



KINDER FAMILY INFORMATION GUIDE

Welcome to Kindergarten!

“Everything I need to know... I learned in kindergarten.”

— Robert Fulghum

Welcome to Kindergarten! Some kinder families are already familiar with how things work around here, but many families are new to our school community. This guide was created to provide a few explanations, tips, and answers to frequently asked questions. We hope it helps!

In addition to our school office, we encourage you to connect with your teachers, room parents, and other families. Whenever you have questions or need more support, we're all here for you. There is a list of “parent ambassador” contacts at the end of this document.

Get connected digitally. Our website has a wealth of information and resources. A great way to stay up-to-date on what's happening at school is to sign up for a digital copy of the school newsletter. There is a link on the school's home page to sign up. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram to receive timely updates, reminders, and inspiration.

Jumping right in, here are some things we think you should know...

- **Formal uniform vs. regular uniform**

Formal uniform is worn on days when students will be attending a mass or prayer service, and on other special occasions as noted on the academic calendar.

On formal days, girls wear the plaid jumper with either a uniform polo or Peter Pan collar shirt underneath. Boys wear long pants with either length shirt sleeve.

On “regular” days, girls can wear the formal uniform jumper, skorts, shorts, or pants and polos. Boys can wear shorts or pants with their uniform shirt.

Cardigans, pull-over sweatshirts, and fleece jackets can be worn in the classroom on cold days, but rain jackets should be removed while inside. Only uniform jackets can be worn to school.

Please refer to the Family Handbook for additional details. A uniform exchange is available for used uniform items, and they'll happily accept your outgrown items as your child grows.

Spirit Day / \$2 Free Dress Day. Every Tuesday is Spirit Day. You can buy spirit shirts through the office at the beginning of the year (or order during registration time), and students wear them on Tuesdays with either jeans or their uniform bottoms. It's fun, but not mandatory.

The first Tuesday of every month is a little different in that your student can wear regular spirit wear or pay \$2 to wear free dress. Please refer to the Family Handbook for free-dress guidelines.

Occasionally, students earn or are given free dress on other days of the week, but we'll give you a heads-up for each of those via the school newsletter.

- **Family Envelope**

Every Wednesday your child will come home with a manilla "Family Envelope." Inside you will find the weekly newsletter, a scrip order form, and other flyers. Your job is to remove all items from the folder, **read** the contents, and return the folder by Friday of the same week (empty or with return items as needed). For example, you can send in your scrip, hot lunch, or Spring Play order form via this envelope. Have a tuition payment due? Stick it in the family envelope. You can also use this envelope as a handy way to send other notes and communications to the office.

- **Choicelunch (lunch delivery program)**

Kinders can participate in Choicelunch once they start going full days (or if they stay for "Kids Club" during the first few weeks). Order lunches at www.choicelunch.com or through the program app.

- **Scrip**

You know those kiosks at the grocery store selling gift cards? That's basically what scrip is. But when you buy your scrip/gift card from St. Agnes, the school gets a percentage of the sale. This is a major part of our fundraising and every family is expected to participate (see the Family Handbook for more info). Scrip is sold in the office or you can submit your order through the Family Envelope and check the "send home with my child" box at the bottom of the page. There is a larger list of participating vendors found online, which you can special order. If you have specific questions you can always email akelley@csdo.org.

Last year we started using the RaiseRight app so you can order eScrip without coming into the office. You cannot order physical gift cards this way, but you can purchase eScrip on demand and reload physical gift cards you purchased through the office.



Here are a few tips to help you reach your goal:

- Invite family/friends to participate and give them copies of the scrip order form. Grandparents, uncles, your BFF – they can all get scrip through you.
- Christmas and birthdays are a great time to give gift cards! Plan your Christmas shopping ahead of time and use scrip gift cards for your purchases.
- Have a large household purchase to make? Check to see if you can purchase scrip for the retailer or service ahead of time.
- Employers often like to give their employees gift cards for Christmas, so offer to purchase those gift cards through you.

- **Car line**

It is pretty likely that your kinder will want to be walked to the classroom door every morning for a while, and you'll need to pick up at the classroom door for the first several weeks as well while they have half day. You can do this all year, if you wish. But once your child starts going full days, car line can be your new best friend. It's a well-oiled machine and most kids love doing it. It may seem a tiny bit confusing at first, so it may help to either watch it once to figure it out. Maps are provided in the Family Handbook. Here's how it works:

- For morning drop-off (starting at 7:45 a.m.), drive into the teacher parking lot, and when you find yourself *parallel to the school*, teachers magically appear, open the car door, whisk your

child and his/her backpack away, shut your car door, and off you go. You then drive back out and on with your day. **Please note that you should only turn right out of the parking lot in the morning, which helps maintain the flow of traffic.**

