A Guide to Second Grade

To: 2nd grade parents
From: Former 2nd grade parents

ST. GILES SCHOOL

Dear Second Grade 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. These hints have been compiled by parents who previously had children in second grade. We hope they provide you with an overview of the upcoming year, highlighting the differences from first grade.

Please keep in mind that this guide is 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 http://www.stgilesschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/St.-Giles-School-Handbook-1.pdf.

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 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.

E-News 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 E-News, please forward a DIGITAL copy to enews@stgilesschool.org. All submissions due by end of school Thursday for publication on Sunday. All articles subject to approval.

We hope this guide helps you and your student to have a happy and successful second grade!

St. Giles PTO

Second graders will be developing stronger reading and writing skills, as well as learning to study for and take tests. Preparing for the sacraments of First Communion and Reconciliation adds additional excitement to the year.

GET YOURSELF READY

- Read the Handbook for the official rules and regulations of the School. It can be found at http://www.stgilesschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/St.-Giles-School-Handbook-1.pdf.
- Try to meet other parents of second graders. It's nice to have a few people to call with any questions you may have. Besides, some probably will become your very good friends.
- Try to attend the Welcome Back coffee that PTO sponsors on the first day of school. It's a great way to meet other parents and share school thoughts.
- Sign-up to volunteer for at least one PTO committee. Volunteering not only helps the School, but it's another opportunity to meet other parents. Check out the PTO's website at https://www.stgilesschool.org/st-giles-pto/ for more information.

GET YOUR SECOND GRADER READY

- There are two second grade classrooms, one teacher per room.
- Please look at the Handbook for the school uniform code.
- **Label all belongings** including gym shoes, winter gear, sweatshirts, lunch bags and back packs. Belongings are kept in lockers shared by students.
- All second graders need backpacks. Backpacks on rollers DO NOT fit in the lockers.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Arrival and Dismissal

- School begins at **8:10 a.m.** with the entry bell. The **tardy bell is at 8:20 a.m.** Primary students must report directly to their classroom 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.
- **Every Wednesday** there will be an **early dismissal at 2:00 p.m.** Students who are not picked up before 2:10 pm will be brought to the office and will need to be picked up there.

- Second graders enter and exit the Corrigan Building through the north Linden Avenue door (Door B). Car pick-up after school is on the Linden Avenue side. Remind your student that they **must** cross at the corners. Refer to the Handbook for traffic and safety regulations.
- 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 and snowy days. The process for the whole school is usually finished in about 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!
- Students arriving after 8:20 a.m. will be marked tardy and will have to check in at the office. Students not picked up before 3:25 p.m. will be brought to the office and will need to be picked up there.

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.

Mass

- Second graders attend 8:30 a.m. Mass on Wednesday with kindergarten through fourth grade students. Parents are encouraged to attend. Children must be at school by 8:20 a.m. If your student is tardy, please bring him or her to the office to be escorted to Mass.
- If there is an all school mass during a school week, students will not be attending mass on their regularly scheduled day. Check the school calendar on the website at https://www.stgilesschool.org/events/.

Lunch

- Second grade goes to recess from 11:00 – 11:20 a.m. Lunch is in the classroom from 11:20-11:40 a.m. Lunch supervisors are assigned to each homeroom and are responsible for supervising the classrooms and playground.
- Send food ready-to-eat and transfer hard to open food (e.g., oranges, fruit, etc.) to reusable containers. Healthy lunches are appreciated. Lunchables are allowed, but no fast food is permitted.
- If your second 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 -** Foods sent in for an individual student's snack or lunch should be carefully checked to ensure they are peanut/tree-nut free. 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.
- **Zero Waste policy** - Students are encouraged to use reusable containers. The lunchroom in the Frawley building is equipped with compost, recycle, and trash bins.
- **Milk** – If you would like for your student to receive milk at lunch, please send request email to office@stgilesschool.org with student name and grade. FACTS will be charged $20.
- **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. 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 E-News. 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.
- **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 and 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.

