

SPARK Schools Primary School Scholar and Family Handbook

**2021 Instructional Year
Grades R-7**

010-125-0600

www.sparkschools.co.za

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Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Our Core Values	4
Communication and Contact Information	5
Tuition and Fees	7
Instructional Hours and Calendar	9
Our Learning Model	9
Curriculum	9
Foundation Phase Learning Model	9
Intermediate Phase Learning Model	8
Social-Emotional Learning	9
Report Cards	9
Homework	9
Behavioural Expectations	10
Foundation Phase	10
Intermediate Phase	10
Bullying and Intimidation	13
Additional Policies	13
Scholar Health and Safety	14
Child Protection	14
Attendance	14
Illness and First Aid	15
Medication	16
Crisis Management	16
Media	16
Parent Engagement	16
School Operations	17
Arrival Procedures	17
Dismissal Procedures	17
Transport	17
Uniform	18
Frequently Asked Questions	19



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 your child's teachers or school leaders 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 teachers 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.

- Bramley: Compassion
 - Carlswald: Collaboration
 - Centurion: Dignity
 - Cresta: Integrity
 - Ferndale: Environmental Stewardship
 - Kempton Park: Courage
 - Lynedoch: Sustainability
 - Midrand: Curiosity
 - Randpark Ridge: Optimism
 - Rosslyn Hub: Excellence
 - Rynfield: Creativity
 - Silver Lakes: Generosity
 - Soweto: Ubuntu
 - Theresa Park: Unity
 - Turffontein: Influence
 - Weltevreden Park: Honour
 - Witpoortjie: Cooperation
-

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

*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 SPARK Scholar, and I'm going to university!*

Communication and Contact Information

Communication Norms

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

- Acknowledge written or e-mail communication within two working days.
- Resolve queries with urgency, including scheduling in-person meetings as needed.
- 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.
- Host monthly and termly opportunities for parents and family members to interact with staff and school leaders in an informal setting.
- Facilitate Class Parent groups at all schools who meet with the school leadership team regularly to discuss school-wide initiatives and plan events.
- Celebrate parents and family members who make positive contributions to our school community.

In return, we request the following of parents and other family members communicating with the school:

- Seek to resolve issues with their child's teacher first, before escalating concerns to a member of 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 is our instructional hours.
 - Interact respectfully in-person and by e-mail with staff, who are also committed to professional and calm communication.
 - Acknowledge what is going well, as well as make suggestions for improvements.
 - Read the weekly newsletter and e-mails from staff thoroughly.
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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.

Accounts and Enrolment

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)!





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 expenses to SPARK scholars and their families. Monthly tuition is the total cost for your child to attend SPARK Schools during our extended instructional day.

SPARK Schools provides all necessary stationery for scholars at school upon receipt of an annual stationery fee, with consumable stationery topped up for SPARK scholars on a termly basis. Parents are not responsible for purchasing textbooks. We ask that families ensure that scholars have access to materials at home for daily homework completion and that parents send scholars with a pair of headphones for personal use at school, in line with our health and safety requirements.

Please note that this stationery fee is mandatory for all scholars.

Our tuition and fees for primary school (Grades R-7) for 2021 are as follows:

<p>R25 500</p> <p>Annual 2021 tuition</p>  <p>Total Annual Tuition</p> <p>R24 000 is the discounted tuition if paid by 31 December 2020</p>	<p>R2 125</p> <p>Monthly 2021 tuition</p>  <p>Paid over 12 months</p>	<p>R550</p> <p>Application Fee</p>  <p>Non-Refundable</p> <p>R500 is the discounted fee if paid before 31 December 2020</p>	<p>R700</p> <p>Stationery Fee</p>  <p>Annual Fee</p> <p>Includes all stationery</p> <p>R610 is the discounted fee if paid before 31 December 2020</p>
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- **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 3 pm, collection may take place until 3:15 pm. However, if the child is collected at 3:45 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.
- **Internal Transfer:** Families may wish to transfer to another school within our network during the academic year. An administration fee of R575 will be charged for internal transfers if you wish to transfer your scholar **more than once** during the 2020 instructional year.

