

**A
Guide
to
Fifth Grade**

To: 5th Grade Parents
From: Former 5th Grade Parents

ST. GILES SCHOOL

Dear Fifth 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. Parents who previously had children in fifth 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 <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 your student to have a happy and successful 5th grade!

St. Giles PTO

GENERAL

Fifth grade will probably be a year of big changes for your child...

- **They're growing up** - Your child will be going through a lot of changes this year physically, emotionally and mentally.
- **Their schedules are getting busier** - Many extracurricular opportunities are available.
- **They need new skills for the increased workload** - More will be expected of your child in terms of organization and study skills. The homework load is greater, copying notes is important; assessments are more varied and challenge the students.

They will still need your help in working on new skills, your guidance with time management, and your encouragement. Study and organization skills are consistently reviewed in class. Each child develops at a different rate. It can be challenging for everyone, so patience is required. Help your child from the first day of school. It will eventually click.

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.

5th graders enter and exit 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.

Bicycles – Beginning in fifth grade, students may ride their bicycles to school. Bicycles must be locked up at the bike racks near the Corrigan Building playground.

Switching of Classes – Students switch classes for Science, Math, Social Studies, Religion, and Reading. Mrs. Kufta teaches religion and science. Ms. Burns teaches Language Arts, Social Studies, Reading, and Spelling. Mrs. Lucas teaches Math.

“Specials”

Art – once per week (109 on Tuesday, 110 on Thursday)

Music – once per week (Both classes on Monday)

Computers – once per week (Both classes on Monday)

Gym – twice per week (Thursday and Friday for both classes)

Spanish – twice per week (Tuesday and Wednesday for both classes)

Library – Students in fourth through eighth grades may have the opportunity to visit the library with their language arts teacher.

Mass

Fifth graders attend 8:30 a.m. Mass on Tuesdays. Parents are encouraged to attend.

Lunch

Fifth graders go to lunch from 11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. in the basement of the Frawley Building followed by recess on the church parking lot. They are on the same lunch schedule as the 6th graders. On Wednesdays, fifth graders have recess first (11:05 – 11:25) followed by lunch (12:25 – 11:45).

Send food ready-to-eat and transfer hard to open food (e.g., oranges, fruit, etc.) to reusable containers. Healthy lunches are appreciated. If your fifth 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.
- **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.

Uniform

Boys' and girls' uniforms remain the same from fourth grade. 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

“Ten Survival Tips for 5th Grade”

From a 6th grader

- **Study ahead.**
- **Try your best.**
- **When you have long-term assignments do them as soon as you can.**
- **Set aside time to do your homework.**
- **Pay attention in class.**
- **Do all of your homework.**
- **Ask questions!**
- **Don't turn in homework late.**
- **Be organized.**
- **Don't ask to go to the bathroom during class (unless it's an emergency)**

Assignment Notebooks – It's essential that your child make good use of their assignment notebook by writing down complete information. This is a key tool in fifth grade. They will be expected to write down all assignments and know when they are due. Although you are no longer required to sign the assignment notebook on a daily basis, you should check their assignment notebook daily and discuss time management with your student. **Do not use the assignment notebook to communicate with the teacher.** The teachers will announce at Curriculum Night what is the best method for communicating with them.

Homework Timing – Work with your child to determine the optimal time to do homework and balance homework with their activities. Note that there is sometimes homework on the weekends and holidays. The amount of time spent on homework varies from student to student. If it seems that your student is spending an excessive amount of time on homework, try to keep track of how much time is spent on each subject. That information will be helpful when talking to the teacher to determine if the time commitment is normal.

Homework During Absence – It is helpful for each student to find a reliable buddy in each class from whom he/she can get notes missed due to absence or a music lesson. Students may also ask the teacher for any missed notes. If you want a teacher to get your child's homework during an absence, you must call the office no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence for pick up after school in the school office. Remember that homework assignments are also listed on the website on the individual Teacher Pages at www.stgilesschool.org.

STUDYING

Development of your child's time management skills is important. Students need to study for major tests more than one night in advance. Test dates are announced a week ahead of time. Please advise your child to plan accordingly. Students may enjoy working in study groups.

