

SPARK Primary School Scholar and Family Handbook



2024 Instructional Year Grades R-7

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www.sparkschools.co.za

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Welcome

Welcome to SPARK Schools for the 2024 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 serves 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.

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 Primary 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 optimism 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 Primary 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 Alberton: | Empowerment |
| • SPARK Bedfordview: | Authenticity |
| • SPARK Blue Downs: | Sustainability |
| • SPARK Bramley: | Compassion |
| • SPARK Carlswald: | Collaboration |
| • SPARK Centurion: | Dignity |
| • SPARK Cresta: | Integrity |
| • SPARK Ferndale: | Environmental Stewardship |
| • SPARK Kempton Park: | Courage |
| • SPARK Midrand: | Curiosity |
| • SPARK Randpark Ridge: | Optimism |
| • SPARK Riversands: | Equity |
| • SPARK Rivonia: | Gratitude |
| • SPARK Rosslyn Hub: | Excellence |

- SPARK Rynfield: Creativity
- SPARK Silver Lakes: Generosity
- SPARK Soweto: Ubuntu
- SPARK Theresa Park: Unity
- SPARK Turffontein: Influence
- SPARK Weltevreden Park: Honour
- SPARK Witpoortjie: Cooperation

The daily creed

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 consistent, clear, and relevant communication builds a strong relationship between our families and 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 Committees 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 7:30am to 4:00pm, which are 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.

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 escalate 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 enrollment and account 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 2024 are as follows:

<p>R33 960</p> <p>Annual 2024 tuition</p>  <p>Total Annual Tuition</p> <p>R31 243.20 is the discounted tuition if paid by 31 December 2023</p>	<p>R2 830</p> <p>Monthly 2024 tuition</p>  <p>Paid over 12 months</p>	<p>R750</p> <p>Application Fee</p>  <p>Non-Refundable</p>	<p>R935</p> <p>Stationery Fee</p>  <p>Annual Fee Includes all stationery</p>	<p>R31 243.20</p> <p>Sibling Discounts</p>  <p>We offer a discount once you have 3 children or more at SPARK</p> <p>Discounted Annual Tuition for each scholar</p>
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- Late Pick-Up Fee:** Late pick-ups are billed at R145 per half hour or part thereof. There is a 15-minute grace period for collection, but late billing begins at dismissal time. For example, if dismissal is at 3pm, pick-up may take place until 3:15pm. However, if the child is collected at 3:45pm, the parent will be billed for two half-hour periods, at a total cost of R290. Please note that if a child is not picked up by 6pm, an additional charge of **R424** will apply in addition to late pick-up charges.
- Internal Transfers:** Families may wish to transfer to another school within our network during the academic year. An administration fee of R700 will be charged for internal transfers if you wish to transfer your scholar **more than once** during the 2024 instructional year.

Aftercare:

Aftercare is available until **5:30 pm daily**. An aftercare contract must be signed before a child's enrollment 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 **5:30pm five days a week during the school terms** will cost **R10 800** per year, payable over **12 months at R 900 per month**.
- Aftercare until **5:30pm on Mondays only during the school terms** will cost **R4 920** annually, payable over **12 months at R410 per month**.
- For families who require aftercare on an ad-hoc basis, pre-arranged aftercare is available at **R145 per day**. Pre-arranged aftercare is available until 5:30pm daily.
- Scholars picked up after 5:30pm are liable for late pick-up fees at a rate of R145 per half hour. Scholars who are picked up after 6:00pm are liable for an additional financial penalty

of **R424**, as well as a possible termination from the aftercare program if picked up after 6:00pm multiple times. Please refer to the aftercare agreement and contract for more information on late pick-up fees.

SPARK Schools Banking Details

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 the 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 account queries as they do not have information regarding accounts, payment plans, or outstanding balances.**

2024 Instructional Hours and Calendar

Instructional hours for 2024 are as follows:

School Hours

- Grade R-3 Minimum Days (**Mondays** 7:45 am-1:00 pm)
- Grade 4-7 Minimum Days (**Mondays** 7:45 am-1:30 pm)
- Report Card Conferences (first week of each term) : 1:30pm-3:45pm
- 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 2024 Instructional Calendar for a full calendar of instructional days. Make special note of the following:

Term Dates

16 January- 20 March, 2024

8 April- 26 June, 2024

22 July- 19 September, 2024

1 October- 11 December, 2024

Public Holidays (School Closed)

01 January New Year's Day

21 March Human Rights Day

22 March Special School Holiday
29 March Good Friday
01 April Family Day
27 April Freedom Day
01 May Workers' Day
16 June Youth Day
17 June Public Holiday
09 August National Women's Day
23 September Special School Holiday
24 September Heritage Day
16 December Day of Reconciliation
25 December Christmas Day
26 December Day of Goodwill

Our Learning Model

Do you wonder what a typical day for a SPARK scholar looks like? View our Day in the Life video to learn about our learning model and your child's daily timetable.

