

SPARK Schools Scholar and Family Handbook

**2021 Instructional Year
High School**

www.sparkschools.co.za
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Welcome

Welcome to SPARK Schools for the 2021 instructional year! Whether you are a returning family or beginning with us for the first time, we look forward to working alongside you during the year ahead.

This Scholar and Family Handbook serve as a guide to our policies and procedures. All family members, scholars, and staff are asked to abide by the expectations set out in this handbook to ensure that our schools are safe and positive learning environments. We are committed to partnering with you and ask that you assist us by upholding and supporting the school's mission, policies, and expectations with your scholar, as well.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask any school staff for clarification.

Thank you for embarking upon this journey with us!

To University and Beyond,

The SPARK Schools Team

Our Core Values

At SPARK Schools, we live by our core values. They are essential to nurturing SPARK scholars who will shape society for the better in the future. These are the five core values that make up the acronym SPARK:

- **Service:** SPARK scholars are active citizens in their classrooms, communities, and country. They dedicate time and effort to serving those in need and approach challenges with a team mindset.
- **Persistence:** SPARK scholars never give up. They relentlessly pursue their academic and personal goals, tackling problems with an optimistic attitude and determination.
- **Achievement:** SPARK scholars accomplish their academic goals, putting them on a trajectory toward university and successful careers. They are intellectually curious and have a genuine love of learning.
- **Responsibility:** SPARK scholars demonstrate self-control and are accountable for their actions. They pay attention, follow directions, complete assignments, and seek to understand how their actions impact others.
- **Kindness:** SPARK scholars treat themselves and others with respect and dignity. They are generous and value their relationships with peers and Educators alike.

Every SPARK School also has a sixth core value, which is unique to that school and acts as a theme for school and community initiatives throughout the school year. SPARK Randburg's 6th core value is Respect.

SPARK scholars promise to abide by our core values when they recite the Daily Creed at Sparks Fly each day. Practice the daily creed with your scholar:

*Who are we? We are SPARK!
I am a SPARK scholar at all times.
I serve my classmates, community, and country.
I am persistent. I never give up.
I achieve my best in all that I do.
I am responsible for my actions.
I treat everyone around me with kindness.
I am a respectful scholar. I consider the rights and feelings of others.
I am a SPARK scholar, and I'm going to university!*

Communication

We believe that consistent, clear, and relevant communication builds a strong relationship between our families and our schools. Therefore, we promise to:

- Resolve queries with urgency, including scheduling in-person meetings as needed and acknowledging written or email communication within two working days;
- Send weekly newsletters containing information about upcoming school events and initiatives;

- Host termly Parent-Community Meetings (PCMs) to update parents and family members on relevant topics and seek feedback to improve our school experience continuously.
- Facilitate Class Parent groups at all schools who meet with the school leadership team regularly to discuss school-wide initiatives and plan events.
- Host opportunities each term for scholars and families to engage with Educators and members of the Leadership Team in an informal setting; and
- Celebrate families when they make positive contributions to our school community.

In return, we request the following of the family members of our scholars when communicating with the school:

- Seek to resolve issues with their scholar's educator first, before escalating concerns to a member of the school leadership, or airing grievances on social media. If your concern is unresolved, please refer to our [Policy for the Resolution of Grievances](#).
- Schedule appointments with members of staff, understanding that they are unavailable for meetings from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, which are our instructional hours.
- Interact respectfully in-person and by e-mail with staff, who are also committed to professional and calm communication.
- Contribute to the school community each term through family volunteer hours.

Social Media

Airing grievances on social media, WhatsApp, or other messaging services without first following our Policy for the Resolution of Grievances is in breach of our Handbook and enrolment contract and could be considered slander against the school. We commit to following the communication norms in the Handbook and ask that all SPARK Schools parents, guardians, and community members do the same. Inappropriate parent behaviour or disrespectful communication can be considered grounds to terminate a contract in very severe circumstances.

Should your query or concern not be resolved by the educators or school leaders, please elevate it further by emailing complaints@sparkschools.co.za.

Please note that our Enrolment and Accounts teams are stationed at SPARK Support, our central office. **School leaders and staff are unable to assist with enrolment and accounts queries.** Should you wish to contact our enrolment and accounts teams, please use the following contact details:

- Enrolment- registrar@sparkschools.co.za
- Accounts- accounts@sparkschools.co.za

Keep up-to-date with SPARK news and spread the SPARK love to family and friends by liking us on [Facebook](#) and following us on Twitter (@SPARKSchools).

Family Engagement

We believe that parents and other family members are our most important partners in fulfilling our vision for South Africa to lead global education. The purpose of family engagement at SPARK Schools is to invest and involve families in this vision by providing opportunities for family contribution, leadership, and recognition in our schools.