- You have the option of doing morning drop-off on the other side of the school, but since we're focused on kinders right now and they are best dropped closer to their classroom, I'll let you look up those details in the Family Handbook.
- In the afternoon, you enter the parking lot on the far side of the church (where there is a stop sign). If you get on campus before 2:45 p.m., you'll have to idle in line along the back fence by the field and the "big toy" play structure. At 2:45 p.m., you're allowed to drive into the large blacktop school yard, parking in rows parallel to the school. Typically, there will be 4 – 5 rows of cars. At 3 p.m., the bells ring and students start exiting school and finding their way to cars. For younger children – especially kinders – the teachers will help get your child to you at your car. **Please stay in or next to your vehicle at all times; do not walk up to get your child.** Once all kids are in the cars and safe, a teacher will dismiss the cars row by row, with new cars filing in behind. (Again, watch it once and it all becomes clear!)

Once the next set of cars are all lined up, a teacher will blow a whistle so the kids know it's safe to proceed to their cars. So even if you're parked right up at the curb in the first row, and your kid is staring at you longingly, he/she can't come to you until all cars are stopped and it's safe for everyone. In the afternoon, all cars exit via the teacher lot, but you can turn right or left as you leave. If you choose to park instead of doing car line, please only park in marked parking spots, and never in the teacher parking lot.

- **Volunteer hours**

I know it seems like a lot, but it's actually pretty easy to earn your 30 hours per family. You will be invited to sign up for all your volunteer interests through SignUp Genius. The link is on our home page and a reminder will be emailed to all families. We'll also be offering some options for helping out in the kinder classroom (more info to come in your welcome packet). You're whole family can get involved with volunteering. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles... they can all help. But **anyone** who volunteers on campus or who attends field trips **must** be cleared for fingerprinting and do the online VIRTUS training first. The earlier you do this, the better, as it can take weeks to have fingerprints processed.

There are a lot of school events you can attend without being screened as a volunteer. Please feel free to join us for community events such as school masses, Stations of the Cross, Blessing of the Animals, and the Wheel-A-Thon. We'd also love to see you at our after-hours family events, such as Fall Fest, the Ice Cream Social, our Father-Daughter Dance, and Mother-Son Adventure.

Well, that should be enough to get you started. There is a lot more information in our Family Handbook, too. On the next page, we provide a little more information about specific events and how you can start planning for fall over the summer.

Key events by month

There are things that you just don't know until someone tells you, and this is particularly true for new kinder families. Below are a few things worth knowing, by month (dates subject to change).

July

The school calendar is available in summer, so now is a good time to download it. As you'll see, the first several weeks of school for kinders are half days. By the way, kids can wear free dress on the first day of school and typically for the next few days as well. Check the calendar and watch for email reminders.

The lines are long for uniform sales on campus, so I highly recommend shopping online with Dennis Uniform during summer and they often offer back-to-school deals on their website. Shop online at www.dennisuniform.com using school code **NZ4STA**. You can view options by grade and gender. If you want to try on the sizes, you can visit their San Francisco store.

We will offer fingerprinting on campus the first day of school, but if you want to get it done a little earlier – and be ready to start volunteering in the classroom as early as possible – I recommend you go to a certified scan location (check your local PostalAnnex) to get it done now. Mrs. Kelley (the school secretary) has the required Live Scan forms in the office. It must be filled out with Diocese of Oakland information or it will not be processed correctly (don't worry, Mrs. Kelley will fill it out for you).

The other thing you'll need to do is complete the **VIRTUS online course** called Protecting God's Children® Online Awareness Session 3.0 (find it under the Forms/Resources tab on the school website). Once completed, turn the completion certificate and \$15 payment to the office.

August

First day of school:

- Super short day with school hours of 8 – 9:30 a.m.
- Free dress
- Coffee and donuts are available for all parents in the Cauchi Hall courtyard
- Parents can attend the 8:30 a.m. prayer service
- Fingerprinting available on campus

September

Wheel-a-Thon (WAT) is a big deal for the kids and funds raised are how we pay for class field trips. Field trips can be expensive, with bus rental alone costing about \$1000. We only take field trips that we can fund with WAT money. Have your child practice riding his/her bike for the weeks leading up to WAT, especially if you've bought a new bike recently. On WAT day, kids have free dress and parents are encouraged to watch, even if you're not volunteering.

October

Blessing of the Animals is another event the kids really love. Any and all live animals are allowed but need to be brought by the parent (on leash or otherwise contained) and go home right after the blessing. Stuffed animals are welcome for families without portable or actual pets. Parents are welcome to stay and watch the blessing – it's always fun and very lively.

The kinders usually have a mid-month field trip to the pumpkin patch, for which you can volunteer. It's a very fun day and a great way to get to know your child's classmates.