You can order a lunch for your child(ren) almost everyday school is in session, with the exception of a few dates 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.

Specials

Art – once per week (Friday #104, Thursday #106)

Music – twice per week (Tuesday & Thursday #104, Tuesday & Wednesday #106)

Computers – once per week (Tuesday #104, Tuesday #106)

Library – once per week (Friday #104, Wednesday #106)

Gym – twice per week (Monday & Wednesday #104, Monday & Thursday #106)

Spanish – once per week (Monday #104, Friday #106)

Students may wear their gym uniforms to school on gym days all day.

Library book checkout is for two weeks. Books must be returned before another book may be checked out.

Forgotten Items

Bring forgotten items to the office. The office will deliver the items or ask you to place them on the table outside of the locked hallway door in the Corrigan Building. They will be brought to your child if adequately labeled (student's full name, room #). Parents should not deliver forgotten items directly to the classroom.

Homework

Homework will be assigned each night. You should expect to spend 20-30 minutes on schoolwork each night, not including time spent reading, studying math facts or spelling words. Second graders should be reading EVERY night.

The student's **Assignment Notebook** is an important tool for keeping track of homework and for communicating with the teacher. The amount and type of homework is at the teacher's discretion. Teachers will respond to your notes or concerns through the use of this notebook. Homework is also listed on the teacher webpage under Teacher Pages – Primary Education on the school website at www.stgilesschool.org.

Collins Writing

Collins Writing is the multi-faceted approach to writing across the curriculum using the Five types of Writing.

Type One Writing: informal writing aimed at capturing ideas

Type Two Writing: also informal writing focuses on correct content

Type Three Writing: composition that is self-edited specifically for focus correction errors

Type Four Writing: in addition to self-edit, this composition gets a peer-edit

Type Five Writing: writing of publishable quality

RTI Support

RTI, or Response to Intervention, is a process used by many schools to help all students succeed, especially those who are struggling with a particular skill, lesson or in a specific subject area. RTI is a three-tier process, with each tier providing an increased level of support.

- In **Tier I**, all students receive high-quality curriculum and instruction in the regular education classroom. The teacher assists all learners and differentiates instruction based on students' needs. Students who are "at-risk" are identified using universal screenings. Identified students receive supplemental instruction, or interventions, generally delivered in small groups during the students' regular school day in the regular classroom. The length of time for Tier I can vary. At the end of this period, students not showing adequate progress are moved to Tier II.
- In **Tier II**, the school provides interventions to students who need more support than they are receiving from the general curriculum. Interventions are provided in small groups in an appropriate setting — either within or outside of the general classroom — by the classroom teacher or member of the RTI Team.
- In **Tier III**, students are provided with intensive, individualized interventions from a member of the RTI Team. These interventions are tailored to the specific needs of the student. Students will receive one-on-one instruction or work in very small groups. Student progress is monitored closely and shared with the classroom teacher and parents.

It is important to note that Tier I and Tier II support is implemented at the discretion of the classroom teacher, with the support of the RTI Team and administration.

Executive Functioning

This year in second grade, we are emphasizing different strategies to help our students strengthen their Executive Functions.

Executive Functions are responsible for these five things:

1 Paying Attention

2 Organizing and Planning

3 Initiating tasks and staying focused on them

4 Regulating emotions

5 Self-monitoring (keeping track of what you're doing)

These skills are essential for harboring good study habits and lessons that the students can take with them through the rest of their academic journey

STUDENT'S PROGRESS

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in early October. Be prepared with concerns you wish to discuss. If you have a few specific areas you would like to discuss, send a note to the teacher in advance. Additional conferences are schedule in February on an as needed basis. Spring Conferences will be invitation only.

Teacher meetings can be arranged at a mutually agreed date and time. The assignment notebook or email may be used to request a meeting. Meetings can be especially helpful since conferences are held so early in the year.