We ask all families to complete 30 volunteer hours annually. There are many ways to contribute to your child's school positively:

- Participate in school events, fundraisers, and extracurricular activities;
- Complete classroom, place-based education or XC project tasks, as requested by an educator; and
- Donate art supplies or other specific items required by the school for a project or initiative.

Class Parents

While all families contribute to our schools through volunteerism, every year, we select Class Parents per grade level to provide a critical link between SPARK families and the school leadership and staff.

The primary responsibilities of the Class Parent are to:

- Attend monthly meetings with the Principal and fellow Class Parents to plan events and discuss school-wide initiatives;
- Connect with new-to-SPARK families during their initial onboarding, to assist them in understanding the SPARK Schools culture and procedures;
- Participate in Open Days, media opportunities, and other events;
- Encourage volunteerism amongst all families; and
- Collect donations for special projects or celebrations.

Class Parents do not assume a governing role and are not involved in the resolution of grievances.

If you are interested in becoming a Class Parent, please contact the Principal of SPARK Randburg in January 2021 with your name, your scholar's name, and their grade level. The Principal will select class Parents to begin their duties in February 2021 after mandatory training.

Tuition and Fees

At SPARK Schools, we provide high-quality education at an affordable cost. Beyond monthly tuition, we aim to limit the number of extra costs to SPARK scholars and their

families and thus give every scholar workbooks and portfolios. Monthly tuition is the total cost for your child to attend SPARK Schools during our extended instructional day.

Stationery and School Supplies

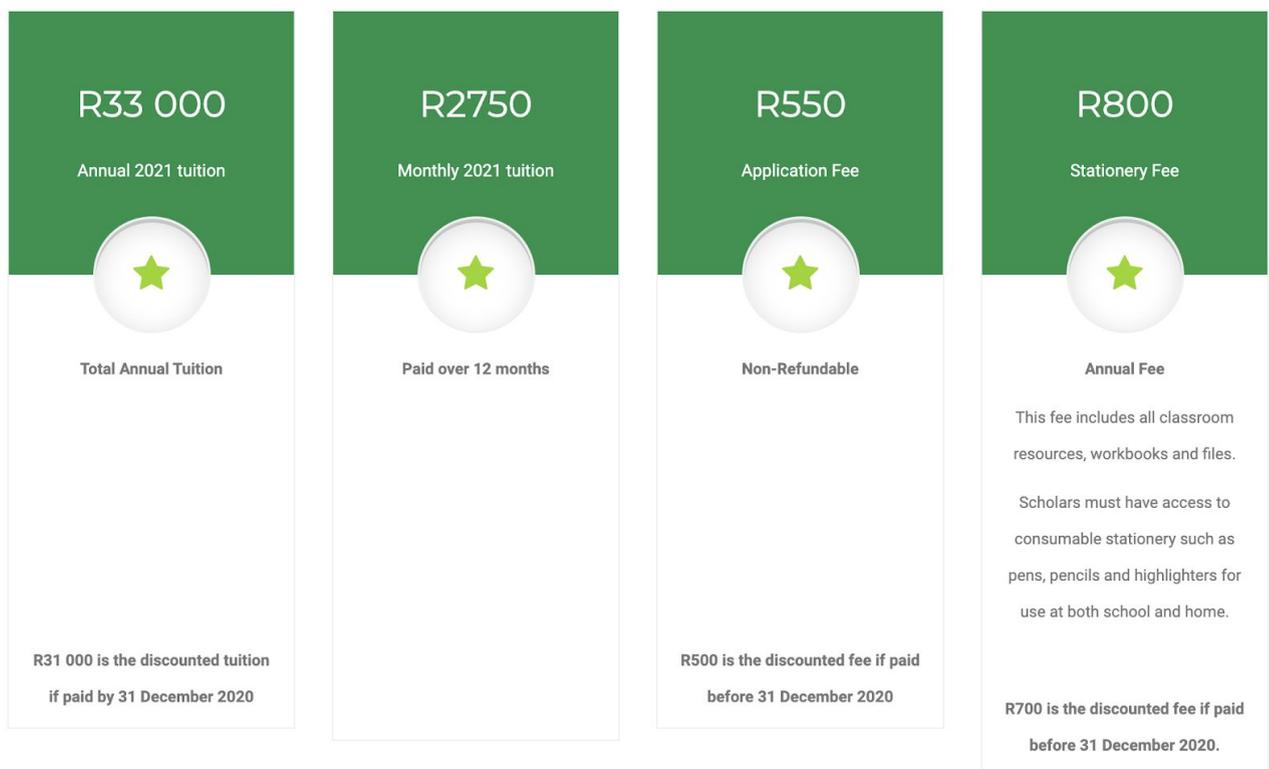
SPARK Schools provides all classroom resources, workbooks and files for scholars upon receipt of an annual stationery fee. Families are not responsible for purchasing textbooks or replenishing classroom resources. **We ask that families ensure that scholars have access to the following consumable stationery for use at school and home:**

- pens (black and blue)
- pencils
- rulers
- highlighters
- rubbers

Scholars must also have access to the following school supplies for use at school and home:

- **Scientific calculator**
 - Senior Phase - Sharp EL531
 - FET - Casio fx82ZA Plus
- **Math set**
 - Croxley 11 piece set

Tuition and fees for high school for 2021 are as follows:



Study Hall is available until 5:30 pm daily. A contract must be signed prior to a scholar's enrolment. All fees are paid in advance. A term's notice (three months) must be given in writing to cancel Study Hall for your scholar.