Curriculum

SPARK Schools is aligned with 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.

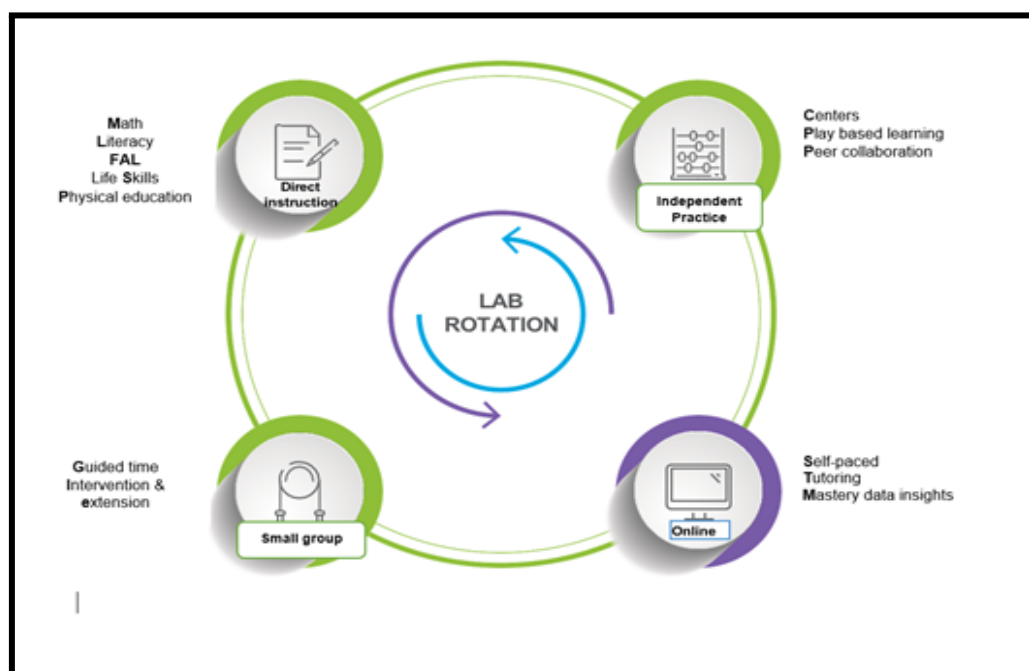
- **Mathematics:** In maths, scholars are taught according to [Scholastic's PRIME curriculum](#), based on the rigorous maths standards of Singapore, the Republic of Korea, and Hong Kong. The curriculum builds scholars' capacity to problem solve, and the assessments in the PRIME curriculum require scholars to employ critical thinking to demonstrate success.
- **Literacy:** SPARK focuses on using CAPS English Home language resources as the basis of teaching in this subject. Laying a solid foundation in English is critical to the success of our scholars. Thus we supplement the CAPS curriculum with resources that are internationally sourced and focus on improved reading and writing skills. The focus is placed on Phonics through the Letters and Sounds curriculum to support the teaching of reading and writing. The Literary Tree curriculum supports reading, whilst Scholastic books are used as mentor texts for Guided Reading.
- **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 primary schools in the network. We offer **isiZulu** as the additional language at all **SPARK Primary 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 Sciences, Social Sciences, 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. SPARK uses CAPS-aligned resources to support the teaching of both these subjects.
- **Life Orientation/Life Skills:** 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 arts) and personal and social well-being**. Scholars learn these subjects during face-to-face teaching, and application thereof also takes place during centre and/or online time. Scholars also focus on social-emotional learning through community circles and reflections during PSW.
- **Physical Education:** At SPARK Schools, our mission is to prepare our scholars for university and careers of their choice. To ensure they are well-rounded and healthy, all scholars participate in physical education each week, focusing on personal health, movement and physical activity, and introduction to the team and individual sports. Physical Education also falls under the umbrella of Life Skills. We offer weekly affordable extramural after-school activities for scholars who wish to pursue specific team and individual sports. Physical Education forms part of Life Orientation.