Aftercare is available until 5:30 pm daily. An aftercare contract must be signed prior to a child's enrolment in aftercare. All aftercare fees are paid in advance. A term's notice (three months) must be given in writing to cancel aftercare.

- Aftercare 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.
- Aftercare 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 ad-hoc basis, pre-arranged aftercare is available at R104 per day. Pre-arranged aftercare is available until 5:30 pm daily.
- Scholars 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 of R290, as well as removal from the aftercare program if picked up after 6:00 pm multiple times. Please refer to the aftercare 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

Reference number: Please use payer reference as stated on your invoice or statement.

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

Please note that instructional hours for all grades levels are as follows for 2021:

- All Grades Minimum Days (**Mondays** and Report Card Conferences) 7:45 am- 1:00 pm
- Grade R and 1 Regular Days (**Tuesday-Friday**): 7:45 am- 2:30 pm
- Grade 2 and 3 Regular Days (**Tuesday-Friday**): 7:45am- 3:00pm
- Grades 4-7 Regular Days (**Tuesday-Friday**): 7:45 am-3:30 pm

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

Term Dates	Report Card Conferences (Minimum Days)	Public Holidays (School Closed)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 January- 31 March • 13 April- 24 June • 13 July- 22 September • 5 October- 2 Dec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13-16 April • 13-16 July • 5-8 October • 29 Nov- 2 Dec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Our Learning Model

Wondering what a typical day for a SPARK scholar looks like? Get to know our learning model and your child's daily timetable by viewing our [Day in the Life video](#).

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.

- **Maths:** In maths, scholars are taught according to [Scholastic's PRIME curriculum](#), which is based upon the rigorous maths standards of Singapore, the Republic of Korea, and Hong Kong. The curriculum builds scholar capacity to problem solve, and the assessments in the PRIME curriculum require scholars to employ critical thinking to demonstrate success.
- **Literacy:** In English, scholars progress through reading and writing according to a curriculum based on Britain's literacy standards. We have adopted the [Literacy Tree Curriculum](#), which is a complete, thematic approach to the teaching of English that places children's literature at its core. Reading, writing, grammar, and phonics are incorporated in day-to-day teaching.
- **First Additional Language:** SPARK scholars' first additional language is taught according to the scope and sequence laid out in the South African national curriculum and our [Language Policy](#). We do not teach Afrikaans at any of our schools in the network. We offer isiZulu as the additional language at all SPARK schools in Gauteng and isiXhosa at our school in the

Western Cape because they are the most populous previously marginalised African languages of their provinces.

- **Natural Science, Social Science, and Technology:** These subjects are introduced formally in the intermediate phase, where scholars learn these subjects during face-to-face teaching, online, and in collaborative group sessions, where they work on projects and case studies.
- **Life Orientation:** This subject is introduced in the foundation phase, as part of our life skills curriculum, and gradually progresses to a more formal structure in the intermediate phase. Scholars will focus on subjects such as Creative Arts (visual and performing), as well as Personal and Social Well-being (PSW). Scholars learn these subjects during face-to-face teaching, as well as online learning time. During PSW, scholars also focus on social-emotional learning through community circles and reflection.
- **Physical Education:** At SPARK Schools, our mission is to prepare our scholars for university and careers of their choice. To ensure that they are well-rounded and healthy, all scholars participate in physical education each week, which focuses on personal health, movement and physical activity, and introduction to the team and individual sports. For scholars who wish to pursue a specific team and individual sports, we offer affordable extramural activities after school weekly. Physical Education forms part of Life Orientation.

Foundation Phase Learning Model

Our lab rotation model in the foundation phase (Grades R-3) is a combination of traditional teaching in the classroom and technology-based learning in the Learning Lab. Scholars experience one-on-one teaching, small group learning or whole group instruction, based on their requirements, during the school day.

Intermediate Phase Learning Model

Our intermediate phase “flex model” is a form of personalised learning that is used in Grades 4 to 7. Scholars move through an individually customised schedule learning Literacy, Maths, Natural Science, Social Science, Technology, and a First Additional Language through different modalities. The model aims to create autonomy and purpose in learning, improve mastery of objectives, build intrinsic motivation in scholars and promote daily reflections to prepare scholars for university.

