**A**

**Guide**

**To**

**Kindergarten**

***To: Kindergarten Parents***

***From: Former Kindergarten Parents***

***ST. GILES SCHOOL***

September 7, 2016

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

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 kindergarten have compiled these hints. We hope they provide you with an overview of the upcoming year, highlighting the differences from kindergarten.

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 Sunday E-News, 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 happy and successful kindergarten year!**

St. Giles PTO

# Arrival and Dismissal

* Full day kindergarten has the same hours as grades 1 – 8. School begins at **8:10 a.m.** with the entry bell. 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.
* Half-day kindergarten also begins at 8:10 a.m. and is dismissed at 11:15 a.m.
* On early dismissal days the entire school is dismissed at 11:40 a.m.
* It is important that students arrive on time in order to participate in the total learning activities for the day.
* Once the first week has gone by, parents should say good-bye to their student outside the school building door. The teachers will lead the students into the classroom.

**Kindergarten students enter and exit the Gleason Building entrance on Columbian Avenue**. Car pick-up after school is on the Columbian Avenue side. 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.

# Lunch and Snack

Half–day students should bring a morning snack. Full day students should bring a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. It is helpful to mark the bag morning snack or afternoon snack so students know which snack to choose. Full day students may order milk through the school for their lunch when registration materials are submitted.

* Send food ready-to-eat, transfer hard to open food (e.g., oranges, fruit, etc.) to reusable containers. Healthy lunches are appreciated. If your kindergarten student 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 are encouraged to use reusable containers. Each classroom in the primary building is equipped with compost, recycle, and trash bins.
* **Fun Lunch** is a PTO sponsored fundraiser. It consists of hot lunch meals delivered twice each month from 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, 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. This is a service provided to our students that does not require the help of our fabulous parent volunteers.

# Parent/Guardian Volunteers

Parents and guardians interested in volunteering in the classroom 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. Further information can be found in the weekly eNews, or see the Assistant Principal, Mrs. Lofgren, for information.

**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.

**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 organize the year-end picnic. Parents will be asked to help with these parties.

# Reading

Reading is not a benchmark for kindergarten. Some children will read by the end of the year, some will not. Within our reading curriculum, the kindergarten teachers use leveled reading materials. The learning process is what is emphasized. The teachers can provide additional reading resources upon request.

# Classroom Visits

Parental visitation in the classroom is much more limited than in preschool. Holiday parties are generally only for the children. There will be other special events where family members will be invited to visit the classroom. The teachers will offer other opportunities for parental involvement. Chaperones for field trips must meet the requirements for the Archdiocesan Protecting God’s Children program. See Assistant Principal Mrs. Lofgren for information.

# Field Trips

If kindergarten 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.

# Spanish

Spanish is part of the curriculum and is taught on Wednesday at 9:55 to 10:15 a.m. in the kindergarten classroom.

# Mass

The kindergarten students attend 8:30 a.m. Mass on Wednesday. Family members are invited and encouraged to attend Mass.

# Specials

**Ms. Mamolella’s Kindergarten Ms. Tomeczko’s Kindergarten**

Mon. Music, Gym Monday - Music

Tues. Gym Tues. – Art

Wed. – Mass, Spanish, Art Wed. – Mass, Spanish, Gym

Thurs. – none Thurs. – Computer/Library

Fri. – Computer/Library Fri. – Gym

Fri. - Primary prayer service in the AM for all primary grades.

**Kindergarten Dress Code**

* Clothes worn to school should allow students to fully participate in the activities of the day.
* Shoes should be safe for running and/or playing on recess equipment. Flip-flops, clogs and backless shoes are unacceptable for safety reasons.
* Hair length should not interfere with the student’s ability to engage in the learning process. Hair must be off one’s face and out of one’s eyes.
* Please send one pair of gym shoes to be left at school.

Please refer to the Handbook available on the school website for a more complete description of the Preschool and Kindergarten Dress Code.

**Projects That Require Parental Involvement**

**"Me Museum"** – The teachers will send home detailed information on this project. Each child is assigned a week for their "museum". The children's "museums" are displayed outside the kindergarten room for one week. They can include stuffed animals, favorite books and toys, or may simply be a poster with photos and descriptions.

**Science experiment** - This project is part of the "Me Museum" project performed in the classroom during each child's week.

**Saint Project** - Your child may need assistance in decorating a life-sized paper doll as a saint. Decorations can be as simple as coloring or as elaborate as hair and clothing glued on to the paper. These finished products are used as part of the All Saints Day celebration at church.

# APEX Intramural and Summer Sports Programs *- Contact Mr. Collins*

Intramural sports programs for all ages are offered in the gym through the APEX program. 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.

**Communication**

In addition to eNews for the school, kindergarten teachers send out a newsletter on a regular basis to update parents on classroom activities. Each teacher also has a teacher page on our school website [www.stgilesschool.org](http://www.stgilesschool.org). The pages can be located under Teacher Pages.

**Special Days and Events**

**Birthday Celebrations** – Parents may plan the craft and donate a book to the classroom. Parents are welcome to visit the class for 30 minutes to share the craft or book. Food treats sent to school in celebration of birthdays are **not** allowed.

**Christmas Pageant** – The Christmas pageant is scheduled for mid-December, and the kindergarten children have a starring role. Parents may need to make a costume (angel, king, shepherd, etc.) for the pageant. Your child will choose their part in class. Be sure to watch for notices pertaining to your involvement.

**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 and/or training classes.

**Picture Day** is the day students are photographed for their individual and class photo. 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 schedule.

**Halloween** is traditionally celebrated with an all-school parade. The timing of the parade dictates whether costumes are worn all day or just in the afternoon. If just in the afternoon, students may bring their costumes or they may go home to change if a parent has written a note. Specifics on the costumes, parade, and party will be provided by the teacher.

**Kindergarten Graduation** – At the end of the school year, the children participate in a special graduation ceremony in the church. All family members are invited to attend.

# 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.