



**Student and Family
Handbook**

2026-27

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Dear St. Stephen's Friends and Families,

I couldn't be happier to welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year! As I step into my fourth year as Head of School, my enthusiasm and deep admiration for our incredible community continue to grow. Reflecting on this past year, I am continually inspired by the genuine joy of learning that radiates from our students and teachers every single day.

Our shared purpose at St. Stephen's Episcopal School is to **help the world grow kinder and smarter**—a mission that truly comes alive through the vibrant partnerships we forge with all of you. We believe that this partnership creates an unparalleled environment where every child can truly flourish.

As we embark on this new academic year, our **IGROW Principles** will continue to guide our every step:

- Integrity
- Grace
- Respect
- Optimism
- Wisdom

These are the principles upon which we build our community, and they thrive best when we live them out together. This handbook is designed to be a valuable resource for your family, outlining important expectations and providing a wealth of useful information to ensure a smooth, safe, and successful year for everyone.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children and for being such an integral part of our journey. We are incredibly optimistic about the year ahead and all that we will achieve together.

Let's make the 2026-2027 school year our best one yet!

With immense gratitude and excitement,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JR' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Troy P. Roddy, Ph.D.
Head of School

St. Stephen's Episcopal School-Houston

Key Information

Mission and Vision

St. Stephen's Episcopal School-Houston (St. Stephen's or School) nurtures each child's academic, creative, and spiritual potential. We see a future where young people lead with compassion, acceptance and a holistic view of the world. Our students are the future; they are our hope and promise for a more caring human community. To nurture that future, our faculty and staff seek to instill the core values in our students and strive to weave these values into the community.

Accreditations and Memberships

St. Stephen's is accredited by the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools and the American Montessori Society.

St. Stephen's is a member of the following organizations.

- National Association of Episcopal Schools
- National Association of Independent Schools
- Houston Area Independent Schools
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education

Educational Program

St. Stephen's embraces a continuum of education, where each developmental stage of the child is considered. We implement Montessori curriculum and principles for all levels. This inspires students towards academic success, spiritual growth, creative expression, responsible citizenship, and success in higher education.

Founded on Dr. Montessori's Planes of Development, our multi-age levels are as follows.

- Orientation: 15 months - 3 years
- Primary: 3 - 6 years
- Lower Elementary: 1st - 3rd grade
- Upper Elementary: 4th - 6th grade
- Middle Years: 7th and 8th grade

Specialist Program

Specialist classes at St. Stephen's Episcopal School enrich and extend the Montessori curriculum. These offerings provide students with hands-on opportunities to explore creativity, movement, language, innovation, and digital responsibility. Each specialist area is integrated with core academic subjects, helping students connect their classroom learning to real-world experiences and personal expression. Students participate in specialist classes on a rotating schedule throughout the week.

Fine Arts: Art & Music

Art: Our Art Program encourages students to develop creative expression, explore a range of media, and understand visual concepts across cultures and history. Students learn foundational skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media while connecting their work to classroom themes in literature, science, math, and social studies. Student artwork is regularly showcased in exhibitions and events throughout the year.

Music: Through the Music Program, students develop skills in rhythm, pitch, harmony, and musical notation. From joyful movement and singing in early childhood to percussion ensembles and vocal performances in later grades, students grow their appreciation for music as both a creative outlet and cultural expression. Performances, chapel participation, and classroom integration are key aspects of the program.

Spanish Language Program

The Spanish Program at SSESH is designed to build language proficiency progressively while fostering an appreciation for the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Students engage through conversation, music, games, and projects that make learning both fun and meaningful.

Primary (PreK–K): Focus: Vocabulary acquisition, listening, memory, and comprehension. Approach: Songs, stories, interactive activities. Assessment: Participation, ability to follow instructions, and conduct. Instruction will take place in the classroom and is integrated into the daily work.

Lower Elementary (Grades 1–3): Focus: Beginning proficiency—listening, speaking, and basic phrases for needs, wants, and courtesies. Approach: Hands-on learning and repetition of core vocabulary. Assessment: Participation, directions-following, classwork, and conduct. Instruction will take place in the classroom and is integrated into the daily work.

Upper Elementary (Grades 4–6): Focus: Elementary proficiency—conversational language, listening, reading, writing, and cultural understanding. Approach: Interactive lessons, Q&A, and structured projects. Assessment: Participation, classwork, teamwork, and conduct. Instruction will take place in the classroom and is integrated into the daily work.

Middle Years (Grades 7–8): Focus: Proficiency development and deeper cultural study; use of Spanish in projects and presentations. Approach: Grammar review, collaborative work, and real-world application. Assessment: Participation, quizzes, projects, and exams. Frequency: Twice a week

Da Vinci Lab (STEM & Makerspace)

The da Vinci Lab is a creative, hands-on learning space where students from Kindergarten through 8th grade engage in engineering, coding, robotics, design, and

exploration. Students come to da Vinci Lab at least once per week for a blend of teacher-guided STEM lessons, open-ended Makerspace time, and computer science practice.

Curriculum by Level:

- Kindergarten: Building with STEM kits, intro to robotics, basic circuits.
- Grades 1–3: Coding, circuits, invention fair, engineering challenges.
- Grades 4–6: Robotics, woodworking, electronics teardown, passion projects.
- Middle Years: Future City competition, drone programming, advanced maker projects.

Expectations: Students are guided by our IGROW values—Integrity, Grace, Respect, Optimism, and Wisdom—to create a respectful, safe, and innovative space.

Physical Education (PE)

PE is an essential part of student life at SESH and a core component to our Wellness Curriculum. The PE program promotes physical health, teamwork, confidence, and social-emotional growth. Students regularly participate in PE classes, which are designed to build coordination, sportsmanship, fitness, and fun through age-appropriate activities and games. PE reinforces the importance of lifelong healthy habits and an active lifestyle.

School Hours

School is in session after Morning Drop-off until the Full Day or End of School Day Carpool. Orientation and Primary families may opt for Half Day. Please note that the Half Day option is not available for Kindergarten students.

Orientation

- Morning Drop-off: 8:00 am
- Classes begin: 8:15 am
- Partial Day Pick-up: 11:30 am
- Full Day Pick-up: 2:30 pm

Primary

- Morning Drop-off: 8:00 am
- Classes begin: 8:15 am
- Partial Day Pick-up: 11:45 am
- Full Day Pick-up: 2:45 pm

Elementary and Middle Years

- Morning Drop-off: 8:00 am
- Classes begin: 8:15 am
- End of School Day Pick-up: 3:30 pm

Early Dismissal

- Orientation and Primary Pick-up: 11:45 am
- Elementary and Middle Years Pick-up: noon

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Drop-off and pick-up locations will be communicated to all parents before the start of the academic year and are subject to change. Please note that all students must be dropped off or picked up from the designated carpool locations.

To ensure a smooth and safe experience during morning and afternoon carpool, we ask families to observe the following guidelines:

- Please remain in your car unless directed otherwise by a St. Stephen's staff member.
- Refrain from using cell phones or texting while in the carpool line.
- Drive slowly, use your blinker, and follow all traffic signals provided by school personnel—they are there to ensure everyone's safety and to keep traffic moving smoothly.
- Always display your carpool sign at drop-off and pick-up.
- Have patience while waiting your turn in the carpool line.
- For morning drop-off, make sure your child is fully awake and alert so faculty can safely assess and assist them from the vehicle.
- If your child uses a car seat, please ensure it complies with all current Texas safety regulations.
- Make sure all components—harnesses, clips, and padding—are used properly and are in good condition.
- SESH staff are not permitted to buckle children into car seats. During afternoon carpool, guardians will be asked to buckle younger children into their seats.
- Do not block parking lot entrances or exits.
- Avoid driving between cones or parking in front of Pecore Hall, Monro Building, or along Sul Ross between 7:45–8:15 AM and 2:30–3:45 PM.
- For a current list of car seat and booster seat requirements—or to

schedule a car seat safety check—visit:
https://www.dps.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/director_staff/public_information/childpassafetyfaqs.pdf

Late Arrivals (Drop-Off and Pick-Up)

Morning Carpool will operate from 8:00 am to 8:15 am. Families seeking to drop off or pick up students during the school day, but not during carpool, should proceed to the Main Reception Desk at 1805 West Alabama.

St. Stephen's expects that all students are duly picked up at the applicable time, whether at the end of the student's school day or by the end of the applicable Extended Care offering. Students who are not picked up at the end of the student's school day or by the end of Sibling and Activity Care and/or After School Care Option 1, will be charged the Extended Care Drop-In Rate. Students who are not picked up by 6 pm will be additionally charged \$20 for the first minute past 6 pm and \$1 a minute for each additional minute.

SSESH Family Platforms

At St. Stephen's, we utilize the following software platforms to serve our community:

FACTS Family Portal and School App:

The FACTS Family Portal is your secure, password-protected gateway to all things SSESH. This centralized hub keeps you connected with your student's academic progress, school announcements, and essential resources.

You can conveniently access the portal in two ways:

- Via Web Browser: Visit the official login page on your computer or mobile device at <https://familyportal.renweb.com>.

- Via Mobile App: Download the custom school app for on-the-go access using the full links below:
 - Apple:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/st-stephens-episcopal-school/id6680192774>
 - Android:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.airealmobile.ststephens-episcopalschoolhouston_35762

These are the features you will find in the portal:

- School Calendar: Keep track of upcoming holidays, events, and important dates.
- Parent and Staff Directory: Easily look up contact details for the school community.
- Your Directory Preferences: Manage and customize what information you share with others.
- Medical Requirements: Access, update, and review health records and student forms.
- Student Academic Portfolio: Check grades, progress reports, and classroom achievements.
- Financial Portal: View tuition statements, manage plans, and make secure payments.
- Re-Enrollment: Complete annual registration paperwork quickly and digitally.
- Resource Links: Links to extended care signups, Monty Meal signups, Bulldog 360 signups, and fundraising.

The School App includes the same features above, except Resource Links are set as their own features:

- Extended Care Sign Up: Sign up for before, or after-school care for students.
- Monty Meals: Sign up for pizza lunch on Fridays, or Thursdays depending on events.
- Bulldog 360 Sign Up: Sign up for after-school enrichment programs for students.