- Study Hall until **5:30 pm five days a week during the school terms** will cost R8640 per year, which is payable over 12 months at R720 per month.
- Study Hall until **5:30 pm on Mondays ONLY during the school terms** will cost R3960, which is payable over 12 months at R330 per month.
- For families who require aftercare on an adhoc basis, pre-arranged aftercare is available at R104 per day. Pre-arranged aftercare is available until 5:30 pm daily.
- **Late Pick-Up Fee:** Late pick-ups are billed at R104 per half hour, or part thereof. There is a 15 minute grace period for collection, but late billing begins from dismissal time. For example, if dismissal is at 4 pm, collection may take place until 4:15 pm. However, if the child is collected at 4:45 pm, the parent will be billed for two half-hour periods, at a total cost of R208. Please note that if a child is not picked up by 6 pm, an additional charge of R290 will apply in addition to late pick-up charges.
- Scholars enrolled in Study Hall who are picked up after 5:30 pm are liable for late pick-up fees at a rate of R104 per half hour. Scholars who are picked up after 6:00 pm are liable for an additional financial penalty, as well as removal from the Study Hall program if picked up after 6:00 pm multiple times. Please refer to the Study Hall agreement and contract for more information on late pick-up fees.

The SPARK Schools bank account is under the following company name: eAdvance (Pty) Ltd. Our bank details are as follows:

Bank: First National Bank (FNB)
Account Name: eAdvance/SPARK Schools
Account Number: 62363790108
Branch Code: 250655

If you have any questions regarding tuition, fees, or billing, please e-mail accounts@sparkschools.co.za or call 010-125-0600. **School leadership and staff cannot assist with accounts queries at the school and have no information regarding accounts, payment plans, or outstanding balances.**

Instructional Hours and Calendar

Instructional hours for 2021 are as follows:

School Hours

Regular Days: 7:30am-4:00pm

Minimum Days (Mondays) 7:30am-1:30pm

Examination Days (Minimum Days) 7:30am-1:30pm

Please refer to the [2021 Instructional Calendar](#) for a full calendar of instructional days.
Make special note of the following:

Term Dates

- 18 January- 30 March 2021 (51 Days)
- 31 April- 22 June 2021 (47 Days)
- 12 July- 21 September 2021 (51 Days)
- 4 October- 30 November 2021 (42 Days)

Examination Days (Minimum Days)

- Term 1: 29 March - 30 March
- Term 2: 10 June - 22 June
- Term 3: 20 September - 21 September
- Term 4: 18 November - 30 November

Public Holidays (School Closed)

- 1 January- New Year's Day
- 21 March- Human Rights Day
- 22 March - Public Holiday
- 2 April- Good Friday
- 5 April- Family Day
- 26 April- School Holiday
- 27 April - Freedom Day
- 1 May- Workers' Day
- 16 June- Youth Day
- 9 August- National Women's Day
- 24 September- Heritage Day
- 16 December- Day of Reconciliation
- 25 December- Christmas Day
- 26 December- Day of Goodwill

Uniform

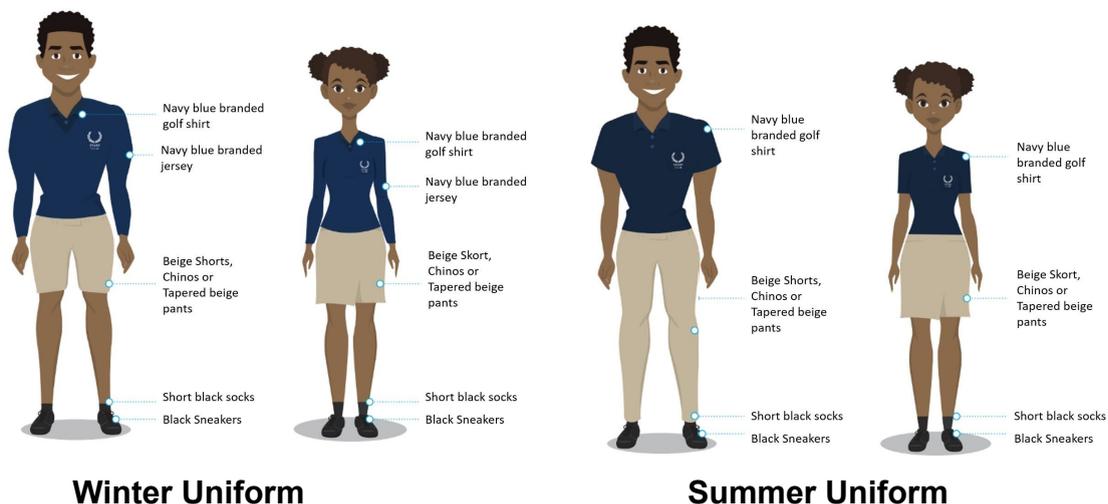
Your scholar's appearance and uniform reflect your scholar and your family's commitment to the SPARK Schools culture. Encourage your scholar to "dress for success" by grooming him/herself neatly and taking care of her appearance at all times. Scholars must wear the full school uniform during school hours on school grounds. Every item of the uniform should be marked inside with the child's full name, and no items other than the official uniform may be worn.