SPARK Schools is guided by the CAPS in delivering age-appropriate sex and sexuality education in relevant approved subjects such as Life Skills, Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, and Life Sciences. CAPS curricular topics related to sex and sexuality are delivered by SPARK Schools with sensitivity appropriate to grade and age as per the [SPARK Sex and Sexuality Policy](#).

Foundation Phase Learning Model (Grades R-3)

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.

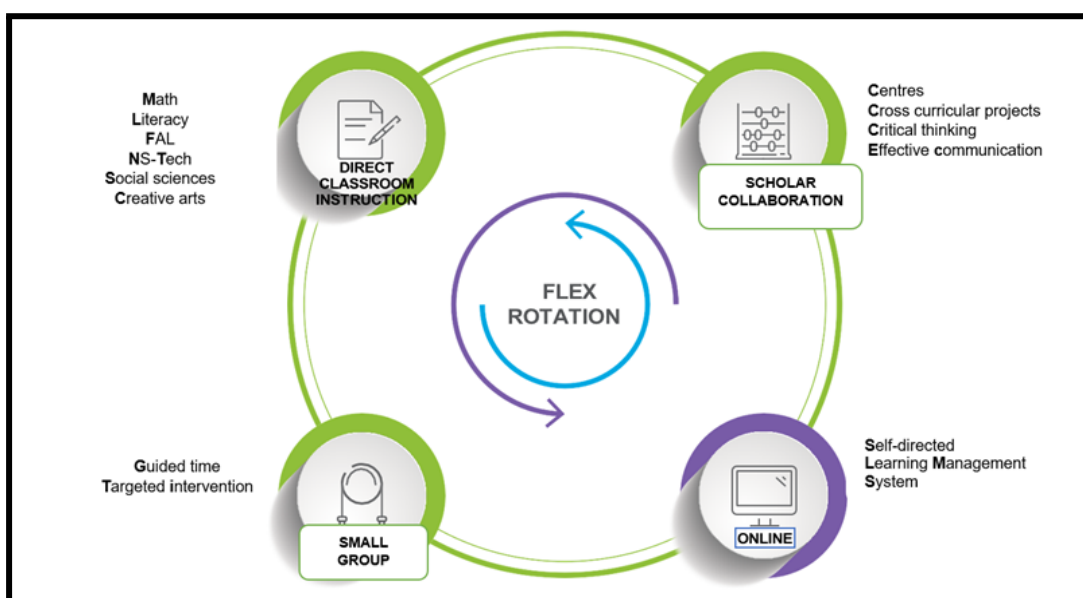


Intermediate Phase Learning Model(Grades 4-6)

Our intermediate phase “flex model” is a form of personalised learning used in Grades 4 to 7.

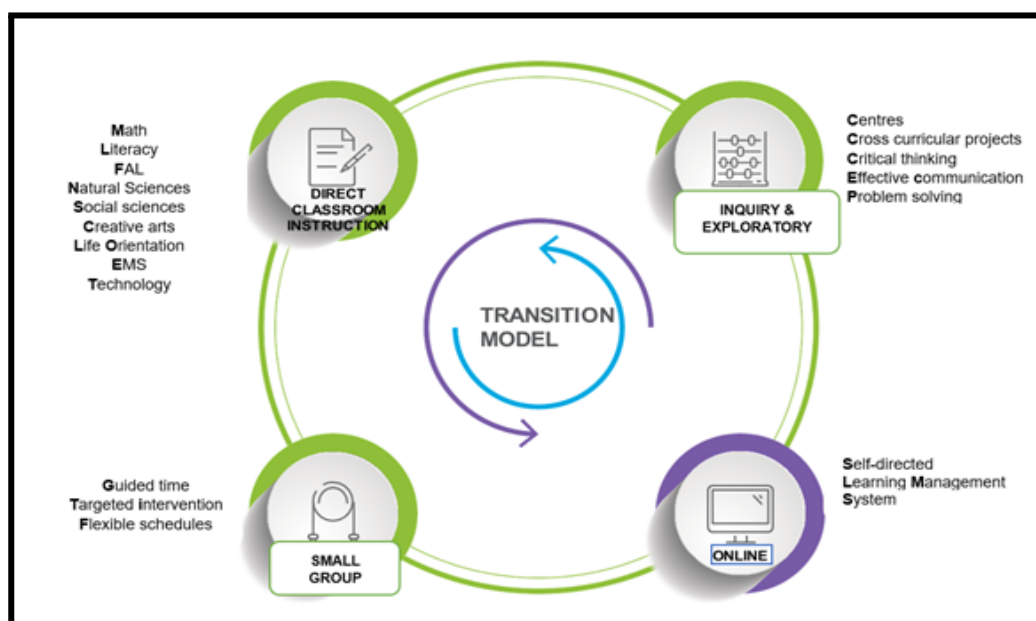
Scholars move through an individually customised schedule learning Literacy, Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Technology, and a First Additional Language through different modalities.