- Support SESH: Fundraising Campaign and donation links

The Directory is mainly used for things like sending birthday party invitations. It includes contact information for faculty and staff, plus the email addresses of each student's custodial parent(s) only. If you prefer not to have your name or email listed, you can opt out through the FACTS Family Portal (district code: SESH-TX) by going to: Web Forms > Family Demographic Form > Custodial Parent Form (scroll to the bottom). Please use the Directory to connect and build community—not to promote or sell products or services.

The School will communicate closures and other health and safety matters via text message to the mobile numbers provided in the FACTS Family Portal during the Enrollment process. Families, please keep your contact information updated by accessing Web Forms > Family Demographic Form in the FACTS Family Portal (our district code is SESH-TX).

Note: Please ensure your login credentials are kept secure and set up multi-factor authentication to access the Family Portal. While not required, FACTS SIS strongly suggests setting up an MFA method (email or authenticator app of your choice) as an additional safeguard to protect your family's private information. If you need assistance setting up your account, please contact the school's IT office at 713-821-9122, or at helpdesk@ssesh.org.

Google Workspace: Upper-level classes and Middle Years students utilize Google Workspace to facilitate collaboration, manage digital assignments and as a repository for materials. This usage includes the standard Google Suite (including Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Gmail) for daily classwork, group projects, and formal submissions.

FACTS LMS: Middle Years students utilize the FACTS LMS (Learning Management System) to view their grades and assignments.

The Hallway: The Hallway is St. Stephen's Episcopal School Houston's weekly digital newsletter, sent via email every Friday during the school year and select Fridays during the summer. It includes important updates, reminders, upcoming events, and highlights from across campus. Families are encouraged to read The Hallway each week to stay informed and connected to school life. Past issues are also available on the school website for reference.

Magnus: In partnership with, St. Stephen's provides an online portal for health forms, such as psychoeducational evaluations, and current immunization records. Access to Magnus Health is integrated into the FACTS Family Portal, no additional credentials are required.

Vidigami: St. Stephen's utilizes Vidigami to help make learning and school life visible by sharing photos and videos from classrooms, events, and campus activities. Vidigami allows families to see moments from their child's school experience in a secure, school-managed platform.

We respectfully ask that families do not post, screenshot, or share photos/videos that include other people's children. Please download photos or videos of your child only and for personal use only. Because many school photos naturally include more than one student, we ask all families to be thoughtful and respectful when saving or sharing any school media.

Vidigami includes privacy and access tools that help schools manage who can view shared content. Families should use Vidigami in accordance with St. Stephen's photo and media guidelines. If you have a concern about a photo or video shared in Vidigami, please contact the school.

Social media: St. Stephen's celebrates our students and teachers on the following social media platforms: Facebook (sseshouston) and Instagram (ssesh_bulldogs). Social media posts will feature students with media releases only.

Raptor: Raptor is a visitor registration system that enhances school security. Using Raptor, St. Stephen's Episcopal School screens every visitor, contractor, and volunteer instantly against the most reliable and up-to-date U.S. sex offender databases in all 50 states.

Whom to Contact

At St. Stephen's, a growth mindset is encouraged and parental questions, concerns or recommendations regarding curriculum, pedagogy or school operations are always welcome. Email addresses for our faculty and staff may be found on the school website at under About > Faculty & Staff.

For matters, including the following, the teacher should be the main point of contact.

- Absences: Teacher with 24-hour notice requested
- Academic Difficulty
- Behavioral Concerns
- Homework Assignments
- Standardized Testing

For other concerns and questions, please contact the following:

- Illness: School Nurse (cheinroth@ssesh.org)
- IT issues: IT Office (mzuniga@ssesh.org)
- Social/Emotional Support: School Counselor (bbennett@ssesh.org)
- Parent Involvement/Volunteering: Director of Community Engagement (lnewchurch@ssesh.org)
- Questions on Orientation & Primary School Policies: Head of Early Childhood (nnasser@ssesh.org)
- Questions on Elementary & Middle Years School Policies: Head of Elementary & Middle Years (chughes@ssesh.org)

- Special Needs, Learning Differences and Accommodations: Learning Specialist (aalanizvela@ssesh.org)
- Tuition Assistance / Financial Aid: Head of School (troddy@ssesh.org)
- Donations, fundraising suggestions, and Monty Meals: Director of Development (kbooth@ssesh.org)
- Admissions and Enrollment: Director of Enrollment Management (emoore@ssesh.org)
- Extended Care and Bulldog 360: Director of Enrichment (chughes@ssesh.org)
- Financial Questions: Business Office (rfigueroa@ssesh.org)

Academic Policies and Procedures

Classroom Placement

On July 1st, each student's classroom placement is planned for the next school year. This process considers ages, learning groups, unique needs, proficiency levels, and overall classroom dynamics. The Head of Early Childhood and the Head of Elementary & Middle Years will make decisions regarding classroom placements, with input from teachers. Requests can be made, but the ultimate decision will be made by St. Stephen's. Questions or feedback about the child's placement may be directed to the Head of Early Childhood or the Head of Elementary & Middle Years.

Program Placement Benchmarks (Orientation and Primary)

Orientation students are expected to be independently and uprightly mobile before the first day of school or summer camp, as applicable. St. Stephen's will partner with parents of students who do not meet this benchmark. Placement solutions may include delaying admission into Orientation and will be determined at the sole discretion of the Head of Early Childhood and/or Head of School.

Primary students should be consistently independent in using the toilet before the start of school or summer camp. This includes recognizing their own need to go, independently using the toilet for both urination and bowel movements, keeping undergarments clean and dry, managing their clothing, and wiping themselves without assistance.

St. Stephen's partners with families to support each child's development, but children who are not yet consistently independent in the restroom may have their Primary

placement delayed or may be placed in an Orientation classroom to continue developing these skills. Final placement decisions will be made by the Head of Early Childhood and/or Head of School.

Academic Dishonesty and Cheating

Academic dishonesty consists of passing off another's work as the work of the student. Passing off could include AI generated text and/or text derived predominantly from content found on the Internet and/or other published work. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, collusion, duplication of work and any other conduct that results in an unfair advantage for a student.

Students are coached, beginning in Primary, about honesty and fairness. Starting in Lower Elementary, students are also taught about honesty concerning classwork, when collaboration is accepted and when it is not. Teachable moments are seized in Lower Elementary, and logical consequences increase in seriousness in Upper Elementary. Students are provided opportunities to make amends and learn from mistakes. In the event that academic dishonesty is suspected in Upper Elementary and up, the teacher shall notify the Head of Elementary & Middle Years and/or Head of School. With due notice and communication with the students and their parents, the School shall determine an appropriate response, which may include, without limitation, zero or partial credit for an assignment, academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Students who participate in any form of academic dishonesty are given opportunities to improve their behavior. The School reserves the right to immediately remove a student at its discretion whose behavior is considered sufficiently egregious to necessitate deviation from this general policy.

Attendance and Tardies

St. Stephen's believes that attendance is paramount. St. Stephen's strongly suggests that families schedule vacations and trips in accordance with school breaks as established in the academic calendar.

Attendance: If you know your child will be absent, send an email to attendance@ssesh.org. A full-day student is counted present if they are at school for at least four hours during the school day. A partial-day student is counted present if they are at school for at least two hours during the partial school day. Students are expected to arrive on time each morning and remain at school until dismissal in the afternoon.

Tardies: Classes begin at 8:15 am each school day. Attendance will be taken starting at 8:15. A child not present when attendance is taken will be counted as absent. If the child arrives later, they will be changed to tardy. Families are responsible for their child(ren) arriving in the classroom on time.

Consequences and Thresholds (*applicable to students in Kindergarten and above*):

Excessive absences equate to over four (4) absences per trimester. Consequences could include, without limitation and based on the level of the student:

- Conferences with the teacher and/or The Head of Elementary & Middle Years,
- Loss of course credit in Middle Years,
- Required make-up work and/or tests,
- Recommendation to not promote to the subsequent level,
- Withholding of an enrollment contract for the subsequent academic year, and/or
- Failure to recommend to a future school or program.

The School also reserves the right not to promote to the next grade any student who has failed to complete their assignments or attend an adequate number of instruction days.

For students in Kindergarten through 8th grade, three tardies equate to one absence.

Students who arrive late in the mornings must check in at the main reception desk before proceeding to class and may be required to visit with the School Nurse prior to being admitted following a personal illness.

Parents are asked to call the School Office (713-821-9100) before 9 am on the day of the absence or tardy arrival. Please provide a written excuse for the absence or tardy immediately upon your student's return to school, including the reason for the absence or tardy and your signature.

In the event of an exceptional circumstance like a critical illness or hospitalization or death of an immediate family member, St. Stephen's will work with the student and parents in completing assignments and schoolwork.

If, in the discretion of the teacher(s) and/or Division Head and/or Head of School, the number or frequency of excused absences and/or tardies negatively impacts the learning experience of the student, families may be asked to meet with the Division Head and/or Head of School to determine remedial action and/or educational support.

Homework and Summer Assignments

At St. Stephen's, we believe that learning does not stop when you leave school.

Homework is an extension of what the students do in the classroom and helps reinforce what they have learned. Homework is assigned age-appropriately and allows parents and students to spend time together by reading to each other, solving math problems, or creating a science or cultural project. Assignments begin gradually in Lower Elementary with nightly reading and increase over time. Upper Elementary

students are assigned literature. Middle Years students are responsible for completing all assignments, if necessary outside of the school day. In school ISEE Prep will be universally available to all 8th grade students during the school day. Middle Years students are also responsible for independent reading and ISEE prep outside of the school day. Your student's teacher will discuss this with you in detail.

Typically, 4th through 8th-grade students will be assigned reading and math assignments to complete over the summer. Students are expected to complete the assignments by the beginning of the academic year. Middle Years assignments will be counted as a grade in the first trimester. The first grades of the school year are dependent on thorough completion of the summer assignments.

Field Trips and Class Overnight Trips

Scheduled Field Trip dates will be announced via email, and written notices will be sent home with students at least a week in advance. Before a field trip, Permission and Release Forms will be sent home with students and must be returned by the deadline. Any costs to be covered by parents will be communicated in advance.

Parent chaperones are selected and invited at the sole discretion of the teacher as needed. The role of parents as chaperones may vary depending on the type, duration, and location of the trip as well as on the needs of the program. The Episcopal Diocese of Texas requires all chaperones to complete the Safeguarding God's Children training program.

Class trips are an important part of the curriculum, and attendance is expected. The guidelines for absences apply to field trips and class trips.