Summer Uniform:

- navy blue golf shirt with school badge
- khaki chinos or skort
- black belt
- black socks
- black takkies
- black wristwatch

Winter Uniform:

- navy blue long-sleeved golf shirt with school badge
- black undershirt
- khaki chinos or skort
- navy blue SPARK branded outerwear (fleece, jersey, jacket, anorak)
- black gloves
- black belt
- short black socks
- black takkies
- black wristwatch
- SPARK branded hat (only to be worn outside)



The uniform may only be purchased from our approved uniform suppliers. No uniform items may be homemade, and the SPARK Schools logo and badge may not be copied or used to create homemade uniform items.

Clothing items that are not approved uniform items or are misworn may be confiscated. If an item of clothing is confiscated, a parent or legal guardian must come to the school to retrieve it. The school is not liable for stolen or damaged clothing.

Scholars should carry a backpack that does not have wheels but has sufficient space for a workbook per subject, personal learning journal, stationery, homework folder, water bottle and a lunch container.

Scholars may not wear jewellery except a small, black wristwatch or Medic Alert bracelet and plain stud earrings. Only one earring per earlobe may be worn.

Hairstyles must be neat and may not fall over the face or eyes. No distracting designs may be cut or shaved into hair or eyebrows.

Personal Devices

Scholars are permitted to bring cellular phones and other handheld devices. However, all cell phones must be completely silent and out of sight during instructional time. Personal devices that are misused, seen or heard during instructional time will be confiscated. If a personal device is confiscated, a parent or legal guardian must come to the school to retrieve the device. The school is not liable for stolen or damaged devices.

Arrivals and Dismissals

Strict adherence to arrival and dismissal procedures set out herein is required to ensure the safety of scholars and staff, but is also practised to respect neighbours and the community.

Arrival Procedures

Parents/legal guardians or SPARK account holders receive a placard with the name and grade of their scholar. The placard must be displayed to gain access to the school grounds. Without a placard, a parent will be in the same position as a visitor and must, therefore, sign-in and provide proof of identification.

Scholars may arrive on school grounds from 7:00-7:30 am. Please take note of the following guidelines, intended to ease congestion and maintain the flow of traffic:

- Scholars should be ready to exit the car with belongings, avoiding the need to remove belongings from the boot.
- Parents or drivers should not exit the car.
- All drivers must turn right out of the parking lot. No driver may turn left as they exit the school.

Please note the procedures for arrival in the COVID-19 School Handbook for specific information on symptom screening during arrivals, as we implement processes in line with the Department of Basic Education and Department of Health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dismissal Procedures

During dismissal, scholars will be present in the dismissal area and will be encouraged to walk swiftly to the appropriate car to promote a steady flow of traffic. School staff will be present to assist with the process. If you would like to speak to a member of staff, you will be asked to park to maintain the flow of traffic. Scholars walk to the appropriate car independently. SPARK Schools does not specify not monitor which scholar leaves with which car and thus cannot be held liable for who your child leaves the school with.

Transport

Parents or guardians are responsible for the transport of scholars. SPARK Schools does not provide, promote, or endorse ANY transport services. Should a parent contract independently with a transport supplier, they do so at their own risk. The parent must ensure that the transport supplier they use complies with the norms and standards of scholar transport and the country's laws in respect thereof as well as the procedures set out herein.

Transport drivers who are contracted by parents must provide a child's placard in respect of the scholars that are being transported to enter the school grounds. Parents are alerted explicitly to the fact that a breach of school rules or policies, including late pick-up, by the transport driver responsible for their child, amounts to a violation of the relevant rule or policy by the parent or legal guardian concerned and could therefore invite consequences for the parents or legal guardians as detailed in the Enrolment Contract.

Self-Transport

"Self-transport scholars," who are scholars walking or driving themselves to school, must arrive between 7:00-7:30 am. Arriving late to school or leaving the school grounds during class or before the end of the school day amounts to unexcused absence or tardiness ("bunking") and requires disciplinary action as detailed in the Code of Conduct.