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.



Transition Model(Grade 7)

This phase is the entry point into the Senior Phase. Most of the learning is through inquiry and exploratory learning, where scholars use their cross-curriculum knowledge to complete projects. Scholars have 9 subjects taught and learnt through direct instruction and online.



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.

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 are 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 at the conclusion of each term with scholar marks and progress from the previous term's formal assignments and assessments. 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 **must** attend a short conference with one of the child's educators to receive feedback to understand their child's progress and receive resources to support their child going forward.

If your child struggles to make adequate progress or meet grade-level promotional 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 scholar support & retention prevention program, please contact your child's teacher or school leader.

Please note that informal assessments are given in each subject throughout the term to determine your child's progress and competence 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

Homework at SPARK serves three purposes: (1) to serve as a home-school connection; (2) pre-work to prepare for an upcoming lesson, project, or assignment; and (3) opportunity for extension work not completed in class.

- **Home-school connection:** Home school connection is primarily for scholars grades R-3. These homework assignments reflect on core values, foster parent investment and engagement, and nurture social-emotional learning. Ideally, the scholar and parent complete the assignment together, serving as an opportunity for connection.
- **Pre-work:** Pre-work is primarily for scholars grades 4-7. These homework assignments prepare scholars for something they will do in the classroom within the next week. They are designed to facilitate prior knowledge recall or provide scholars with the foundational knowledge required to participate actively in an upcoming lesson.
- **Extension:** Extension work is primarily for scholars grade 4-7. These homework assignments provide scholars with an opportunity to practise the skills they learned during a classroom lesson. These are most closely aligned to the traditional style of homework.

Keep the following in mind with regard to the Home School Connection:

The home-school-connection template informs:

- Daily behaviour reflection in the foundation phase
- Overall weekly reflection in the intermediate phase
- Weekly reading passage
- Short daily skill reinforcement activity for the core subjects (15-20 minutes)

Note the time frame guidelines for Home School Connection:

Grade R & 1: 20 mins

Grade 2 & 3: 25 - 30 mins

Grade 4 - 6: 30 to 35 mins

Why add weekly reading?

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you will go." –Dr. Seuss. Reading is a fundamental part of academic success. We aim to instil a love for reading within our scholars. To do this, we must cultivate a reading habit among our children. We know this will have a positive impact on all their subjects, as well as inspire creative thoughts and imagination.

What is your role as a parent?

We ask that you continue signing the behavioural log and engage with the other content alongside your child. Completed homework will result in parent hours awarded at the school level. As a parent, you play an integral role in your child's academic success.

What is the role of the teachers?

Educators ensure that homework is checked weekly. They award scholar rewards points and parent hours for completed homework and take note of challenges experienced by scholars when completing the homework.

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, the production of the child's academic report will be postponed until all required assessments have been completed.

The above is all in line as per the [SPARK Assessment Policy](#), where more information about promotion, proficiency, retention, enrollment and absenteeism can be found.