Social-Emotional Learning

Using a social-emotional curriculum, we teach scholars how to manage their emotions, build healthy relationships with others, and practice mindfulness at school and home. Our primary social-emotional curriculum is [Toolbox by Dovetail Learning](#).

Following our focus on core values as part of social-emotional development, SPARK Schools is non-denominational. We practise tolerance and respect the rights of families to share their beliefs with their scholars. As a part of the life skills curriculum, children may be exposed to various religions of the world. Still, SPARK Schools does not endorse or show favouritism to a specific religion or culture. According to our [Diversity Policy](#), SPARK Schools is committed to upholding diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families.

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 during the final week of term.) 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 are asked to attend a short conference with one of the child's educators to receive the report card, understand their child's progress, and receive resources to support their child going forward.

If your child is struggling to make adequate progress or meet grade-level standards, your child's teacher will work with you to create a plan to ensure your child's success. We aim to prevent the need to retain children in the grade level after the school year through our retention prevention program. For more information on our retention prevention program, please contact your child's teacher or school leader.

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

Homework

Because our scholars participate in an extended instructional day, we believe they have ample opportunity to practice academic skills during the school day. Homework at SPARK Schools consists of a conversational prompt that allows parents and scholars to discuss what the child is learning at school and how they are making use of core values and social-emotional tools. We believe that this redesigned homework will lead to deeper parent engagement with the school and deeper relationships between scholars and parents.

As such, homework completion will no longer take place during aftercare, for those scholars who attend. Instead, we are asking all parents to sign the daily behavioural log and to report on their daily conversation with their child.

Should you wish for your child to practice academic skills at home, please request extra worksheets or additional practice from your child's teacher directly.

Please note that, in addition to this homework, scholar workbooks will be sent home to track subject-specific academic progress and provide parents with the opportunity to comment on their child's work. Parents will also receive termly subject overviews at the start of each term that will state skills to be covered in the term ahead. This can also be used as a reference to aid academic practise at home.

Absence from Assessments and Assignment Submissions

In the case of illness or any other circumstance beyond the scholar's control, preventing a scholar from attending school on the day of an assessment or assignment submission:

- The scholar must provide a medical certificate or an affidavit on the day of return after an absence.
 - The scholar must complete the assessment or submit the assignment on the day of return.
 - Should a scholar be absent for an extended period beyond assessments, production of the child's academic report will be postponed until all required assessments have been completed.
-

Behavioural Expectations

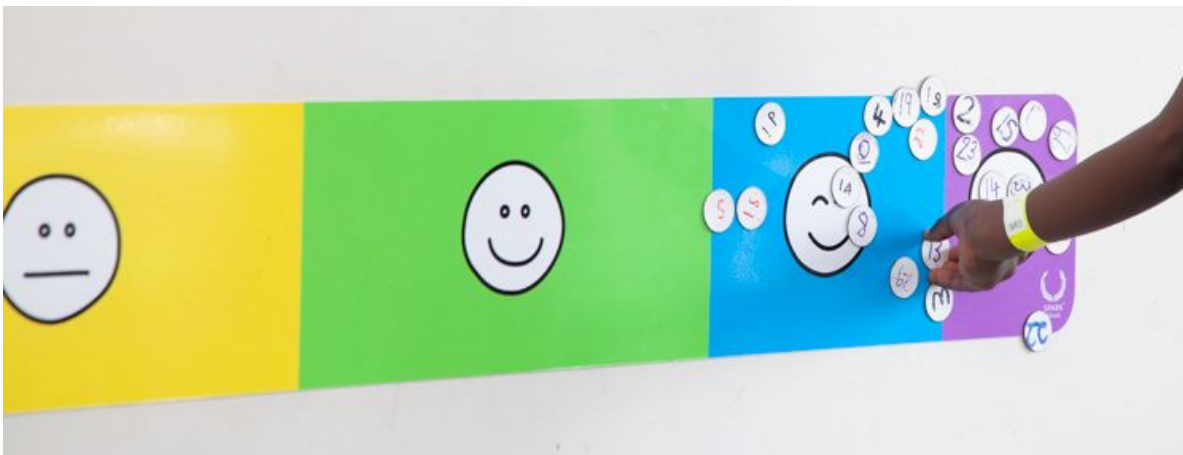
Our [Code of Conduct](#) has been developed per the South African Schools Act and is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning at SPARK Schools. This Code of Conduct aims to ensure that SPARK School's core values are upheld.