The above notwithstanding, the parents or legal guardian of a "self-transport scholar" acknowledge and accept that the scholar is old or independent enough to walk to and from school, or to drive to and from school, and is in a position to leave the school grounds independently. SPARK Schools does not accept responsibility for the safety of scholars once they have exited the school grounds (with or without permission).

Parents must provide written permission to allow their scholar to leave the school premises via self-transport.

Learning Model

The SPARK, high school model, is a rotational blended learning model designed to cultivate global citizens through the delivery of integrated inquiry projects. The scholar-centred model is comprised of the following parts:

- **Skills** - Face-to-Face Instruction
- **Online** - Virtual Learning
- **Inquiry** - XC Project Completion and Collaboration
- **Study** - Independent Practice

Learning is inquiry-based and driven by BIG HOOK problem questions anchored to integrated CAPS Plus South African National Curriculum subjects. Inquiry projects, or *XC Projects*, drive learning and are assigned termly across multiple subjects.

Clubs are designated and run by school-based staff, offering scholars opportunities for sports, fitness, cultural development and community engagement.

Daily Reflection sessions with an educator offer scholars a meaningful relationship with adults carefully trained to increase individual character. The purpose of the reflection is to develop self-awareness with regards to emotional intelligence and self-regulation with regards to academic performance.

Curriculum

SPARK Schools is aligned to South African national standards and seeks to extend scholar learning to meet international grade-level standards. Therefore, each curriculum used encompasses the requirements of the CAPS curriculum and deepens scholar knowledge to make SPARK scholars globally competitive.

Curriculum resources such as art supplies, scientific equipment and textbook guides are procured and managed by the school.

The following resources are being used in the Senior Phase (Grade 8 & 9):

Subject Area	Description	Publisher
Mathematics	Classroom Mathematics (Grade 8 & 9) Inzalo Mathematics https://www.ukuqonda.org.za/learning-materials/mathematics-grade-7-9	Heinemann Sasol & Siyavula

English	A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens (Grade 8) The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, by John Boyne (Grade 9)	Scholars will be loaned a copy for Term 1
isiZulu	Khalipha Mfunda for First Additional Language (Grade 7 – 9) isiZulu Sethu (Ibanga 8 & 9)	Funda Njalo Shuters and Shooters
Natural Sciences	Natural Sciences: Solutions for All (Grade 8) Platinum: Natural Sciences (Grade 9) Free downloadable Scholar Natural Science Workbooks: http://www.mstworkbooks.co.za/index.html	Macmillan Pearson
Technology	Inzalo Technology (Grade 8 & 9) http://www.mstworkbooks.co.za/index.html	Sasol & Siyavula
Social Sciences	Social Sciences: Solutions for All (Grade 8) Platinum: Social Sciences (Grade 9)	Macmillan Pearson
Economic and Management Sciences	EMS Today (Grade 8 & 9)	Maskew Miller Longman
Creative Arts	Creative Arts: Solutions for All (Grade 8 & 9)	Macmillan

The following resources are being used in the Further Education and Training Phase
(Grade 10 - 12):

Subject Area	Description	Publisher
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mind Action Series
	Everything Math (Open Source)	Siyavula https://www.siyavula.com/read
Mathematics Literacy	Mathematical Literacy	Via Afrika
	Everything Math (Open Source)	Siyavula https://www.siyavula.com/read
English	English for Success	Oxford
	Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare)	Cambridge Schools Series
	The Mark (Edith Bulring)	Tafelberg
isiZulu	isiZulu Sethu	Shuters and Shooters
	Izinhliziyu Ezibuhlungu - School Edition (N.G. Sibiyi)	Shuters and Shooters
Physical Sciences	Oxford Successful Physical Sciences	Oxford
Life Sciences	Life Sciences	Via Afrika
Business Studies	Consumo Business Studies	Consumo
Economics	Focus Economics	Maskew Millar Longman
History	In Search of History	Oxford
Geography	Platinum Geography	Pearson

SPARK high schools offer subjects in line with the Department of Basic Education National CAPS curriculum. However, the implementation of curriculum content is via the high school integrated inquiry model.

FET Phase Subject Choice

FET Phase subjects are selected in grade 10. SPARK FET Phase Scholars are required to take seven subjects for their National Senior Certificate. SPARK Schools is offering eleven FET subjects:

- Group A subjects (Compulsory): English Home Language, isiZulu First Additional Language, Mathematics/Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation;
- Group B subjects (Choice): Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Business Studies, Economics, History, Geography.

All subject change requests are subject to consultation with school staff. Requests for changes to FET subjects are considered at the following points.