While on field trips and class trips, students represent St. Stephen's and are expected to behave accordingly. School policy prohibits: (1) the possession of weapons, (2) the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs and (3) any sexual conduct during field trips and class trips. Participants, including parent chaperones, violating these rules and expectations are subject to discipline, up to and including separation from the school.

Students who display exceptionally poor judgment on field trips or class trips may be sent home at their parents' expense as well as face disciplinary action when returning to school.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are administered by St. Stephen's in order to track student progress over time and in comparison to national averages. They also provide a norm-referenced, objective tool to help us evaluate potential curriculum gaps over time, especially when consistent patterns emerge. We administer standardized tests as a low-risk, safe opportunity for students to become familiar with the experience of taking standardized tests.

Students in 2nd–8th grade take the IOWA Achievement Test each year. Results, once received, are shared with families via the Student Portfolio. In addition to standardized testing, St. Stephen's uses IXL as a tool for baseline skill measurement and to monitor individual skill growth over time. The School reserves the right to make changes to its testing programs without prior notice to parents. The results of standardized tests do not factor into a child's promotion into the next grade.

School Scheduled Conferences

Parent participation in school conferences is essential to maintaining the parent-teacher partnership. Additionally, teacher observation is a key element of your child's assessment and is communicated most thoroughly by your child's teacher during these in-person meetings.

Students in grades 1st - 8th are expected to attend regularly scheduled conferences with their parents unless informed otherwise. At all levels, written evaluations will typically accompany each conference.

Should the need arise, parents or teachers may request additional conferences. If a teacher requests an additional conference, the faculty member may invite the Division Head, Learning Specialist, Nurse, or Counselor at their discretion, and will inform the parent in advance via email, with all included parties CCed, as to the nature, purpose, scope, and desired outcomes of the conference. Likewise, if a parent desires further information or would like to make an inquiry beyond the scope of the trimester conference with their child's classroom teacher, they may email all parties whom they wish to include in advance to decide upon a mutually agreeable time and format, as well as goals and desired outcomes of the meeting for the benefit of the child.

Transcripts

Requests for transcripts should be requested by filling out the Transcript Request Form found at <https://ssesh.org/transcript-request/>, or emailed to registrar@ssesh.org. Please allow up to 5 business days to process the request for records.

Tutoring by St. Stephen's Teachers

Tutoring by a child's current teacher outside of regular class time may present a conflict of interest. Parents may not privately contract with, or provide additional compensation to, their child's current teacher for the purpose of tutoring, unless approved by the Head of School. When tutoring support is needed, other St. Stephen's teachers who are not currently responsible for teaching or academically assessing the child may be available to provide tutoring, as appropriate.

Wellness Department

Health Information Storage and Sharing

Magnus Health: St. Stephen's collects and maintains all student health records—including, but not limited to, physical health, mental health, learning accommodations, and assessments—through Magnus Health, a secure electronic medical records system. All information stored in Magnus is confidential and accessible only to authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis.

Parents are required to complete all necessary forms and documentation in Magnus prior to the first day of school and update records throughout the year as needed. The information provided is essential to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of each student during their time on campus.

Magnus Health can be accessed via the Parent Portal, either through the mobile app or a desktop computer, without the need for a separate login.

Health Information Sharing: Parents agree, as a condition of continued enrollment, to consent to the release of any of the student's health-related information, including information relating to treatment, testing, medical and mental health records, to employees or agents of the School, on a need-to-know basis, to meet the medical or safety needs of the student and the community or the legal responsibilities of the School. While the School strives to safeguard student medical information, it must also balance matters of privacy and confidentiality with safeguarding the interests and well-being of our students and our community. Parents/guardians consent to allow employees and agents of the School, who need to know, to receive and/or share medical and/or psychological information necessary to serve the best interests of the student and/or community.

Learning Specialist

Learning Support is the strategy, design, and delivery of assessment, evidence-based, structured intervention, and explicit, scaffolded support and accommodations for learners in need of more than is available to all students in the Montessori General Education Classroom in the core instructional areas of Reading and Math.

The purpose of Learning Support at St. Stephen's is to provide evidence-based academic support to students, parents, and faculty so that all students may thrive as learners. Students may qualify for Learning Support Services through an independent evaluation by an educational diagnostician or licensed specialist in school psychology diagnosing the child with learning differences in need of evidence-based accommodations and interventions.

Further, learning support is available to any student demonstrating persistent achievement gaps in the core areas of Reading and Math through teacher and parent referral. Some concrete ways that we achieve this is through universal assessment and data analysis, which allow us to visualize student achievement at the time of admission and over time through beginning and end of year assessment, ongoing faculty support through open consultative office hours with the Learning Specialist, and universal learning support groups, such as afterschool reading intervention, for which children qualify on a rotating basis by teacher referral, and from which children may graduate using mastery percentages on taught material.

Student Support: Teachers, School Counselor, and/or Learning Specialists may observe social, behavioral or academic difficulties in class. In such cases, parents may expect a comprehensive process, guided by the Learning Specialist and inclusive of all stakeholders. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. The process shall include:

- Making observations;
- Reporting observations

- Gathering documentation, including work samples, portfolio, behavior reports (where applicable), test scores, formative assessments, summative assessments, report cards, and authentic student work revealing strengths and weaknesses;
- Testing, evaluation or assessment of the student's needs by qualified professionals (costs to be borne by families if selecting private evaluation, or request an evaluation through the LEA to which a child is zoned, and receive an evaluation at no additional cost);
- Creation of a holistic, cross-curricular plan, which may include specialized services, evidence-based interventions, outside professionals in the school environment (such as SLPs, OT, and/or PT), and accommodations to implement at St. Stephen's. In some cases, the review will include a recommendation that the student enrolls in a different program at another school if the student cannot be adequately served by St. Stephen's.

Each year, the School will reassess accommodations recommended for students and may require updated documentation from parents and other professionals. Students who qualify for accommodations should use them consistently in their classroom work to be eligible for the same accommodations on standardized tests, final exams and major assignments. Students and parents utilizing accommodations will comply with faculty, staff and administrative instructions concerning the implementation of the accommodations. Decisions concerning whether accommodations have been implemented properly are at the sole discretion of the Head of School.

Schedule of Services: Students receive evidence-based accommodations to testing and classwork according to instructions provided in the evaluation by a physician, occupational therapist, licensed educational diagnostician, licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP), or clinical neuropsychologist. Accommodations are implemented by

classroom teachers, consultative with the Learning Specialist, and by the Learning Specialist herself.

Should a student qualify with an academic deficit in Reading or Math, the child is placed by means of assessment in a structured, evidence-based protocol for intervention in the skills and objectives impacted by the child's eligibility for Learning Support. Every child qualifying with eligibility in foundational academic skills is guaranteed, upon written consent from their parent, enrollment in an intervention designed to meet their needs in Reading and/or Math.

Reading and math fluency are core academic skills required for proficiency in academic tasks and for successful matriculation into high school. As such, early intervention is key. Students in grades 1-4 are prioritized for intervention services during the morning Montessori work period. Enrolled students with an evaluation on file at the beginning of the year, on the first day of school, and signed consent for services, are further prioritized for these morning intervention service blocks. Parents are advised that students in grades 6-8 qualifying with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, or Dyscalculia who may derive meaningful benefit from academic services and regular intervention are enrolled in a math or reading elective may take place of a Specials course, where applicable. If a parent does not consent for their child to receive services during a Specials block, or does not consent to intervention during any portion of the day, parents are advised that consent for academic services is fully at-will, and may be revoked at any time.

In-class services are also available for our Upper Elementary students with an evaluation from a part-time paraprofessional, employed by St. Stephen's. These services include executive functioning tasks, such as planning work, prioritizing work, getting out materials, using materials safely, and putting away materials. The SESH paraprofessional will monitor student work initiation, task completion, and academic accuracy and output daily, whilst also monitoring use and implementation of accommodations. The paraprofessional is a collaborative team member working under the classroom teacher, in the service of both the child and the classroom, and collects data to be shared at team meetings. Parents will hear communication from the

classroom teacher or the Learning Specialist based on data collected by the paraprofessional.

Staff Collaboration with the Learning Specialist: When collaborating on behalf of vulnerable learners, teachers, administrators, and the Learning Specialist will strive to follow IGROW principles and communicate with transparency, grace, and wisdom. SSESH recognizes one key to communicating with wisdom is the use of confidential, HIPAA and FERPA-protected portals in service of vulnerable learners. At the beginning of every school year, homeroom teachers and specialists will receive confidential documents explaining which of their students receive services, which services they receive, which accommodations their classwork and assessments should contain, links to resources that teach them how to implement and track various accommodations, and vital next steps for student learning. Classroom teachers have access to Magnus and will read evaluation material directly from the portal; parents should not email evaluations to teachers, as no confidential material will be stored on individual devices. Should parents have questions for the classroom teacher or Learning Specialist about accommodations or evaluations, email is an appropriate channel. However, the documents themselves should be uploaded directly to Magnus, and only viewed within Magnus.

Additionally, PD resources from the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt and AMS online are furnished to teachers who seek to grow their personal practice in delivering accommodated and scaffolded work to exceptional learners in their classes. Access to these documents is updated to reflect new hires and to delete staff that no longer work for SSESH. These documents are not shared with parents, personal connections, board members, or outside stakeholders, as they are confidential.

Non-instructional staff will not access clinical records for students with evaluations. Scheduling documents are available separately and, while also confidential in nature, do not contain the level of clinical detail that instructional documents must.

Student Learning and Neuropsychological Evaluations: If a teacher collects data over time and believes that a learning, cognitive, or psychoeducational evaluation will illuminate the source of a child's challenges in class and support them in success, the teacher will present their data, gathered over time, on the child's behavior and achievement, and request a meeting with the Learning Specialist and parent, notifying the level administrator in advance. The resulting team will then convene and determine the best course forward to support the child. As all evaluations take place outside of school, associated costs are borne by families. In the event that a family seeks a comprehensive evaluation without additional cost, they may seek one through their zoned school district. The choice to evaluate and qualify a child for services is fully at the discretion of the parent. Under no circumstances will a teacher, administrator, or the Learning Specialist hypothesize as to any specific diagnosis, as these diagnoses emerge from extensive cognitive and psychological testing instruments, which are evidence-based, and independently normed and scored. Psychoeducational diagnoses cannot be accurately determined by any observer, however well they may know the child or the characteristics of various learning profiles.