Our core values form the basis of our behavioural expectations at SPARK Schools. We practice positive behaviour management using specific tools in our foundation phase and intermediate phase models.

Foundation Phase

Our behaviour chart, used in the classroom and Learning Lab in Grades R-3, helps scholars track their behaviour throughout a given class period. Each scholar begins with their magnet on the green panel, indicating that they are "ready to learn." If a scholar exceeds classroom expectations by displaying core values in an exemplary way or setting an example of good behaviour for others, they may move their magnet up to the blue or purple panels. If a scholar struggles with behaviour or violates a classroom rule, they will move their magnet down to yellow, orange, or red, based on the severity of the infraction. Scholars whose magnets are on red must complete a written reflection, will call their parents, and will lose privileges.

When scholars rotate to a new subject, for example, from literacy to maths classrooms, they begin again on green. This gives scholars a fresh start with a new teacher and encourages them to continue behaving well or improve their behaviour if they were previously below green on the chart.



Parents can expect to receive a daily report, included in each scholar's homework folder, which shows the scholar's behaviour colour in each class and may include educator comments. The behaviour chart includes space for parents to write notes or ask questions and includes an indication of the scholar's homework quality. Parents should expect to be supplied with an explanation from the teacher for scholars on orange or red, **but should not expect further written explanation if their child was on yellow** and received a verbal warning for their behaviour.

In cases of severe behaviour issues, the scholar's parents will be contacted to attend a meeting with the scholar's teachers to create a plan to ensure the child's success. If a scholar is placed on an Individualised Behaviour Plan, the agreed-upon milestones must be met to prevent the child's contract from being terminated.

Intermediate Phase

In Grades 4-7, our scholars record their behaviour on a Daily Learning Journal, where they self-reflect on demonstration of each of the core values daily. Educators in the intermediate phase leverage the privilege of personal responsibility by removing that privilege as a consequence for a child's poor behaviour and completing the journal for the child when they struggle to behave.

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
- 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 parents 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, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can be physical or non-physical.

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](#).

Parents or guardians 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.
- Be aware, in a respectful manner, of the content of social behaviours and content posted on electronic sites, via SMS or MMS.
- Be supportive when an incident of bullying in any form and, in particular, of cyber-bullying, is reported as this can be extremely damaging and have lasting effects. Encourage their child to retain any possible evidence.
- Inform their child's teacher if there is any suspicion that their child is being bullied.
- Not take matters into their own hands in confronting the perpetrator or his/her parents.
- Refrain from telling their child to retaliate.
- Address the situation if their child is found to have abused another learner.

Additional Policies

SPARK Schools may add and amend policies throughout the instructional year, which will be published on our website for family members and scholars to review.

Scholar 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 safeguarding 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 teacher. **Please note that this includes breaches to the October 2017 ruling on reasonable chastisement by the South Gauteng High Court, which held that parents 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.

Attendance

Section 3 of the Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) makes school attendance compulsory for specific ages, i.e. everyone under the age of 16. As stated in our Scholar Attendance Policy, we abide by the Policy on Learner Attendance included in this legislation that discusses the procedures to be followed when dealing with 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 parents regarding their responsibility and requesting the parents' 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 parents.
- 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 parents 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, teachers and district officials are obliged to show zero tolerance for unexcused absences (DBE, RSA, 2010, para. 14(a)).

The cancellation of a learner's record in the class register entails the Principal informing the class teacher, the parents and the district office of the cancellation, the date of the cancellation and the reason, therefore.