- Grade 10 Mid-year (by the end of term 1)
- Grade 10 End of year (by the end of term 3)
- Grade 11 Mid-year (by the end of term 1)

To ensure scholars are adequately prepared for matriculation, grade 11 mid-year is the final opportunity for a subject change. No subject changes are considered at the end of grade 11 or the beginning of grade 12.

Scholars who change subjects mid-year will not receive credit in their final report for the assessments taken in the original subject. The report card will only reflect the assessments taken in the new subject.

Mid-year changes incur a R250 fee per subject to cover the use of books for the new subject, new subject workbook, and subject change administration. End of year changes are at no cost to the family.

Report Cards

Report cards are distributed during the first week of each term with scholar marks and progress from the previous term's formal assignments and assessments. In Term 4, these reports are sent home via email after all examinations have been completed and marks inputted. Our report cards show the scholar's progress according to our globally competitive assessments, as well as a mark indicating the child's progress against a traditional South African grading scale.

Parents can expect to see a 'result' in Senior Phase and an 'endorsement' in FET per term on their scholar's report card.

A Senior Phase result is based on the achievement of the Department of Education's promotion requirements:

- Home Language at least 50%, Mathematics at least 40%, First Additional Language at least 40%, three other subjects at least 40% and two other subjects at least 30%
- Scholars must achieve these requirements as a minimum to be promoted to the next grade level.
- Scholars are expected to achieve SPARK Schools proficiency which is 60% or more in all subjects.

A FET 'endorsement' is based on the level of pass mark qualification achieved as follows:

- Higher Certificate - Home Language at least 40%, two other subjects at least 40% and three other subjects at least 30%
- Diploma - Home Language at least 40%, four other subjects at least 40%, two other subjects at least 30%
- Bachelors - Home Language at least 40%, four other subjects at least 50%, two other subjects at least 30%

Families are asked to attend a short conference with one of the scholar's educators to receive the report card, understand their Scholar's progress, and receive resources to support their scholar going forward.

If your scholar is struggling to make adequate progress or meet grade-level standards, your scholar's educators will work with you to create a plan to ensure your scholar's success. We aim to prevent the need to retain scholars in a grade level after the school year through our Fail No One (FNO) program. For more information on this retention prevention program, please contact one of your scholar's educators or school leaders.

Please note that informal assessments will be given in each subject throughout the term, to determine your scholar's progress prior to formal assessments after each term. The results of these assessments are not reflected on your scholar's report card. Still, they are an essential tool your scholar's educator uses to support your scholar to success.

Ensure that you familiarise yourself with the termly "Scholar Assessment Overview" which will be sent to via email and available in your scholar's academic diary.

Workbooks and Portfolio Files

Scholar Workbooks and Portfolio Files are vital pieces of evidence regarding scholars' academic progress. They are also used to demonstrate compliance with national education regulations.

Workbooks are used for class activities, study notes and homework. At the start of each term, scholars are given a “Scholar Book Overview” which notes all tasks and content to be covered in the term.

Portfolio Files are used by scholars to develop metacognition and self-regulation and to showcase their projects and assessments. Files are categorised by CAPS subjects and are used as an evidence base for assessment compliance. Given the importance of keeping these pieces of evidence uniform, scholars will not be allowed to take Portfolio Files home. Families will be allowed to view Portfolio Files at report card conferences, and results of tests and projects will be noted in the front of the Portfolio Files on the “Progress Tracking Page” for feedback to families.

Should a parent wish to see their scholar’s portfolio files at a point other than at report card conferences, the educators or school leadership team will happily welcome a meeting and set up a review of test scores and results.

Assessments

At SPARK Schools, we recognise that all assessment is used for improving personalised learning and scholar engagement with personal learning goals. Assessment is, therefore, both for learning and of learning. Assessment results are not viewed as a complete judgement of a scholar’s ability, rather as a developmental point on a personal learning journey. It is to this end that high school assessment is continuously framed in a cycle of self-regulation and development of metacognition.

Assessment combines traditional tests, homework, examinations and XC Projects. Reporting of achievement is given in each delineated CAPS subject.

In Senior Phase, all assessments combine into the final year mark with 40% for Term 1 - 3 and 60% for the final examinations.

In FET Phase, all assessments combine into the final year mark with 25% Term 1-3 and 75% final examinations.

Absence from Tests / Examinations and Assignment Submission Dates

In the case of illness or any other circumstance beyond the scholar’s control, preventing a scholar from attending school on the day of a test or examination:

- A medical certificate or an affidavit must be provided by the scholar on the day of return after an absence.
- The scholar must complete the test/examination on the day of return.
- This process also applies to project and assignment deadlines. Should a scholar be absent on the day of a given deadline:
 - The project or assignment must be handed in on the first day of return to school after an absence.

- A medical certificate or an affidavit must be provided to explain the absence.
- Should a scholar be absent for an extended period beyond the examination or test season, production of the child's academic report will be postponed until all required assessments have been completed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else's work and presenting it as your own.