We also have a small Halloween party with stations, for which you can volunteer. Kids do **not** wear Halloween costumes to school. We have an evening Fall Fest with a costume parade, Trunk-or-Treat, cake walk, and games.

November

Stone Soup partners the kinders with 1st Grade to celebrate Thanksgiving. Parents can attend or sign up as volunteers to help with the event.

December

The Christmas concert is a major production and not to be missed. The afternoon show is much less crowded, but just as fun. Get there early and line up outside to ensure you'll get a good seat.

We typically have a class Christmas party with stations, for which you can volunteer.

January

Catholic Schools Week launches with Open House, which is not required, but you are highly encouraged to attend. It's great to see the projects each class has displayed and the kids are so proud to show you their art and accomplishments. Even though we are especially focused on our kinders, don't miss visiting the other classrooms (3rd grade is always a favorite). The book sale is a major event this day, so prepare yourself to stand in line while your kids "shop." But know that the book sale takes place over a few days during the school week, so there's no need to rush in on Open House day if you can come another day (it's open until 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday, the week following Open House).

During Catholic Schools Week, there are daily themes and events. Students will have opportunities to participate with crazy hair, crazy socks, themed outfits (eg, yellow and black for Spelling Bee day), and will attend various assemblies. Please adhere to communicated guidelines, which includes **no dye or sprays (even washable) for hair.**

February

We do not have a traditional Valentine's Day party, but we do have a picnic with the 8th grade buddies and exchange valentines with classmates. The Student Council typically offers candygrams, too.

March

Stations of the Cross is something the classes each witness/present on Fridays during Lent, and parents are invited to attend. On Good Friday, the 8th grade class does their amazing performance.

The Easter party will likely need volunteers, so look for an invitation to sign up.

April

The kinders will host their first school mass this month, and they get really excited about this new responsibility. Try to attend, if you can.

If you have a daughter, you'll definitely want to attend the Father/Daughter dance. It's a major production and the girls love to get dressed up and dance the night away. Photos and dinner are included in the ticket price.

May

Kinders typically do a field trip to the Oakland zoo with their buddies this month. Chaperones are needed, but the 8th graders do the brunt of the work, watching their buddies and carrying shared packs. Kinders will be given t-shirts to wear to help identify them.

Teacher Appreciation Week happens this month, and the PACE team will communicate about events and requests for support.

The Spring Play is another of our amazing shows and should not be missed. As with the Christmas Concert, you'll find the afternoon show to be less crowded, but line up early anyway.

Field Day isn't something parents typically attend unless they've signed up to volunteer. Kinders do a shorter version than the rest of the school, in a separate area.

June

The Ice Cream Social is a big hit with the kids, and a last hurrah before the final days of school. The kids will run around like crazy and you can sit and chat with other parents.

Kinder Author Day is **the big event** of the kinder year, and all parents are expected to attend. Each family gets their own pew in church, so you have space for up to 10 people in your row. Each child takes a turn sitting on stage while the story they wrote and illustrated is read aloud and shown on the church's big screens. All the stories are awesome, and the kids are so proud to be celebrated this way.

On the last day of school, there is a prayer service at the end of which each class physically and symbolically "moves up" to their new position at school. For example, the 8th grade teacher introduces himself to the current 7th grade class, explains what they can expect for the coming year, then invites them to stand up and move as a class to where the 8th grade sits during prayer services (8th grade has graduated a week prior, so their space is open). This continues for each class through to Mrs. Ghelfi inviting any incoming kinders to come sit with her. Parents are invited to attend, and it's a very special ceremony for the students.

There are two events that aren't tied to specific months:

- **Bocce Tournament** – This is an adult-only event. It's a chance to hang out with other parents during the day, enjoy lunch and some cocktails, and put your name in for lots of great raffle items. Parents play in teams and each team has a theme. Get creative with it!
- **Auction** – The auction is a major fundraiser for the school, but it's also a ton of fun and an opportunity to snag some really cool stuff. The event gets better every year – not to be missed. Consider reserving a table with other families for an extra discount. It's nice to sit with people you know, but it's also a great event for getting to know people better.

Help is just a call, text, or email away!

We have a group of Parent Ambassador families who are here to help. They've all been where you are now and have become seasoned St. Agnes parents along the way. They have answers to even the strangest of questions! Please call, email, or text these families at any time:

- Reyna Cruz (3rd and 6th graders), 510-915-2080, reyna.cruz1@gmail.com
- Shannon Dorsey (4th and 7th graders), 925-818-6601, sed@barnold.com
- Millie Frias (8th grader and St. Agnes graduate), 925-325-8041, thefriasfamily@gmail.com
- Celina Izon (3rd, 7th, and 8th graders), 808-754-3722, celinasyee@yahoo.com
- Ann Schultz (7th grader and St. Agnes graduates), 510-435-3423, annburris@hotmail.com