Note Taking Skills – Your child will be copying notes during class that will be important to their success. Reinforce with your child that it is important to take notes on board work. Some information discussed in class but not in their books may appear on a test.

Essay Tests – Students will have to apply critical thinking to concepts they've learned in class, and write about them in 3-5 sentence essay answers. It is helpful early in the year to practice writing an essay answer.

Extra Help Sessions – Teachers are often available before or after school for extra help by appointment. Encourage your child to take advantage of these sessions as they can be very helpful and to request one-on-one time with the teacher if needed. Please contact Mrs. Kufta at rkufta@stgilesschool.org, Ms. Burns at rburns@stgilesschool.org, and Mrs. Lucas at klucas@stgilesschool.org.

STUDENT'S PROGRESS

Weekly Folders Each Wednesday, teachers will send home a folder with completed assignments, tests, and quizzes to help you chart your child's progress. A signature is required on all tests and quizzes. Other papers should not be returned. Folders should be returned by Friday of the same week.

Checking Grades - Your child's grades will 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.

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.

Letter Grades Students will receive letter grades in all subject areas, including Art, Religion, Gym, Music and Spanish.

Parent-Teacher Conferences take place in October in McDonough Hall, with signup being done online. Parents meet only with the homeroom teacher. If needed, a separate conference with the others can be scheduled at a different time. Optional parent-teacher conferences with any teacher are offered in March.

Teacher Meetings can be arranged at a mutually agreed date and time. Email may be used to request a meeting. 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/>. 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 – Fifth graders are included in the annual Christmas program. Rehearsals are held during November during school. The concert is held in the church in 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 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 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 for lunch and to change. Teachers will send home a permission slip. Specifics on costumes, parade, and party will be provided by the teachers.

Aspire Test – ASPIRE Tests are given in third through eighth grades at St. Giles School. 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.

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!

Interscholastic Sports - *Contact Athleticdirector@stgilesschool.org*

St. Giles offers many ways for students to participate in sports. Coupled with the greater workload, parents are cautioned not to over-commit students to too many sports at one time. Rules and philosophies of the sports program are listed in the Athletic Handbook, a copy of which may be found on the St. Giles School Interscholastic website at <http://www.stgilesschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SGS-Interscholastic-Athletic-handbook.pdf>.

This is the first year boys and girls are eligible for interscholastic sport teams playing versus other schools in leagues. The opportunities include:

Co-ed Soccer (Late August – October)	Co-ed Soccer (April – May)
Girls Basketball (October-January)	Boys Basketball (November-April)
Girls Volleyball (January-April)	Boys Volleyball (March-May)
Cross Country (August - October)	

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 under “Student Life” “Athletics” “Interscholastic Sports Website.”

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 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/>.

Altar Servers - *Contact person: Mary Arsinow at the Ministry Center altarserversrock@gmail.com or at (773) 622-1036*

Boys and girls may serve as altar servers from 5th through 8th grade. Sign-up for new servers is typically in the spring, but there are also a few training sessions in the fall. After a brief training session, students are placed on the servers' schedule. The Masses they serve are on a rotating basis. Servers are used at the 8:30 a.m. weekday Masses, the 8:00 a.m. Saturday Mass and all weekend Masses. Typically students serve 2-3 times per month.

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

5th graders who participated in band last year, play in Concert Band this year. Concert Band practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays before school. 5th graders are also eligible for Jazz Band; tryouts are required.

Music lessons are given during the week according to the schedule posted in the classroom. Students must make note of the posted time for their instrument lessons each week, and get there on their own without a reminder from the homeroom teacher.

Also, teachers expect that students on their own will get any class notes they miss during their music lessons.

Scouting Programs

In fifth 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 <http://www.stgilesschool.org/student-life/clubs/>.

Student Council - *Contact persons: Mrs. Lechowicz and Ms. Gallo*

Classroom elections are held at the beginning of 5th grade for homeroom representative. The elected representatives attend Student Council meetings that are held at school during lunch time. At the end of 5th grade, students may run in a school-wide election to serve as a Student Council officer for the following school year.

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 fifth 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 fifth/sixth 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.