Plagiarism includes:

- Copying from another scholar or the internet;
- Allowing family members to complete work on behalf of a scholar;
- Submitting work without citations or a bibliography.

No form of plagiarism is acceptable at SPARK Schools. Scholars who submit plagiarised work will be penalised and the Code of Conduct will be applied in terms of disciplinary action.

Behavioural Expectations

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct has been developed in accordance with the South African Schools Act and is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning at SPARK Schools. The aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that SPARK Schools core values are upheld.

Our core values form the basis of our behavioural expectations at SPARK Schools. By consistently reinforcing the core values and how they drive decision making, we are able to build a strong school culture. We practice positive behaviour management to support scholars with character development and responsible decision making while at school and in their communities.

SPARK high school scholars are taught responsibility and independence in preparation university and career. While there will always be staff members on site to monitor scholar behaviour and intervene when necessary, there are times throughout the day where they **will not** be directly supervised by a SPARK staff member (ex: prior to school start time, after school for scholars who are not participating in study hall or extra curricular activities, transitions from class to class, bathroom breaks, independent study time). During these times, scholars are expected to behave in alignment with the core values and make responsible decisions.

Bullying and Intimidation

SPARK Schools aims to provide a safe and secure environment where:

- Individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted;

- Individuals empathise with one another, and offer one another support; and
- Bullying is reported and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate such behaviour.

SPARK Schools does not tolerate bullying in any form, and all members of the school staff are committed to promoting a safe and caring environment for the scholars. Staff, scholars and families will work together to address issues of bullying when these arise.

Bullying is aggressive behaviour or harassment by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can be physical or non-physical in nature. Bullying can be online through social media, email, messaging and phone calls.

When an incident of bullying or suspected bullying is reported, the school will respond in a manner that is appropriate to the incident. For full information on definitions of bullying, preventative measures, and reporting procedures, please review our [Anti-Bullying Policy](#).

Families are advised to:

- Be alert to signs of unhappiness in their child's life. Any change in attitude, drop in school marks, avoiding school or social activities and other unusual behaviours may indicate bullying;
- Interact frequently with their child to understand how they experience interactions with friends, family, peers and adults;
- Monitor social interactions (in-person, phone, email) and content posted online;
- Inform their scholar's educator if there is any suspicion that their scholar is bullying or being bullied;
- Not take matters into their own hands in confronting the perpetrator or his/her family;
- Refrain from telling their child to retaliate; and
- Clearly address the situation if their child is found to be abusing or abused another scholar.

Media

SPARK Schools has a new and innovative school model in South Africa and will thus be subject to increased media attention. SPARK scholars may be photographed or filmed for social networking and promotional purposes. **If you would prefer for your child not to be photographed or filmed, you should complete an opt out form to state that permission has not been granted for media release.**

Social Media

SPARK Schools recognises the evolution of social media as a mechanism of communication and its importance in being used responsibly and appropriately in

relation to the school's business and the larger school community. On social media platforms, scholars and families are expected to behave in a manner which is representative of the school's policies and core values.

Scholars and their parents or legal guardians should regularly review the content of the scholar's social media postings and remove any information that could reflect negatively on SPARK Schools, its staff, other scholars, SPARK families or other stakeholders.

Scholars should ensure that the content of social media or other online postings is accurate, ethical and legal. The attention of scholars and their parents is drawn to the personal liability a scholar or parent may incur for defamation (a false statement damaging to the subject of the statement) or breach of privacy legislation.

Scholars and families may not engage in activities online or through social media which could bring SPARK Schools into disrepute - in particular, through offensive conduct which impacts on the SPARK Schools community. Conduct which is threatening, abusive, harmful, hateful, malicious, discriminatory, demeaning, derogatory will always contravene SPARK Schools' policies and ethos.

In line with SPARK Schools' social media policy, scholars and/or their parents or legal guardians may not post or engage in:

- defamatory conduct
- bullying conduct
- impersonation
- the sharing of inappropriate, obscene or pornographic material
- the sharing of personal information of any sort, pertaining to an individual, where such disclosure may cause harm or amount to an intrusion or invasion of the individual's privacy
- the use of the SPARK logo or other SPARK trademarks or intellectual property without written permission.

SPARK Schools reserves the right to investigate any allegations which contravene the School's policies and/or involve scholar safety.

SPARK scholars should uphold the ethos of their school at all times. Therefore, conduct which offends the precepts contained above, whether within the boundaries of the school or outside of those boundaries, will be subject to the oversight of the school and its leadership - which includes the right to take disciplinary action against scholars and parents found to have acted in a way which contravenes the school's policies and by its nature offends public policy. Such disciplinary action may include suspension, expulsion and/or termination of the parent Enrolment Contract.