Grades - Second graders do not receive letter grades. Students will receive a dot (approaching standards), S (meeting standards), and plus (mastery of standard). Teachers will use PowerSchool to update grades. You can use your PowerSchool ID to track your student's progress.

Tutoring needs for a child 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.

COMMUNICATION

Email is good ways to request meetings, communication questions about homework or general business with your teacher. Please give teachers 48 hours to respond to emails.

The Sunday E-News is your information lifeline to the school. All information will be delivered via email to all parents. If you do not receive the weekly E-News, contact the school office at office@stgilesschool.org.

Teacher Websites are located on the school website at www.stgilesschool.org under Teacher Pages – Primary Education – Second Grade. On their websites the second grade teachers post for more specific classroom news. On occasion, paper notices/forms get sent through the students' take home folders.

PBIS

PBIS, or Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, is our school wide behavior management plan. PBIS are actions and interventions used proactively, so a student is educated rather than punished as a means to improve behavior. Our goal is to foster a positive school climate.

SACRAMENTS

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will begin during the first part of the year. Both school and Religious Education second graders will receive Reconciliation prior to Christmas. Further information will be forthcoming. Please check the parish website at www.stgilesparish.org/SACRAMENTS to view the information for this year's process and preparation.

First Communion

Preparation - Your second grader will be preparing both in the classroom and at home. Teachers, parents, the Religious Education Department, and Mrs. Zver are all involved in the planning and preparation of this religious event.

Schedule - Religious Education will distribute a schedule of events related to Reconciliation and First Communion.

- Informational meetings describing preparation, dates, seating, appropriate dress, and scheduling are conducted. In addition to the class ceremony which most of the second graders attend, you may elect to have your child receive First Communion at a Sunday mass. A schedule of possible dates will be offered at the informational meeting.
- A family retreat is held where second graders make First Communion banners to decorate the church.
- Please check the parish website at www.stgilesparish.org/sacraments. Each month a parent update is posted and the calendar of events and assignments for the student's year of preparation are available.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND DAYS

Early Dismissal Day means that school is dismissed at 11:40 a.m. with the same pick up procedures as regular days.

Early Dismissal Wednesdays occur every Wednesday at 2:00 p.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 sessions.

Picture Day is the day students are photographed for their individual and class photos. The students are **out of uniform**. (*Refer to the School Handbook for information 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.

Christmas Program is the annual Christmas Program at the school. Second grade students participate in the program. Rehearsals are held during the month of November during school. The program will be held in the evening.

May Crowning is a special celebration of Mary with the second and eighth graders playing a special role. Second graders will be asked to wear their First Communion outfit in the afternoon.

Birthday Book Club 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/. 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. For more information, refer to the PTO page on the school website under Parents – PTO.

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, and supervise the students. 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 that takes place in the beginning of March. This event is organized by the Development office and committee coordinators. Parents in 3rd and 6th grades 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 E-News. Watch it closely – most sign-ups have deadlines!

Enrichment Programs

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 Spanish and more. These fee-based programs are run by outside vendors, St. Giles teachers, and parents.

Registration and payments will be run through our program vendors. Check the below for program description and registration information, as well as schedule. We also have a new payment plan. Last minute registration for these programs has increased yearly. Late registration is the last three days of the enrollment period.

The late fees go directly to the program vendors. Winter and spring enrollment will be a two-week period. Programs are available to all St. Giles School students grades K thru 8. Financial aid is available each semester.

For more information and details on specific programs go to the Student Life – Enrichment Programs section of the school website https://www.stgilesschool.org/student-life/enrichment-programs/.

Scouting Programs

In second grade, your child may sign-up for Scouts. Parents volunteer to be troop and den leaders. Information is sent home via E-News, email or the take home folder. Information on scouting may be found on the school website at https://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-Requirements.pdf and in every edition of E-News. Please contact Assistant Principal Ms. Lofgren with any questions.

Field Trips – If the first 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 and Valentine's Day. They also work jointly with the sixth grade room parents to organize the year-end first/second-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.