Should a student in the process of evaluation require teacher feedback on clinical assessment instruments, parents and clinicians are advised to give teachers 72 hours to complete these instruments with their feedback. Staff will return these within the recommended period, having filled them out in consultation with their data and recordkeeping devices, including the academic, behavioral, and discipline records for the student, in order to give the most honest, genuine, and helpful feedback to clinicians in support of an accurate diagnosis.

Parents of students who have a current (within the last three calendar years) learning, speech, or neuropsychological evaluation on file should upload that file into Magnus, our HIPAA and FERPA-protected portal, in the Student VHR (vital health record). Any troubleshooting questions with the Magnus OS can be addressed to the Nurse, IT, or Learning Specialist.

Communicating About Accommodations and Services: If a child with accommodations continues to demonstrate low grades or evidence of poor academic performance, the teacher and Learning Specialist will further collaborate to establish changes on behalf of the child, tracking the changes for efficacy, and notifying both the parent and the level administrator as necessary.

If a teacher is unsure how to access confidential documents or needs guidance on implementing an accommodation, they will contact the Learning Specialist. If a child reports that they are not receiving a needed accommodation in a specific class, the parent should reach out to the teacher and the Learning Specialist via email.

Counselor

The School Counselor plays a crucial role in the Wellness Department, acting as an advocate for our students' mental, emotional, and social well-being. The counselor provides support and guidance to help students navigate challenges such as academic pressures, social challenges, and personal issues. By fostering a safe and inclusive environment, the counselor encourages students to express their feelings and concerns, facilitating open communication that allows for growth and development of age-appropriate social skills. The counselor also collaborates with teachers, parents, and community resources to develop programs that promote healthy coping strategies and resilience for our students. By prioritizing mental health and wellness, the School Counselor not only helps students succeed academically but also empowers them to become well-rounded individuals prepared for the future.

School Nurse

The School Nurse plays a vital role in supporting student health and academic success through the delivery of direct nursing care, health education, and coordination of school health programs. Serving as a key liaison among the school, students, families, and healthcare providers, the nurse assesses physical, emotional, and social health needs,

manages chronic conditions, administers medications, and promotes a healthy school environment through education on disease prevention and wellness practices.

All medications, health-related information, and correspondence should be directed to the nurse via email or delivered in person.

Contagious Illnesses: St. Stephen's is dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of all students, faculty, staff, and members of our community. To support this commitment, all health-related absences must be reported to the School Nurse. Parents are encouraged to monitor their children for signs and symptoms of contagious illnesses. If illness is suspected, students should remain at home, and parents should contact the nurse for guidance regarding the appropriate steps for care and clearance to return to school.

Send home/Stay home criteria:

- Temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rash accompanied by other symptoms
- An injury requiring further medical attention
- Malaise coupled with recurrent clinic visits within one school day

This is not an exhaustive list, and St. Stephen's reserves the right to determine when a student needs to go home and which symptoms require a doctor's release to return.

Any health-related absence lasting three or more consecutive days requires a physician's note for the student to return to school. The note must include the reason for the absence and specify the student's level of clearance—whether for full participation or with specific restrictions (e.g., academic, physical, or extracurricular activities).

Once a student is medically cleared to return without restrictions, the school requires a formal letter from the physician confirming the student's release for full participation in all school activities.

Community Notifications: Certain communicable illnesses, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), require notification to parents, employees, and, in some cases, the Houston Health Department in accordance with public health guidelines.

Allergen: If a student has a life-threatening allergy, this information must be documented in the student's Vital Health Record in Magnus Health. Additionally, an Allergy Action Plan must be completed by the student's physician and uploaded to Magnus prior to the first day of school.

Epinephrine auto-injectors must be submitted to the School Nurse by the first day of school. They should be placed in a labeled Zip-lock bag along with any prescribed antihistamines listed in the Allergy Action Plan (e.g., Zyrtec, Benadryl). Auto-injectors must remain in their original packaging, include the prescription label, and contain both required doses.

St. Stephen's is not an allergen-free campus. At the start of the school year, classroom parents will be notified of any food allergies present in their child's classroom. We ask that parents be mindful of these allergies when providing food for shared events such as birthdays or class celebrations. As an alternative, non-food items are encouraged for special occasions.

All faculty and staff receive annual training in the recognition of allergic reactions and the proper administration of epinephrine auto-injectors.

Immunizations/Health Records: The State of Texas requires all students meet or exceed the minimum immunization requirements established by the state. All new and

returning students must be up to date on required immunizations and submit official immunization records to the school prior to the first day of classes, and as needed throughout the school year to remain in compliance.

Immunization exemptions are permitted for medical reasons, religious beliefs, or reasons of conscience.

All Magnus Health requirements must be completed and submitted before the first day of school.

Injuries: If your child requires the use of any medical device (crutches, a wheelchair, ace wrap, etc.), a physician's note must be provided to the School Nurse stating the use of the device, duration of use, as well as outlining any necessary limitations, including academic and physical activities.

Students will not be permitted to resume physical activity until a written medical clearance is provided by the physician, explicitly stating that the student is allowed to return without restrictions.

Medication: If a student requires prescription medication during school hours, the Prescription Medication Permission Form available in Magnus Health must be completed and submitted. Medications must be provided in their original container with the prescription label intact. Loose pills or unidentified medications will not be accepted or administered under any circumstances.

Students are not permitted to carry any medication on their person while at school, with the exception of approved rescue medications (e.g., inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors). In such cases, written authorization must be on file from both the parent and the prescribing physician, clearly stating the medical necessity for the student to carry the medication.

Under the supervision of the school's consulting physician, the clinic may provide certain over-the-counter (OTC) medications for the symptomatic relief of minor ailments that do not require exclusion from school. These medications will only be administered with prior written consent through the Over-the-Counter Medication Form in Magnus Health. OTC medications will not be dispensed without the proper permissions on file.

Health Classes

St. Stephen's offers health education classes led by the Wellness Department and may occasionally include guest speakers, such as healthcare professionals and other members of our community. All lessons are age-appropriate and designed to provide students with a strong foundation of knowledge that can be further reinforced at home.

Parents will receive a permission form prior to the start of the puberty unit. Families who prefer to opt out may do so.

Responsibilities and Conduct

Values

At St. Stephen's Episcopal School, our mission is to nurture each child's academic, creative, and spiritual potential—making the world both kinder and smarter. Our vision looks ahead to a future where young people lead with compassion, acceptance, and a holistic understanding of the world.

This mission and vision are the foundation of everything we do. They guide our dedicated faculty and staff as they instill core values, foster community, and create meaningful learning experiences for our students.

In daily practice, our school community lives out the IGROW principles: Integrity, Grace, Respect, Optimism, and Wisdom. These values help shape the character of our students and define what it means to be a Bulldog.

To bring the Bulldog Experience to life, faculty and staff focus on four essential commitments: Safety and Security, Modeling Bulldog Leadership (IGROW), Professionalism, and Efficiency.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Stephen's admits qualified students of any race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration

of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs and athletic and other School-administered programs.

Gender Identity and Expression

Our community is invested in nurturing an environment that is open and affirming of all students, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The faculty will work with any student to ensure bathroom accessibility, a safe academic environment and inclusion in athletics. In addition, every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's gender identity. Students shall have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the parameters of the School's dress code.

Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying

Each person at St. Stephen's has the right to participate fully in the life of the School without fear of harassment or bullying. St. Stephen's adopts the definition of bullying established by the Anti-Bullying Alliance as follows:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

The School recognizes and respects individual differences and does not discriminate nor tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or any other prohibited criteria as set forth in pertinent state or federal law. To provide an environment of mutual respect, tolerance and sensitivity, every member of the community, including students, parents, faculty and staff, must be committed to appropriate behavior.

Inappropriate behavior towards others, whether verbal or physical, is unacceptable. Such behavior includes unwelcome physical advances, discriminatory comments, or

words, acts, or gestures that cause physical or emotional harm, cause reasonable fear of harm, create a hostile environment, infringe on the rights of another, social isolation or manipulation. Inappropriate behavior also includes students being disrespectful to teachers.

Anyone who believes that they are a victim of such behavior should report such activity to the Division Head(s) or the Head of School. Families can expect a response from the Division Head(s) or Head of School within 24 hours of the report. In reviewing and responding to concerns, the administration will take the age and developmental level of the student or students involved into consideration. This policy applies on school grounds, field trips, overnight trips, school activities, and the virtual realm, including, but not limited to, social media. Bullying may include cyberbullying, regardless of the time or location of the message sent. Any community member who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to separation from St. Stephen's. The School reserves the right to refer to appropriate law enforcement authorities any behavior which the School believes is criminal in nature.

Sexual Harassment and Inappropriate Sexual Relationships

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Students or employees who engage in sexual harassment on school premises, off-school premises at a school-sponsored activity, or in another manner that negatively

impacts the educational environment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including separation from the School. This policy applies to opposite-sex and same-sex victims. Complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly and carefully investigated. All students are assured that they will be free from reprisal or retaliation as a result of reporting any such valid complaints. Complaints should be reported to the Division Head or the Head of School.

Any sexual misconduct between students is forbidden on campus, on school trips or at a school-sponsored event. In addition, romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a school employee is prohibited. These relationships should also be reported to the Division Head or the Head of School.

Tiered Behavior Support Policies

Orientation (Ages 15 Months - 3 Years)

Purpose: The Orientation Community is a nurturing Montessori environment designed to support young children as they develop independence, language, social awareness, self-regulation, and confidence.

Toddlers are in the earliest stages of learning how to communicate their needs, manage emotions, interact with others, and navigate group settings. As a result, challenging behaviors are viewed as a normal part of development and an opportunity for learning.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support healthy emotional and social development
- Maintain a safe and peaceful learning environment
- Teach positive social skills through guidance and modeling
- Foster growing independence and self-confidence
- Build strong partnerships between school and home

Our approach prioritizes connection, prevention, teaching, and restoration rather than punishment.

Guiding Principles:

In our Montessori Toddler Community, children are learning to:

- Care for themselves
- Care for others
- Care for the environment
- Use gentle hands and kind actions
- Express needs appropriately
- Follow simple routines and expectations
- Develop independence
- Begin solving problems with adult support

Because toddlers are still developing self-control and language skills, adults provide consistent guidance, clear boundaries, and compassionate support.

