birthday Celebrations** Sign up your child for participation in Birthday Book Club in the month of the student’s birthday on the hot lunch website <https://stgilesschool.hotlunches.net/admin/>. Food treats sent to school in celebration of birthdays are **not** allowed.

Students may be out of uniform one day during the week of their birthday or half birthday. Food treats sent to school in celebration of birthdays are not allowed.

**Christmas Program** – Fourth graders are included in the annual Christmas program. Rehearsals are held during November and December during school. The Christmas program is held in the church in mid-December.

**May Crowning** is a special celebration of Mary with the second and eighth graders playing a special role. All students attend the May Crowning ceremony which takes place at the beginning of May.

**Early Dismissal** is scheduled **every Wednesday at 2 p.m.** with the same pick-up procedures as regular days. In addition, there are **occasional half days** scheduled which typically means that **dismissal is at 11:40 a.m.** with the same pick-up procedures as regular days.

**Institute Days** are days that school is not in session, but the teachers are in meetings &/or training sessions.

**Picture Day** is the day students are photographed for their individual and class photos. The students are **out of uniform**. *(Refer to the Handbook for guidelines on appropriate attire for out of uniform days.)* If for some reason you miss picture day, a make-up/retake day is scheduled.

**Halloween** is traditionally celebrated with a school parade. Students may bring their costumes to school, or they may go home to change during lunch. Teachers will send home a permission slip. Specifics on the costumes, parade and party will be provided by the teachers.

**ASPIRE TEST** – ASPIRE Tests are given in third through eighth grades at St. Giles. They are based on the Common Core State Standards. Parents can help by ensuring their child gets a good night’s sleep and a nutritious breakfast. Since it is the first time taking a standardized test, they may need some reassurance from home. Scores are mailed home.

# SCHOOL’S MAJOR FUNDRAISERS

**Lion’s Leap** is the name of the school’s walkathon that takes place in September. It is one of two major fundraisers for the school. The minimum amount due is $100 for a one child family in K – 8, $200 for a family with two or more children K – 8, and $50 for preschool. Read the back of the Lion’s Leap form that is distributed early in September for the details of the walkathon and incentives. It’s a fun day for the kids and is a vital source of funds for the operating budget. Parent volunteers are needed to count laps, hand out water, supervise the students, and students love to see parents at the event.

**Black and Gold Gala** is the second major fundraiser - an auction which includes silent, live and online bidding items. This year it will take place on March 11, 2017 at McDonough Hall. This event is organized by the Development office and committee coordinators. Parents in 3rd and 6th grade each year will be expected to commit some volunteer time for the event. Parents, parishioners and friends can enjoy a social evening and bid on a wide variety of items with lower and higher bid amounts in order to support the school.

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

**Information regarding all the extracurricular activities are sent home via the eNews. Watch it closely – most sign-ups have deadlines!**

**Band -** *Contact: Mr. Gloppen / Mr. Knauf*

Fourth grade students may join the Beginning Band. Students may begin lessons the summer prior to fourth grade. Costs include band fees, instruction fees and instrument costs or rental fee.

Beginning Band practices during lunch in the gym. Beginning Band has its own concert in November. All St. Giles School bands perform in the Christmas, Pops (March) and spring (end of May) concerts. Beginning Band members do not wear uniforms, and “Sunday” clothing is recommended.

**Instrument Lessons**

Private instrument lessons are given in the Gleeson Building on a weekly basis during class time. The lesson schedule is on a rotating basis so the students avoid repeatedly missing the same subject. The schedule is posted in each classroom and students are responsible for getting to their lessons without a reminder from the homeroom teacher. **Additionally, teachers expect that students will obtain from a teacher any classwork missed or assigned homework during their absence.**

**APEX (After school PE Extension) and Summer Programs -** *Contact Mr. Collins*

APEX offers after school gym games, and intramural team sports. The program includes a wide variety sports including soccer and hand hockey for the primary grades and basketball, volleyball and kickball for the middle and junior high grades. All teams are coed and the emphasis is on learning and having fun! Sessions are held throughout the school year and take place immediately following the school day. Information regarding registration is distributed by Mr. Collins, the gym teacher. APEX also runs a gym program from the end of school in June to mid-July. Various activities are programmed throughout the day and students pay one fee and drop in for activities of interest. Summer program information is distributed in the spring.