Health and Safety

Child Protection

SPARK Schools is steadfast in its devotion to protecting children at risk and ensuring that they can experience quality care and nurturing relationships. SPARK Schools has put in place guidelines for protecting children in all aspects related to the Children's Act that impact the nature of work of SPARK Schools to ensure the wellbeing of children impacted by their work.

All SPARK Schools staff and leaders are bound by law to report suspected abuse or neglect according to our Child Protection Policy and Duty to Report. If you have questions about the grounds upon which reporting may take place, please contact your child's school leader or educator. **Please note that this includes breaches to the October 2017 ruling on reasonable chastisement by the South Gauteng High Court, which held that families may not commit violence against their children as a form of discipline, including hitting, slapping, pushing, beating, or otherwise.** Evidence of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse at home is cause for reporting according to the SPARK Schools Child Protection Policy.

Illness and First Aid

Please refer to the COVID-19 School Handbook for up-to-date information on procedures implemented by SPARK Schools in line with the COVID-19 regulations set out by the Department of Health and Department of Basic Education. If any procedures should be changed or enhanced to better ensure the health and safety of our SPARK community this handbook will be updated and a new version will be circulated to parents.

Do not send a sick scholar to school. If your scholar is experiencing a fever, rash, pain, nausea, or other symptoms of contagious illness, please inform the school that the scholar will not be attending. Please provide a doctor's note if the scholar is booked off for two or more days.

If a scholar becomes ill at school, school staff will follow these procedures according to our First Aid Policy:

- If a scholar becomes ill during the school day, their parents must be contacted and asked to pick their scholar up as soon as possible. During this time the scholar will be cared for in a quiet and calm area.
- A minimum of five (5) telephone attempts followed with a maximum of three (3) emails is considered a reasonable attempt to contact each parent and/or guardian at the contact number provided to the enrolment team. **If your contact details change, it is imperative that you update them with the office manager immediately.**

If a contagious infection is identified in the school, parents must be informed to enable them to spot the early signs of this illness.

If a scholar becomes severely ill or injured, our policy is to call for an ambulance immediately. No member of the school staff may transport an ill or injured child. Should this take place, the school will contact the parent directly, accompany the child to the hospital, and remain with the scholar until the parent arrives.

Medication

Per the requirements of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa, of which SPARK Schools is a member, school staff are not in a position to prescribe or dispense medication for any child. Only a licensed health professional (e.g. doctor, nurse, physiotherapist, etc.) may prescribe and/ or dispense medicine. Even in the case of slight headaches or ailments, our school staff members may not administer medication to any child. **The only exception to this rule is if a licensed medical professional has provided instructions in writing to the school directly regarding a prescribed medication. These instructions have to be resubmitted and updated in accordance with the medication's expiration date.**

If your scholar suffers from a severe allergy, please inform school leaders and staff immediately. Should your scholar require an epipen to treat severe allergic reactions, this should be carried in the child's backpack in a sealed box or bag, with a note on its purpose and administration. We also welcome parents who would like to train staff members of their child's allergy to contact our school leaders to schedule this training.

Crisis Management

According to our Crisis Management Strategy, each school has appointed a Crisis Management Team comprised of a group of staff of the school who are equipped to make the necessary decisions quickly and efficiently when a crisis occurs. Please ask your school leaders for more information on your school's Crisis Management Team and how to obtain information from the school during a crisis. If you can be of assistance during a crisis as trained emergency personnel, please inform a member of school staff. **Please note that, should a crisis occur, parents must present identification when picking up the scholar from an alternate location due to an emergency.**

Attendance

Section 3 of the Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) makes school attendance compulsory for everyone under the age of 16. As stated in our Scholar Attendance Policy, we abide by the Policy on Learner Attendance with regards to scholar absenteeism.

- If a learner is absent for three consecutive school days without a valid **written** reason, the matter should be reported to **the Principal**, who must **intervene**. This intervention must include contacting the parent regarding their responsibility and requesting the parent cooperation; approaching the district office for support

if necessary, and requesting government or non-government social development agencies to intervene, when necessary.

- **If the absence reaches 10 consecutive school days**, the learner's record in the class register ***must be cancelled on the grounds of continuous absence***. The cancellation should take place only after the Principal has again made a **reasonable** attempt to contact the parent. Any of the following three circumstances may apply, their record in the class register must be cancelled:
 - The learner has been withdrawn from that school.
 - No valid reason was offered for the absence.
 - The parent could not be reached (DBE, RSA, 2010, para. 56).

As is evident from the phrases "must be charged" and "must be cancelled", the Principal is not allowed any discretion in this matter. Furthermore, the policy provides that principals, Educators and district officials are obliged to show zero tolerance for unexcused absences (DBE, RSA, 2010, para. 14(a)).

The cancellation of a scholar's record in the class register entails the Principal informing the class Educator, the parent and the district office of the cancellation, the date of the cancellation and the reason therefore.