Tier 1: Everyday Guidance and Support:

Instructional Philosophy: Model and support expected behavior

Guiding Principles: Redirection and Gentle Guidance

Tier 1 behaviors are common and developmentally appropriate behaviors that occur as toddlers learn self-regulation and social skills.

Examples of Tier 1 Behaviors

- Difficulty waiting for a turn
- Taking materials from others
- Brief conflicts with peers
- Running indoors
- Loud voices indoors

- Throwing materials
- Difficulty transitioning between activities
- Separation challenges
- Occasional refusal to participate
- Emotional reactions such as crying or frustration

Teacher Responses and Supports

Teachers may:

- Redirect calmly and consistently
- Model appropriate language and behavior
- Offer limited choices
- Provide opportunities for movement
- Help children identify feelings
- Support peaceful interactions
- Reinforce classroom routines
- Offer comfort and reassurance
- Provide a quiet space for calming
- Adjust the environment to support success
- Encourage positive social interactions

Teachers may communicate informally with families to share observations and strategies.

Tier 2: Increased Support and Family Partnership

Instructional Philosophy: Address persistent or more disruptive behaviors

Guiding Principles: Clear communication with parents and supporting staff

Tier 2 behaviors are repeated patterns that require additional support beyond typical classroom guidance.

Examples of Tier 2 Behaviors

- Repeated hitting, biting, kicking, or pushing
- Frequent emotional outbursts that are difficult to recover from

- Ongoing difficulty following classroom routines
- Repeated unsafe behavior
- Persistent disruption of classroom activities
- Frequent conflicts with peers
- Repeated throwing or damaging materials
- Significant separation difficulties that affect participation

Additional Supports May Include

- Increased observation and documentation
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Consistent support strategies between home and school
- Individualized behavior support plans
- Additional opportunities for emotional regulation
- Increased supervision and teacher support
- Consultation with administration as needed

The school may recommend outside evaluation or support services to better understand how to support the child's success.

Tier 3: Intensive Support and Safety Planning:

Instructional Philosophy: Ensure safety and provide individualized support

Guiding Principles: Decision making is centered around the wellbeing of the community

Tier 3 behaviors involve ongoing concerns that significantly affect safety or participation despite previous interventions.

Examples of Tier 3 Behaviors

- Repeated serious aggression toward peers or adults
- Behavior resulting in significant injury
- Persistent unsafe behavior despite intervention
- Frequent attempts to leave supervised areas

- Severe emotional dysregulation that prevents participation
- Ongoing behavior that significantly disrupts the classroom community

Administrative Responses and Supports

Responses may include:

- Immediate administrative involvement
- Parent conferences
- Development of a formal support plan
- Collaboration with outside professionals
- Temporary modification of the child's schedule
- Temporary removal from activities when necessary for safety
- Re-entry planning and ongoing review of support needs

All decisions are made with consideration for the developmental needs of the child, the safety of the community, and the child's long-term success.

Restorative and Developmental Practices

Toddlers learn best through:

- Consistent routines
- Predictable expectations
- Warm and responsive relationships
- Observation and modeling
- Opportunities for repetition and practice
- Positive reinforcement
- Respectful guidance

Teachers help children learn to:

- Recognize emotions
- Develop empathy
- Use words and gestures to communicate needs

- Repair relationships with support
- Build self-confidence and independence

Parent Partnership: Strong collaboration between school and home is essential.

Families can expect:

- Respectful and compassionate communication
- Developmentally appropriate guidance
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Supportive discussions focused on growth

Parents are encouraged to:

- Maintain consistent routines
- Support independence at home
- Reinforce respectful interactions
- Communicate openly with teachers
- Partner collaboratively when concerns arise

Commitment to Montessori Values: Our Orientation Community is grounded in respect for each child and confidence in every child's ability to grow and develop. Through loving guidance, consistent boundaries, and strong relationships, we help children build the social and emotional foundations necessary for lifelong learning and participation in a peaceful community.

Primary (3 Years - Kindergarten)

Purpose: Our Montessori early childhood community is designed to nurture independence, self-regulation, empathy, and respect through a carefully prepared environment and consistent adult guidance. Young children are still developing emotional regulation, communication skills, impulse control, and social awareness.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support healthy social and emotional development
- Maintain a safe and peaceful classroom environment
- Teach appropriate behavior through modeling and guidance
- Foster independence and responsibility
- Build strong partnerships between school and home

Our approach prioritizes teaching, redirection, consistency, and restoration over punishment.

Guiding Principles:

In our Montessori environment, children are supported in learning to:

- Care for themselves
- Care for others
- Care for the environment
- Use gentle hands and kind words
- Follow classroom routines and expectations
- Solve problems peacefully
- Develop increasing independence and self-control

Behavior is viewed as communication. Teachers work to understand the developmental needs underlying behavior while helping children learn appropriate skills and boundaries.

Tier 1: Common Behaviors at this Developmental Stage:

Instructional Philosophy: Model and support expected behavior

Guiding Principles: Redirection and Gentle Guidance

Tier 1 behaviors are expected behaviors at these developmental levels that are supported within the classroom through redirection, modeling, and support.

Examples of Tier 1 Behaviors

- Difficulty waiting for a turn
- Minor conflicts with peers
- Running indoors
- Loud voices indoors
- Misuse of materials
- Short periods of non-participation
- Difficulty with transitions
- Occasional refusal to follow directions

Teacher Responses and Supports

Teachers may:

- Redirect calmly and consistently
- Model appropriate behavior and language
- Offer choices within limits
- Provide grace and courtesy lessons
- Help children identify emotions
- Support conflict resolution
- Guide children toward appropriate activities
- Offer a quiet space for calming and regulation
- Reinforce positive behavior
- Adjust the environment or routines as needed

Generally, these are not behaviors that prompt immediate teacher communication with parents. Teachers may communicate informally with parents if support strategies would benefit from home-school collaboration.

Tier 2: Increased Support and Family Collaboration:

Instructional Philosophy: Address persistent or more disruptive behaviors

Guiding Principles: Clear communication with parents and supporting staff

Tier 2 behaviors involve repeated behaviors that interfere with safety, learning, or the functioning of the classroom community.

Examples of Tier 2 Behaviors

- Repeated aggression such as hitting, biting, kicking, or pushing

- Ongoing refusal to follow adult direction
- Repeated unsafe behavior
- Persistent disruption during work periods
- Frequent emotional outbursts
- Intentional destruction of materials
- Repeated hurtful language or exclusion of peers
- Difficulty separating from caregivers that significantly impacts participation

Possible Responses and Supports

In addition to Tier 1 supports:

- Formal parent communication
- Increased observation and documentation
- Collaborative behavior support strategies between home and school
- Individualized support plans
- Additional emotional regulation support
- Temporary removal from a situation to regain calm and safety
- Increased teacher proximity and supervision
- Meetings with parents and administration if needed

The school may recommend outside evaluation or support services to better understand how to support the child's success.

Tier 3: Intensive Intervention and Safety Response:

Instructional Philosophy: Ensure safety and provide individualized support

Guiding Principles: Decision making is centered around the wellbeing of the community

Tier 3 behaviors involve serious or ongoing concerns that compromise the safety or well-being of the child, peers, or staff.

Examples of Tier 3 Behaviors:

- Repeated serious aggression
- Behavior causing significant injury as determined by the school
- Intentional abuse of a staff member
- Persistent unsafe behavior despite interventions
- Severe emotional dysregulation that prevents participation
- Ongoing destruction of property
- Repeated leaving of supervised spaces
- Behavior that significantly disrupts the learning environment over time

Administrative Responses and Supports

Responses may include:

- Immediate administrative involvement
- Parent conferences
- Temporary removal from classroom activities
- Development of a formal intervention plan
- Reduced schedule or temporary suspension if safety requires
- Requirement for outside professional support
- Re-entry planning meetings
- Ongoing review of placement appropriateness

All decisions are made with consideration for the developmental needs of the child, classroom safety, and the well-being of the entire community.

Parent Partnership: Strong collaboration between school and home is essential in supporting young children.

Families can expect:

- Compassionate and respectful communication
- Partnership-focused problem solving
- Supportive conversations centered on child development

Parents are expected to:

- Maintain consistent routines and expectations
- Reinforce peaceful problem-solving strategies
- Communicate openly with teachers
- Partner collaboratively when concerns arise

Commitment to Montessori Values:

Our Montessori early childhood program is grounded in respect for the child and belief in each child's capacity for growth. Through patient guidance, consistent expectations, and strong relationships, we help children develop the social and emotional skills needed to thrive within a peaceful and caring community.

Elementary and Middle Years

Purpose: The St. Stephen's Episcopal School community is grounded in respect, responsibility, independence, and care for self, others, and the environment. The purpose of this policy is to support students in developing self-regulation, accountability, problem-solving skills, and peaceful conflict resolution while maintaining a safe and productive learning environment for all.

This policy is designed to:

- Protect the dignity of every child
- Teach and restore rather than punish
- Encourage reflection and personal growth
- Provide clear and consistent expectations
- Foster partnership between school and home

Guiding Principles:

In our Montessori environment, students are expected to:

- Respect themselves, others, and the learning environment
- Use peaceful communication and problem-solving strategies
- Follow classroom agreements and community expectations
- Demonstrate responsibility and independence
- Contribute positively to the classroom community
- Maintain physical and emotional safety for all

It is important to remember that the learning environment does not only exist at the St. Stephen's campus, but rather any place the school community convenes. This includes field trips, class meet ups, and other school sponsored events that may take place off campus.

Behavior support is approached developmentally, recognizing that children learn appropriate behavior through guidance, practice, reflection, and support.

Tier 1: Classroom-Based Redirection and Support:

Instructional Philosophy: Model and support expected behavior
Guiding Principles: Redirection and Gentle Guidance

Tier 1 behaviors are minor or infrequent disruptions that can typically be resolved within the classroom environment.

Examples of Tier 1 Behaviors

- Off-task behavior
- Disruptive talking
- Misuse of classroom materials
- Running indoors
- Minor disrespectful language or tone
- Not following classroom procedures
- Interrupting lessons or work cycles
- Inappropriate noise levels
- Minor peer conflicts

Teacher Responses and Supports

Teachers may:

- Redirect behavior calmly and privately
- Review classroom expectations
- Facilitate problem-solving conversations
- Provide reminders or reteaching
- Offer a reset or reflection space
- Encourage conflict resolution
- Assign restorative classroom responsibilities
- Communicate informally with parents if patterns emerge

Tier 2: Structured Intervention and Family Partnership:

Instructional Philosophy: Address persistent or more disruptive behaviors

Guiding Principles: Clear communication with parents and supporting staff

Tier 2 behaviors involve repeated Tier 1 behaviors or actions that substantially interfere with learning, safety, or community functioning.