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 better to 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 child to school. If your child is experiencing a fever, rash, pain, nausea, or other symptoms of a contagious illness, please inform the school that the child will not be attending. Please provide a doctor's note if the child 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 parent(s) 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 effort to contact each parent or guardian at the contact number provided to the enrolment team. **If your contact details change, you must 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 school staff may transport a sick or injured child. Should this take place, the school will contact parents directly, accompany the child to the hospital, and remain with the child until the parents arrive.

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 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 per the medication's expiration date.**

If your child suffers from a severe allergy, please inform school leaders and staff immediately.

Should your child 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 child's 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 the school staff. Please note that should a crisis occur, Parents or guardians must present identification when picking up children from an alternate location due to an emergency.

Media

SPARK Schools are a new and innovative 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.**

Parent Engagement

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

We ask all families to complete 30 volunteer hours annually. While the majority of these hours will be completed through [our homework structure](#), there are many ways to contribute to your child’s school positively.

- Participate in school events, fundraisers, and extracurricular activities.
- Complete classroom tasks, as requested by a teacher.
- Donate art supplies or other specific item required by the school for a project or initiative.

Last year, we introduced the role of “Class Parent” in our schools. While many parents contribute to our schools through volunteerism, this year, we are selecting one “lead” parent per class to provide a critical link between parents 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 parents 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 parents.
- Collect donations for special projects or celebrations, like Heritage Day.

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 your school in January 2021 with your name, your child’s name, and your child’s grade level and class name. Principals will select class Parents to begin their duties in the first term after mandatory training.

School Operations

Arrival Procedures

Since SPARK Schools are located within communities, we strictly enforce arrival procedures to ensure the safety of our children and staff, as well as to be respectful of our neighbours. All procedures must be followed according to these guidelines to keep the flow of traffic moving.

Scholars may arrive on school grounds from 6:45-7:40 am. It is strictly prohibited for scholars to arrive unaccompanied or to enter the school grounds before 6:45 am. Parents of scholars who arrive unsupervised before 6:45 am repeatedly will be asked to meet with school leadership, and this behaviour may be characterised as neglect and dealt with according to our Child Protection policy.

When arriving in the morning, the driver should drive up to the SPARK Schools car park entrance and stop. Once the driver has stopped, the guard will walk down the driveway and open the car door to allow the scholar to exit safely onto the school grounds. The scholar should be ready to exit the car with their backpack on. The scholar should not need to remove their backpack from the boot. The driver should never exit the vehicle.

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

All parents will receive a placard with the name and grade of their scholar. This placard must be displayed upon arriving at SPARK. As the driver arrives at school, he will be greeted by a school staff member. This staff member will report the scholar name off the placard to another staff member stationed inside the school grounds. At this point, the scholar will be notified and will proceed to the school gate, where the guard will deliver the scholar to the correct car. All scholars will remain inside the school grounds until dismissed by the guard. The driver should never exit the vehicle; the guard will assist scholars in entering their cars.

Please review the [late pick-up fees](#), which are billed per half hour.

Transport

Parents or guardians are responsible for the transport of scholars daily. SPARK Schools does not provide, promote, or endorse any transport. Should a parent or guardian contract independently with a transport supplier, the parent does so at their own risk. The parent must ensure that the transport supplier they use complies with the norms and standards of learner transport according to the National Transport Policy. Their transport driver must have a driver license and public driver's permit, and they must have a valid license disc for their vehicle.

Transport drivers must be provided with the child's placard to pick up the child. If a transport driver is late to pick-up a child or violates school rules and regulations, the parent of the child is held responsible for late pick-up fees or breach of rules.

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 themselves 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	Winter Uniform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a navy blue golf shirt with school badge ● khaki shorts or skort ● a navy blue peak cap or floppy hat with school badge ● white socks ● white takkies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a navy blue golf shirt with school badge ● a navy blue long-sleeved golf shirt with school badge ● long khaki pants or a choice of navy blue tracksuit pants for Grade R scholars only ● a navy blue jersey with school badge ● a navy blue drimac with school badge ● a navy blue beanie hat ● white socks ● white takkies

Scholars should carry a backpack that does not have wheels but has sufficient space for a homework folder, water bottle, and lunch box.