**Enrichment**

The St. Giles PTO is proud to offer a wide variety of after-school Enrichment Programs that provide extra-curricular experiences in arts and academics that enhance what our children are learning in school. The programs range from debate, cooking, and musicals to Mandarin and more. These fee-based programs are run by outside vendors, St. Giles teachers, and parents.

The PTO manages registration, set up, and payments. Programs are available to all St. Giles students grades K thru 8. Financial aid is available each semester.

Enrichment Programs will have a rolling registration. We have a session each semester. Registration is run thru our PTO payment platform <http://stgilesschool.hotlunches.net>. Don’t let the name fool you. This site manages all PTO program payments: hot lunch, birthday book club, enrichment programs and more. PayPal is the preferred payment method on the site. If you choose to pay by check or cash, simply note the student information on the envelope with the cash or check you submit to the Enrichment Program mailbox in the office.

For more information and details on specific programs go to the PTO tab on the school website.

**Interscholastic Sports** – Contact*Athleticdirector@stgilesschool.org*

Beginning in 5th grade, St. Giles School offers many ways for kids to participate in sports. However, 4th grade students have the opportunity to participate in spring interscholastic soccer.

Coupled with the greater workload, parents are cautioned not to over-commit their students for too many sports at one time. Rules and philosophies of the sports program are listed in the Athletic Handbook that is distributed to students when they first sign up for a sport. The Athletic Handbook can be found on the school website. A signed form stating the student and parent have read the handbook is required annually.

A description of the sporting teams offered, fees, and specifics regarding field locations, uniforms, schedules, etc. may be found at <http://stgileslionsathletics.org.assn.la/> or on the school website at [www.stgilesschool.org](http://www.stgilesschool.org) under “Student Life” “Athletics” “Interscholastic Sports Website.”

**Student Council** - *Contact: Mrs. Lechowicz, Ms. Gallo*

Classroom elections are held at the beginning of fourth grade for homeroom representative. The elected representatives attend Student Council meetings that are held at school during lunch. At the end of fourth grade, students may run in a school-wide election to serve as a Student Council officer for the following year.

**Scouts**

In fourth grade, girls may sign-up for Juniors and boys may sign up for Webelos. These Scouting programs are open to students of St. Giles School and children of St. Giles Parish. Parents volunteer to be troop and den leaders. Information is sent home via eNews, email or the take home folder. Information on scouting may be found on the school website at <http://www.stgilesschool.org/student-life/clubs/>.

**Rainbows** - *Contact: Mrs. Monica Lechowicz/Counselor*

This program is for children who have experienced death, divorce or significant loss.

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE

Parents should sign up with the PTO if they are interested in being involved. All volunteers in the school must complete the Archdiocesan requirements for Protecting God’s Children (VIRTUS) in order to volunteer. Virtus information may be found on the school website at [http://www.stgilesschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SGS-Volunteer-Requiements.pdf](http://www.stgilesschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SGS-Volunteer-Requiements.pdfa) and in every edition of eNews. Please contact Assistant Principal Mrs. Lofgren with any questions. See the Assistant Principal, Mrs. Lofgren, for information.

**Field Trips –** If fourth grade has any field trips during the year, parents may be needed as chaperones. If you are interested in helping in any way, please check with the office to fulfill the Archdiocesan requirements for volunteers.

**Room Parents –** There are typically two room parents per classroom who organize class parties with games, crafts, and treats at Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine’s Day. They also work jointly with the fourth grade room parents to organize the year-end picnic third/fourth grade picnic. Parents will be asked to help with these parties.

**Visitors/volunteers in School -** All visitors or volunteers must report to the office for an identification badge while in the buildings. Upon leaving, please return the badge to the school office.