Examples of Tier 2 Behaviors:

- Repeated classroom disruption
- Ongoing refusal to follow adult direction
- Repeated disrespect toward peers or adults
- Intentional misuse or damage of materials
- Exclusionary or unkind social behavior
- Inappropriate digital behavior

- Minor physical aggression
- Leaving supervised areas without permission
- Repeated dishonesty
- Off Campus behavior that negatively impacts the learning environment
- Repeated dress code violations

Possible Responses and Supports

In addition to Tier 1 supports:

- Parent communication by teacher or administration
- Formal reflection process
- Restorative conference
- Loss or limitation of privileges
- Behavior support plan
- Increased adult supervision
- Temporary removal from classroom activity
- Check-in/check-out system
- Collaborative goal setting with student and family

Documentation: Repeated Tier 2 behaviors may be documented to track patterns and support interventions.

Tier 3: Administrative Intervention:

Instructional Philosophy: Ensure safety and provide individualized support

Guiding Principles: Decision making is centered around the wellbeing of the community

Tier 3 behaviors are serious incidents that compromise the physical or emotional safety of others or significantly disrupt the school environment.

Examples of Tier 3 Behaviors:

- Physical aggression or fighting
- Pattern of bullying or harassment (including cyberbullying, texting, or other types of online harassment)
- Threatening behavior
- Severe disrespect or intimidation
- Repeated unsafe behavior
- Major property destruction
- Theft
- Discriminatory language or actions
- Possession of prohibited items

- Serious technology misuse
- Behavior posing danger to self or others

Administrative Responses

Responses may include:

- Immediate administrative involvement
- Parent conference
- Removal from classroom or activity
- Restorative action plan
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Required re-entry meeting
- Referral for outside support services
- Probationary enrollment status

The school reserves the right to determine appropriate consequences based on severity, frequency, developmental level, and safety considerations.

Severe or Immediate Safety Concerns:

Certain behaviors may require immediate administrative action regardless of prior behavior history, including:

- Violence or credible threats
- Possession of weapons
- Serious harassment or bullying
- Dangerous conduct
- Substance possession or use

These situations may result in immediate removal from activities, suspension, or further disciplinary review.

As students grow in our programs and age the expectation for self-regulation and behavior choices increases. We do not hold students across this age spectrum to the same standard but use this framework as a guide and apply it appropriately to each age level.

Restorative Practices:

Whenever appropriate, restorative practices will be used to help students:

- Understand the impact of their actions

- Repair harm caused to others
- Rebuild trust within the community
- Develop stronger self-awareness and empathy

Restorative approaches may include:

- Guided reflection
- Peer mediation
- Restorative conversations
- Community repair actions
- Apologies and restitution

Parent Partnership: Strong communication between school and home is essential.

Families can expect:

- Timely communication regarding significant concerns
- Collaboration in supporting student growth
- Respectful and solution-oriented dialogue

Parents are expected to:

- Reinforce school expectations at home
- Partner with teachers and administrators
- Support restorative and reflective processes

Commitment to Montessori Values: Our approach to behavior reflects Montessori principles of dignity, respect, independence, responsibility, and peaceful community living. We believe every child is capable of growth and positive change when supported with consistency, compassion, and accountability.

Prohibited Conduct and Substances

Drugs, weapons, vandalism, and smoking/vaping are strictly prohibited on campus and at all school-related events, activities, or trips by any member of the community—student or adult.

Students may not possess or use alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices, or any legal or illegal drugs while on school property or at school-sponsored events. Any student found under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol will be suspended. Similarly, acts of

vandalism or property damage will result in disciplinary action and may require restitution.

Students may not possess weapons, firearms, handguns, explosive materials, knives, or projectiles on campus or during any school-sponsored trip, activity, or event. Any student found in possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons, or related paraphernalia will be subject to serious disciplinary procedures. All applicable laws will be followed.

The School also reserves the right to refer students or parents to counseling programs when deemed appropriate and may require participation in such programs as a condition of continued enrollment.

Weapons of any kind are not permitted on school grounds or at school functions, including off-campus events. Only on-duty police officers may be armed on the St. Stephen's Church and School campus.

Dress Code

St. Stephen's educates children aged 15 months to eighth grade. As such, dress requirements reflect the development of the child, the skills the child is acquiring in school, and the age-appropriate social expectations and universal graces and courtesies we seek to teach in accordance with our IGROW principles.

Students at St. Stephen's are expected to attend school appropriately dressed and groomed. St. Stephen's does not require a daily uniform; however, students must observe the following clothing guidelines for all genders:

- Attire should include shirts, shorts, skirts, dresses, pants, sweaters, and sweatshirts as applicable and seasonally appropriate.
- Unless provided for during a special event or Spirit Week, pajamas and costumes are not appropriate for school.

- Student clothing shall not bear references to alcohol, drugs, sexually explicit, vulgar, offensive, exclusionary, or violent remarks. Clothing should make no reference to violence or to weaponry.
- No visible undergarments.
- No visible midriff.
- Shorts must be worn underneath skirts or dresses.
- Jewelry is expected to be safe, preventing harm to the wearer and to all other students.
- Closed toe shoes are expected to be worn at all times.
- No hats or caps should be worn in the Nave. Exceptions shall be made for religious or cultural affiliation.
- Sunglasses are to be worn out of doors only.
- Children's clothing should allow for a child's freedom of movement.

Children who are developing independence and are toilet learning should be dressed in clothing they can put on and take off easily.

Students who do not adhere to these guidelines may be provided with clothing issued by the school. Parents may be called if appropriate clothing is not available or the student refuses dress-code-appropriate clothing.

Formal attire may be required for special events throughout the year.

Lunch and Snacks

Any meal or snack sent to school should be well-balanced and nutritious. Students may

not bring candy or soft drinks to campus. Unless a teacher specifies otherwise, only water in spill-proof bottles is allowed in the classroom. For health and safety reasons, students should not share food or drinks with others.

Lunchboxes should include ice packs to keep food at a safe temperature, as refrigeration is not available. Microwaves are accessible for students who need to reheat their meals (limited to 30 seconds.)

St. Stephen's offers an optional catered lunch program through Simply Fresh Kitchen. Families may order meals directly at <https://new.thesimplyfreshkitchen.com/>. Meals are made fresh daily and delivered to campus. Ordering is flexible, and families can choose the days and meals that work best for them.

Food delivery should be limited to absolute emergencies. The delivery address is 1805 West Alabama. Please make sure your child's teacher is aware if you plan to have food delivered.

Personal Property and Electronics

Cell phones, iPads, and smartwatches—defined as watches that enable wearers to make or receive calls and messages—are not permitted in view or in use during the school day. These devices must be turned in to the teacher at the beginning of the day and will be returned at dismissal.

Students may not bring toys or sports equipment from home unless specifically permitted by the School or a faculty member.

Please note that any personal items brought to school—including electronics, accessories, or other belongings—are brought at the student's own risk. The School is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

Care for School Property

Students are expected to show respect for the School's campus and materials, including indoor and outdoor areas and personal work and eating spaces. All School equipment should be used appropriately and put away after use. Students will be asked to keep desks, picnic tables and the surrounding areas clean after lunch as well as to care for the materials and campus in general.

The School typically provides textbooks and supplies. The Business Office will assess replacement costs for lost books, materials, Chromebooks or instruments.

Vandalism may be subject to disciplinary action, including remedial action and/or the assessment of costs to the family.

Responsible Use of IT Equipment, Internet, and Software

Students are expected to take care of school equipment and technology. Computers and iPads are to be used only for school-related projects. The Internet may be used for educational purposes only. Students must use the school network, email system, tablets, computers, printers, or other equipment appropriately. Students may not use their school email addresses for any non-academic purposes, such as chatting amongst classmates, signing up for free trials or gaming sites, etc. Upper Elementary and Middle Years students use Chromebooks and Google accounts to complete their work.

These Chromebooks may not be removed from the premises without proper supervision and approval by the SESH IT Department. Websites should not be accessed that have been blocked by St. Stephen's, which includes but is not limited to chatting, gaming, hacking, and pornographic sites. If a student inadvertently accesses inappropriate content, the School will not be held responsible, and students are expected to notify their teacher of the error. In addition, streaming websites like Netflix, YouTube and Hulu may not be accessed unless for educational purposes and approved by the teacher.

In our ongoing commitment to maintaining academic integrity while preparing students for a digital future, the unrestricted use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom is monitored and limited. To support this policy, the IT department has implemented restrictions across all student-issued devices and school Google accounts, blocking AI platforms and only allowing access when necessary. AI exposure will be limited to specific, teacher-guided lessons. The curriculum will focus on the ethical, responsible, and purposeful applications of this technology. AI will only be referenced as a tool to enhance critical thinking and learning—never as a shortcut to allow students to complete or bypass their own academic work.

Students are expected to use personal technology in a manner consistent with St. Stephen's mission and norms, and parents are expected to monitor this usage. For instance, students may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from School, for engaging in inappropriate behavior, even if such behavior occurs on personal devices. Such inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, sending illicit pictures of other students or themselves ("sexting") and engaging in bullying or harassing behavior through text messages, social media, or other forms of electronic communication ("cyberbullying").

Supplemental Agreements in Middle Years

Middle Years students may be asked to sign supplemental agreements on conduct, as deemed necessary and appropriate by Middle Years faculty, in consultation with the Division Head. Such agreements will be shared with families and students prior to signing so as to encourage an open and honest discussion on the goals and objectives of each agreement. Such agreements are incorporated by reference into this Handbook, as if fully set forth herein, and are subject to the disciplinary provisions of this Handbook.

Expectations of Families

Child Abuse and Neglect

St. Stephen's, in accordance with the Texas Family Code, is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of children. All employees of St. Stephen's Episcopal School are mandatory reporters and are required to report any suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child under the age of 18.

This responsibility belongs to each employee individually and may not be delegated to another person. Any employee who has cause to believe that a child may have been abused or neglected is expected to make a report to the appropriate authorities, which may include the Texas Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or local law enforcement, and to fulfill all legal reporting requirements.