Scholars may not wear jewellery except a small, solid-coloured wristwatch or Medic Alert bracelet. Scholars may only wear plain gold or silver stud earrings. Earrings may not contain cut or coloured glass. Only one wearing per earlobe may be worn.

For male scholars, hairstyles must be neat. No distracting designs may be cut or shaved into hair or eyebrows. Gel or mousse may be used in moderation to control hair. Braids or dreadlocks must be neat and tied back if over the collar. There can be no artificial hair colouring, tints, or streaks.

For female scholars, hair may not fall over the face or eyes. Gel or mousse may be used in moderation to control hair. Hair, including braids and extensions, must be tied back if over the collar. There can be no artificial hair colouring or streaks. Hair clips must be black or silver. Hairbands or beads must be blue, green, white, or black. No multicoloured or decorative hair bands are allowed. Nail polish and makeup are not appropriate for school.

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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do SPARK Scholars participate in arts and culture activities?

- SPARK scholars are creative and innovative! In addition to weekly art projects in their classrooms and aftercare, our scholars put on an annual arts showcase and performing arts event at their schools. For scholars who wish to pursue dance, drama, visual arts, and music more seriously, we offer affordable extramural activities after school weekly.

How can my child participate in sport outside of daily physical education?

- If your scholar wishes to pursue a specific team and individual sports, we offer affordable extramural activities after school weekly. As we grow, we are partnering with community clubs and coaches to offer competitive sporting opportunities to scholars and families that wish to pursue them.

Why have you chosen isiZulu (Gauteng) and isiXhosa (Western Cape) as the school's first additional languages?

- All SPARK Schools are English-medium schools, meaning that the primary language of instruction, except for additional languages taught, is English. All SPARK Schools offer as a first additional language, mandatory from Grade R, the most populous previously marginalised African language of the province. For example, the first additional language offered in Gauteng is isiZulu, and the first additional language offered in the Western Cape is isiXhosa. We believe our first additional languages go a long way in preparing SPARK scholars for South Africa's diverse society and economy.

Does SPARK Schools require or encourage families to purchase textbooks for use at home?

- Our curriculum per subject is a combination of high-quality resources we have sourced locally and globally. While we are always happy to share supplemental resources with families for additional practice at home, we do not require or encourage families to purchase the textbooks and curriculum at use at school for home use. As an affordable school model, we do not believe that families should bear the cost of purchasing these texts and resources.

What can I send for my child's lunch and snacks?

- We believe that healthy bodies fuel healthy minds. We, therefore, ask that snacks and lunch packed for scholars include healthy options, like sandwiches on brown bread, vegetables, rice, pasta, eggs, fruit, crackers, yoghurt, and cheese. Scholars should bring a water bottle to school that can be refilled.
 - Biscuits, sweets (including chocolate spreads or muffins), and chips are not allowed and will be confiscated by school staff. Juice, soda, flavoured water, milkshakes, and drinking yoghurt are not permitted at school.
 - If you have questions about healthy food choices for school, please contact your child's teacher or school leader.
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What if I forget my placard?

- If you forget your placard, the guard will ask you to enter the school grounds, park in the car park, and proceed to the reception area to show proper identification to pick up your scholar. This is to ensure the safety of your child, as well as to ensure the efficiency of our process.

What if I have two children who are dismissed at different times?

- You may either pick your children up at their dismissal times or wait to pick both children up at the later time.

What if I cannot pick up my child until later?

- You must enrol your scholar in our aftercare program if you intend to pick her up later than your child's dismissal time. Children in the aftercare program proceed there directly when dismissed. If your scholar attends the aftercare program, you will pick them up directly from their assigned aftercare classroom.

What if I am late to collect my child

- Parents of scholars who are not enrolled in the aftercare program who arrive late will be charged late pick-up fees [according to our billing policies](#). This fee will be used to compensate the aftercare staff for their services.

Where can I find my child's lost property?

- Lost items labelled with your child's name will be returned to your child directly. Unlabeled lost items will be placed in the Lost Property box in the reception area.
 - Any unlabeled uniform items that remain in Lost Property for a month may be donated to a secondhand uniform shop.
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