

A
Guide
to

Second Grade

*To Parents
From Parents*

September 7, 2016

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**.

Grade level information can be found in the **Curriculum Overviews**.

Teacher-specific information such as expectations, best ways to communicate with them, grading, etc. are presented at Curriculum Night.

The Sunday Enews is your information lifeline to the school. All information will be delivered via email to all parents. If you ever need a flyer or announcement included in the Sunday Enews send it to enews@stgilesschool.org the Wednesday before the Sunday you want it included.

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

St. Giles PTO

General

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 school handbook for the official rules and regulations of the school.
- Try to sign up to volunteer for at least one PTO committee.

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.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Refer to the school 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.
- Students arriving after 8:20 will be marked tardy and will have to check in at the office. Students not picked up before 3:25 will be brought to the office and will need to be picked up there.
- Be especially aware of the no parking areas as the Village of Oak Park will issue tickets.

Mass

- Second graders attend 8:30 a.m. Mass on Wednesday. Parents are encouraged to attend. Children must be at school by 8:20. 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.

Lunch

- Second grade goes to recess from 11:45 - 12:05. Lunch is in the classroom from 12:05 – 12:25.
- Lunchables are allowed, but no fast food is permitted.
- Please refrain from bringing snacks or lunches with peanuts or labeled “May contain tree nuts”.
- If your child forgets his or her lunch, bring it to the school office marked with the child’s name and room number and it will be delivered to the classroom.

Specials

- Art – once per week (Friday #104, Tuesday #106)
- Music – once per week (Wednesday #104, Wednesday #106)
- Computers and Library – alternating weeks (Thursday #104, Friday #106)
- Gym – twice per week (Tuesday & Friday #104, Monday & Tuesday #106)
- Spanish – once per week (Monday #104, Thursday #106)

It may be helpful to leave gym shoes at school for gym class.

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

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.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will begin during the first part of the year. Both school and Religious Ed 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.

1ST 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 Days

May Crowning- 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.

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

Early Dismissal Wednesdays occur every Wednesday at 2:00, 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 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.

Lion's Leap is the name of the St. Giles Walkathon that takes place in September. It is the school's major fundraiser. Read the back of the Lion's Leap form for the walkathon details and incentives. It is a fun day for the kids and an out of uniform day.

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 – Second graders are included in the annual Christmas Program. Rehearsals are held during the month of November during school. The program will be held in the evening.

Birthday Book Club sends your student an invitation to a Birthday Book party during the month of your child's birthday. Summer month birthdays are included during the school year. The required donation is used to purchase a book for the school library. At the party, a snack is provided and the student chooses a book. There is a variety of books from which to choose, all of which were selected by the librarians. The book selected will have a bookplate placed in it stating who donated the book. It is a fun activity for the kids, and it helps keep the school library current.

Special Programs

There are numerous after-school Enrichment programs sponsored by the PTO. Please check the school website for more information.

Intramurals

Contact: Mr. Jim Collins/Physical Education

Intramural indoor soccer and hand hockey are available to second graders. These intramural sports are coached by junior high students and take place after school in the school gym.

Information regarding registration will be sent home.

Rainbows for All Children

Contact: Mrs. Monica Lechowicz/Counselor

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

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE

Great Books and Room Parents are all coordinated through PTO. Parents should complete the PTO volunteer form, if they are interested in helping with any of these. All adults must complete the Archdiocese compliance for any volunteering that includes student supervision. It can be found in the Enews every week or on the school website "Parent Forms" page.

Great Books - In small groups, volunteers discuss with the second graders stories the teachers have selected from the Great Books program.

Holiday Parties – Room parents provide snacks and activities for Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's and Year-end picnic.

Birthdays – Students are allowed to bring a non-consumable treat or prize for their classmates to celebrate their birthday.

Field Trips – Parents will be asked to volunteer as chaperones on field trips.

Lion's Leap – Parents can assist in many ways with the school's annual fundraiser.

Fun Lunch – Volunteers help coordinate the fun lunches provided to students on a monthly basis.

Communication

Absences must be reported to the school office by 8:80 a.m. Work will be made up upon return to school.

Parent Teacher Conferences are held in November and March. November conferences are mandatory for all families, while March conferences will be scheduled by teacher invitation. Be prepared with concerns you wish to discuss. If you have a few specific areas you wish to discuss, consider sending a note to the teacher in advance.

Teacher Meetings can be arranged at a mutually agreed upon date and time through email.