Family Matters and Family Law

When parents are unmarried, separated, divorced or involved in divorce proceedings, the Head of School is presented with the complex task of determining the rights and responsibilities of each parent and, in some cases, third-party guardians. Issues of who may enroll, withdraw, or pick up the child will require an in-depth analysis of each parent's rights, privileges, duties, and powers with respect to each child. Parents in such situations must reach out to the Head of School at the beginning of the academic year or as soon as possible after such family matters arise.

The Head of School is the first point of contact for any matter involving family law, including requests for statements of character, opinions regarding parental behavior, or questions posed by any Guardian ad Litem.

Divorce agreements and/or other documentation of custody and/or parental rights must be provided upon request of the Head of School.

Authorization to Release Child

No student will be released to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian without written authorization from the student's parent or guardian. Parents are responsible for providing the names and contact information of authorized pickup persons during the enrollment process and must keep this information up to date via the FACTS Family Portal, especially in the case of changes to custodial rights or authorized individuals.

Anyone other than a parent or legal guardian who is picking up a student may be asked to present a valid photo ID. If someone not listed in the FACTS Family Portal will be picking up your child, the School must be notified in advance by email.

Gifts and Fundraising

We recognize that charitable giving is a joyful expression of the donor's commitment to the mission, program, and future of our organization. St. Stephen's Episcopal School-Houston is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, and all gifts are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. For a gift to apply to a specific tax year, the School must receive an online gift by midnight on December 31st, or a mailed gift postmarked no later than December 31st.

During the 20226-27 school year, the primary fundraising campaigns will include:

- Weekly "Monty Meals" lunch program (every Friday or Thursday - please check the calendar)
- 2026 Annual Fund, starting in August
- Grandparents and Special Friends giving
- Holiday Giving in December, for teachers and staff appreciation
- 2026 Gala with Fund-A-Scholar/scholarship giving in April.

Except for Holiday Giving, these donations will support initiatives such as classroom and campus improvements, scholarships and financial assistance, and professional development for our teachers.

To avoid a conflict of interest, School employees may not accept an individual gift from a single family/parent, student, or any other person connected to the School that is valued at more than \$50. Cash is specifically prohibited. If you wish to show your appreciation of a teacher or staff member, please consider making a Holiday Giving donation, which will benefit all teachers and staff who work for our students. 100% of the tax-deductible Holiday Giving donations will go directly to teachers and staff in December bonuses.

Unrestricted giving, such as through the Annual Fund, supports our yearly budget needs. For restricted or designated gifts, such as for Fund-A-Scholar/scholarship or for capital campaign projects, we will apply as indicated. We strongly encourage you to check with your employer to see if they have a Matching Gifts program, in order to maximize your support.

Gifts of real estate or furniture must be arranged in advance with the Head of School. For stock or securities gifts, please coordinate your donation with the Director of Development. For in-kind gifts of items or supplies for classrooms or the school, please let the Director of Development know for tracking purposes, and to receive appropriate recognition and an acknowledgement letter for your tax records. This includes items for events and the spring Gala's Silent Auction.

Because we respect the privacy of our donors, our mailing list is never given, sold, or rented to another party. If a donor wishes to remain anonymous, St. Stephen's will do everything in its power to respect that wish. Unfortunately, we cannot completely guarantee anonymity.

Students are not permitted to fundraise on behalf of the School. Student-initiated funds raised to benefit other organizations or needs are part of nurturing students' budding compassion for others and the planet.

Social Media

St. Stephen's celebrates our students and teachers on the following social media platforms: Facebook (sseshouston) and Instagram (ssesh_bulldogs). Social media posts will feature students with media releases only.

We welcome your thoughts and comments and look forward to what you have to say.

However, we will remove postings that:

- Break the law or encourage others to do so; this includes respecting copyright and fair use laws;
- Contain abusive or inappropriate language or statements; this includes remarks that are hateful as well as those that contain obscenities or are sexually explicit;
- Easily identify students and/or staff in defamatory, abusive, or generally negative terms;
- Do not show proper consideration for others' privacy or are considered likely to offend or provoke others;
- Are spam (repeatedly posting the same comment or comments that are simply advertising/promoting a service or product).

The page administrators reserve the right to not post or to remove any comments at any time, for any reason, but we hope that will not ever be necessary. We also reserve the right to block or restrict individuals who misuse our social media platforms.

Families, please respect the data privacy of minors and other persons by not posting photos or other identifying information.

Campus Life

Safety and Security

Parents can expect that all faculty and staff are trained in security procedures, an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is in place and is reviewed as necessary, drills occur regularly, and CPR and First Aid training is provided and documented for all employees. St. Stephen's also has a full-time security officer on campus to support daily safety procedures, monitor campus activity, and help maintain a secure environment for students, employees, and visitors.

In keeping with the policy of the Episcopal Diocese, all faculty, staff, chaperones, and volunteers are required to complete the Safeguarding God's Children course and obtain certification. This process includes an interview, background check, and course completion.

School Visitors

In the interest of safety and service to all families, the School reserves the right to refuse entry to the campus to any person for any reason. This could occur during safety drills, during a safety/security event, if an unannounced visitor would overcrowd a classroom, or in any other situation considered necessary by administration.

External video monitoring is in place to enhance safety and security across the campus. Activities around the campus perimeter are continuously monitored through surveillance cameras to ensure a secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. This system helps deter unauthorized access and supports timely responses to any suspicious behavior or incidents.

With the exception of parents in carpool, all visitors entering campus must first check in at the Front Office before proceeding anywhere on campus. This includes parents,

guardians, volunteers, vendors, and invited guests, even when the visit has been scheduled in advance. Visitors must register via the Raptor Visitor Management System. Upon entering the shared Church and School entrance on West Alabama, all visitors will be asked to present a valid government-issued ID, which will be scanned into the Raptor Visitor Management System. Upon reading the information, Raptor will check the national database to identify sexual offenders.

The Raptor system only scans the name, date of birth, and photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. Additional data from the driver's license is not gathered, and the database is not connected to any other system, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. Therefore, any other information connected to the driver's license is not part of the system and is not accessible to any users. Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of their visit. Visitors are expected to wear the badge while on campus and return to the Front Office when leaving campus.

St. Stephen's Community Council (SCC)

The SCC, our parent volunteer program at St. Stephen's Episcopal School, exists to:

- Foster a vibrant, inclusive school community;
- Support the mission and daily life of the school through meaningful volunteer service;
- Strengthen the partnership between families, faculty, and staff.

All parents and guardians of St. Stephen's students are invited and encouraged to participate in the Parent Volunteer Program.

Volunteer opportunities range from classroom support and event planning to campus hospitality and service projects. The program is designed to welcome all levels of involvement and to ensure every parent can find a way to contribute that is meaningful and manageable.

Participation in the Parent Volunteer Program is a powerful way to connect with the SSESH community, support the school's mission, and enrich your family's school experience.

Room Parents

Room Parents foster community at St. Stephen's by supporting classroom culture and school-wide engagement. Room Parents:

- Are the teacher's first points of contact for any classroom needs outside of what the school provides (e.g., items needed in the classroom, volunteers for tasks)
- Help to promote school events.
- Coordinate lead teacher and associate teacher birthday celebrations and encourage holiday giving in accordance with the Student and Family Handbook.
- Assist with seasonal and holiday classroom decorations.
- Provide opportunities for families to connect outside of school (e.g., playdates)
- Reach out to new families to support their transition, answer questions, or connect them with the right person for support.
- May be asked to provide testimonials for the school's marketing initiatives.
- Collaborate with the Director of Community Engagement to support Teacher Appreciation Week activities.

Room Parents are not responsible for school curriculum or administration. They are appointed at the discretion of the Lead Teacher(s) and serve under the guidance of the Director of Community Engagement.

Extended Care

St. Stephen's Extended Care Program is an enriching and developmentally appropriate environment that supports the unique growth and individuality of each student. Rooted in Montessori values, the program is designed to offer a peaceful and purposeful environment that supports continued growth and exploration. It provides a balance of structured and unstructured time that allows children to continue developing cognitively, socially, and emotionally in a supportive community.

Students in Extended Care participate in meaningful activities such as indoor and outdoor play, art projects, collaborative games, and homework completion. They are also given ample time to rest, reflect, and engage in imaginative or quiet play. The atmosphere is calm and respectful, guided by the principles of grace and courtesy that are foundational to the Montessori philosophy.

Staffing and Supervision: Our Extended Care staff are caring professionals who are experienced childcare providers. They serve as guides and mentors, modeling respectful communication and positive conflict resolution. Each staff member is committed to nurturing the whole child—supporting personal growth, emotional well-being, and social development.

Staff maintain consistent routines and clear expectations that provide children with both security and autonomy. They work in partnership with the Director of Enrichments to ensure a positive transition from the academic school day to after-school care.

Parent Expectations: Parents play a vital role in maintaining the harmony and effectiveness of the Extended Care Program.

We ask families to:

- Communicate any special needs or updates that may affect their child's participation in the program with the Director of Enrichment

- Ensure timely pickup, respecting the program's hours and late pickup policies.
- Support and partner with the Director of Enrichment when behavioral or developmental concerns arise.
- Review and discuss behavioral expectations with their child.

Student Expectations:

Children in Extended Care are expected to:

- Treat peers and adults with kindness and respect.
- Engage constructively in the activities offered, using materials appropriately.
- Follow established routines and respond positively to guidance from staff.
- Demonstrate responsibility for their belongings and behavior.
- Practice peaceful conflict resolution, using their words to express needs and emotions.

Bulldog 360

St. Stephen's *Bulldog 360* program offers an enriching selection of after-school classes that allow students to explore their interests and deepen their love of learning beyond the regular school day. Rooted in Montessori principles of independence, curiosity, and holistic development, Bulldog 360 offers a wide array of engaging opportunities in the physical, creative, musical, technological, and engineering realms.

These enrichment classes are designed to help students discover new passions, build practical skills, and cultivate perseverance, self-expression, and confidence. Regular participation in Bulldog 360 supports the development of the whole child—nurturing social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a joyful, hands-on way.

Program Staffing and Instruction: Bulldog 360 instructors include both St. Stephen's faculty and carefully selected outside professionals in various fields. All instructors undergo a vetting process to ensure alignment with the school's educational philosophy and commitment to child-centered learning. Classes are small, collaborative, and designed to honor each child's developmental stage and learning style.

Parent Expectations: Families are encouraged to consider their child's individual needs, interests, and readiness before enrolling in Bulldog 360 classes. To ensure the best fit, **parents of young children are encouraged to consult with their child's classroom teacher before enrolling** in enrichment courses. Teachers will help determine whether the class aligns with the student's developmental readiness, stamina, and social-emotional needs.

We also ask families to:

- Discuss class expectations with their child in advance.
- Respect end times for each class and arrange for timely pickup.
- Communicate with the Bulldog 360 Coordinator about any changes in attendance or needs.
- Support open dialogue if challenges arise during the session.

Student Expectations:

Students enrolled in Bulldog 360 are expected to:

- Approach new activities with curiosity and a willingness to try.
- Follow class guidelines and actively participate to the best of their ability.
- Demonstrate respect for instructors, peers, and materials.
- Ask for help when needed and take ownership of their behavior.

Developmental Readiness and Refund Policy: Bulldog 360 is built on the belief that enrichment experiences are most beneficial when students are developmentally prepared to fully engage.

If a student enrolls in a class and it becomes clear within the first two weeks that the class is not developmentally appropriate, the Director of Enrichment will reach out to the family. In such cases, the student will be withdrawn from the class, and a full refund will be issued for the remainder of the session.

This policy is in place to ensure that each child's enrichment experience is positive, constructive, and aligned with their current developmental needs.

Enrollment and Registration

Tuition and Fees

St. Stephen's is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, dependent upon tuition as its principal source of income. In order to continue offering high-quality experiences in our classrooms, it is critical that student accounts are kept current.

For information regarding tuition or financial obligations, please refer to the Enrollment Agreement or contact the Business Office at 713-821-9100. If your family is behind on payment, please notify the Business Office immediately to create or revise a payment plan. The following penalties may be imposed in the event of past-due payments:

- A late fee of 1.5% per month may be assessed on past-due payments.
- If an account is more than 90 days past due, parents may be asked to keep their child out of school until the account is made current.
- A re-enrollment contract may be withheld until the account is made current.

Please note, tuition deposits are non-refundable. Written termination of the Enrollment Agreement must be received by the Head of School before June 1st, per the Enrollment Agreement, in order to terminate tuition responsibilities.

Credit card fees assessed via FACTS Tuition and FACTS Payment Forms will be paid by families.

Financial Aid

There are more applications for assistance than funds available; therefore, St. Stephen's uses the following practices to distribute aid responsibly:

- New students must be mission-appropriate and in good standing with their previous school.
- Current accounts must be up-to-date to be considered for aid in the subsequent year.
- All awards are assessed with regard to family needs as determined by a third-party assessment.

Governance

Church and School Partnership

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is an inclusive, nurturing, and healing community that seeks and invites all to practice the transformational and empowering work of Jesus Christ among us and in the world. The School is a parish day school of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Governance in Episcopal Parish Day Schools:

- St. Stephen's Episcopal School's by-laws articulate the mission of the School and Church, the relationship between the Church and School and the roles of the Vestry and the Board of Trustees.
- The Church views the School as one of its Missions and is a significant outreach program to the community. The composition of the School's Board of Trustees includes both Church (60%) and School representation (40%).
- Roles and responsibilities of the Vestry, Board, Rector and Head of School are clearly defined and linked to ensure the School is managed wisely, harmoniously and spiritually.

Study of Religion in Episcopal Schools:

- The study of religion within the curricular offering is a crucial dimension of the identity of the School as well as an anchor in a strong and balanced academic program.
- Our religion curriculum includes other world religions and ethics.
- Below is a list of what students will be learning in Chapel with their age group:
 - Early Childhood: an understanding of God's presence and God's

- love in our lives;
 - 1st-8th grade: an introduction to the Liturgical year, Episcopal liturgy and biblical stories.
- All students participate in Chapel once per week. In addition, the School holds several All-School Chapels throughout the year in which parents are always welcome. Chapel content is sensitive to the diversity of religious identities of our students while remaining faithful to Christian foundations and Episcopal practice and tradition.
- Every other year, Middle Years students study World Religions as part of their core curriculum.

Furthering Episcopal Identity at St. Stephen's School:

- The School's traditions and community life demonstrate its commitment to honor, celebrate and worship God in Christ as the center of life and to support all people regardless of origin, ability or religion.
- The School has a fundamental commitment to be an inclusive community grounded in respect for each of its members.
- Community service, service-learning and other forms of outreach are tangible expressions of our Episcopal identity and are available to all students and mandatory for all Middle Years students.

An Episcopal School:

- Is comprehensive and inclusive by encouraging respect for the other person's beliefs, actively seeking faculty and students of diverse backgrounds and traditions and looking for the values that unite people rather than those that divide.
- Has a common liturgical tradition. It is through their worship that Episcopalians are bound most closely together. Students will have the opportunity to experience the best of Episcopal worship if they are to understand the heart of the Church's teaching.

- Begins from the premise that we are all a community of explorers, in which we all need to learn and grow by pursuing questions wherever they lead, to use our critical faculties and to value our learning from the past.
- Encourages students to understand the issues and complexities of society and to consider what their individual responsibilities are and to take action.
- Is founded on love. Love for students, for their value as children of God and for their unique gifts. Love sustains everything we do.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is composed of members from the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, School, and surrounding community. The structure and work of the Board of Trustees is governed by a set of by-laws, which are aligned with and approved by both the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Vestry.

The Board of Trustees conducts the strategic work of the board via fixed committees.

The Board of Trustees sets policy, hires and evaluates the Head of School, approves the annual budget, ensures fiscal soundness, sets fundraising strategy, determines the school's mission, and determines the Growth Strategy every four years, on average.

The Board does not determine curriculum, make personnel or admission decisions or address daily operations of the School.

Administratively, the Division Head(s) and School Directors report to the Head of School with faculty and staff reporting to either the Division Head(s) or Directors. The Head of School is the sole employee of the Board of Trustees and is the chief administrative agent of the daily operations and policies of the School.

Appendix A:

Criteria for Readmission to School

Families must notify if their child is exposed to or tests positive for any communicable disease, including COVID-19.

If a child is presenting symptoms of a communicable disease not mentioned below, please contact the school nurse for further guidance on readmission criteria.

Communicable Disease	Symptoms	Symptoms for Exclusion from Care	Criteria for Readmission to School
Chicken Pox	Fever, loss of appetite, irritability, itchy, blister-like rash Blisters in various stages of oozing and crusting	When evidence of fever, lesions, or blisters are present	Fever free without medication assistance for 24 hours When all lesions are dried and crusted over and 24 hours have passed with no new lesions occurring
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Redness that involves the whites of the eyes or surrounding tissue, puffiness Discharge and crusting around eyes	When tissue or whites of eyes are red or if the eye has persistent colored (green or yellow) or white discharge	MD grants permission with note and Rx eye drop treatment has begun
Cold Sores	Blisters on the lips or around mouth Fever	If fever is present	Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication

COVID-19	See CDC Guidelines, as may be amended by the Head of School in consultation with the Re-Gathering Task Force of St. Stephen's Church and School	See CDC Guidelines, as may be amended by the Head of School in consultation with the Re-Gathering Task Force of St. Stephen's Church and School	See CDC Guidelines, as may be amended by the Head of School in consultation with the Re-Gathering Task Force of St. Stephen's Church and School
Diarrheal Disease - infectious	Loose or frequent stools Abdominal cramping Increased Temperature	If student has 1 or more incident in a 24-hour period If student requires extensive individualized care	Parents provide a note and 24 hours after symptoms resolve
Ear Infections	Pulling at ear, discomfort or irritability Fever	If fever is present If student requires extensive individualized care	Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication Able to participate in group care (including outdoor play)
Fifth Disease	First symptoms may be mild and non-specific: Fever, runny nose, and headache Bright red rash on cheeks Possibly second lace-like rash on body	If fever is present or does not feel well Children with Fifth's Disease are more contagious before they get a rash	Parents provide a note and 24 hours after fever

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	Painful white blisters in the mouth, hands or feet Sore throat, fever	If fever is present When blisters are present on mouth/hands/feet If student requires extensive individualized care	MD grants permission with note Fever free for 24 hours without medication Able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)
Head Lice	Itching and scratching of the scalp, as well as pinpoint white eggs (nits) that will not flick off the hair shaft	When lice or nits are present	Parents provide a note that all treatments of shampoo with pediculicide have been applied appropriately and all dead lice and nits have been removed.
Impetigo (Staph)	Blister-like sores (often around the mouth and nose) Releases a yellow cloudy fluid leaving a weeping sore Fluid dries leaving a yellow or golden colored crust May also involve neck and limbs	If sores are present If student requires extensive individualized care	MD grants permission with note After receiving treatment and responding (24 hours after receiving treatment)
Influenza	Abrupt onset of temperature, headaches, muscle aches and cough	If fever is present If student requires individualized care	Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications Able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)

Measles	Skin rash Upper respiratory infection Fever swollen glands in back of head and neck	If rash is present If fever is present	Return four days after rash onset Must also be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications
Mononucleosis	Variable symptoms, infants and young children may be asymptomatic Fever, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat	If fever present	MD grants permission with note Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications
Molluscum	Virus causing small white or pink raised bumps or growths (wart-like)	If areas of molluscum cannot be covered and kept covered during the school day	When area can be covered by clothing or band-aids
Mumps	Swelling beneath jaw in front of one or both ears May have low-grade fever	If symptomatic	Five days from onset of swelling
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	"Whooping" sound following inspiration Coughing fits, difficulty catching breath. May vomit after coughing Low-grade fever, runny nose	If symptomatic	Completion of five days of appropriate antibiotic therapy

Ringworm	Patchy areas of scaling with mild itch in a ring pattern	If symptomatic	Parents provide note ensuring that treatment with fungicide has begun and spots are covered
Scabies	Pimple-like skin rash Intense itching	If symptomatic	Readmit once treatment has begun
Strep Throat	Red, painful throat Swollen tonsils Fever Ear infections possible	If symptomatic	MD grants permission with note Once on antibiotic treatment and responding Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
Vomiting	Discharging stomach contents through the mouths	If there is a vomiting episode in a 24-hour period (may indicate bacterial or viral infection) If student requires extension individualized care	When symptom free for 24 hours