Behavioural Expectations

SPARK primary schools' behaviour management is rooted in respect, care and fidelity to improvement for every scholar. SPARK staff owns the responsibility to support scholars with positive decision making at all times. Our corrective and restorative approach begins with a root cause analysis and requires the participation of all stakeholders (teachers, parents and scholars)

Code of Conduct

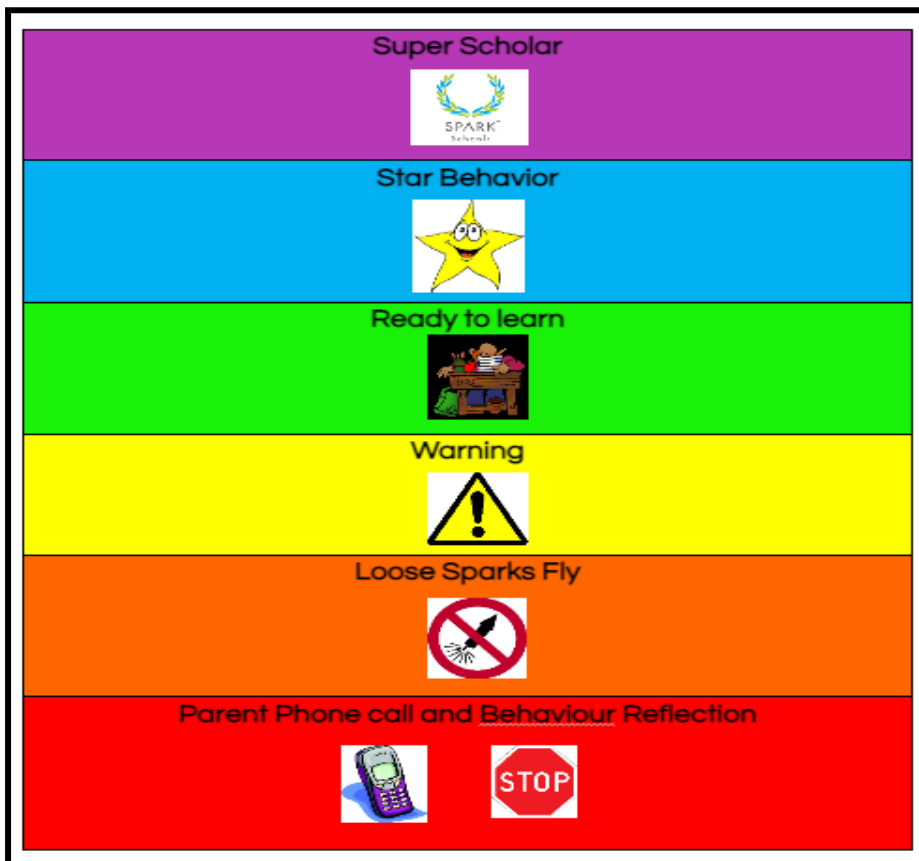
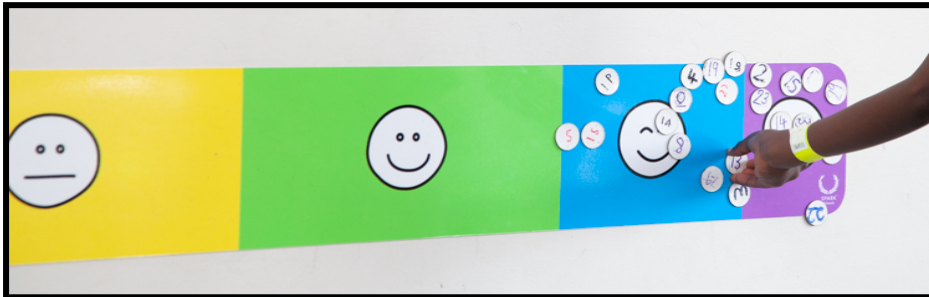
Our [Code of Conduct](#) has been developed per the South African Schools Act. It is informed by our restorative approach to behaviour management, which aims to establish a disciplined, safe and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning at SPARK Schools. This Code of Conduct 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 practise positive behaviour management using specific tools in our foundation and intermediate phase models.

Foundation Phase (Grades R-3)

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. When scholars rotate to a new subject, for example, from Literacy to Mathematics 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 the green on the chart.

Image 2: showing a behaviour magnet 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 a 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 in a Daily Learning Journal, where they self-reflect on the 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 of a child's poor behaviour and completing the journal for the child when they struggle to behave.

Anti-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 **ongoing and deliberate** aggressive behaviour or harassment by an individual or a group, over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can be physical (Verbal, social, mental, physical, material) or non-physical (cyberbullying).

Bullying in any form can cause immediate, delayed or long-term effects on everyone involved, including victims and bystanders. Single incidents of disagreements and fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

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:

- **Teach empathy.**
- **Have a nonviolent approach at home which includes; physical, verbal, and written violence.**
- **Practise positive parenting.**

- **Never give children access to cellphones or the internet without proper education of the dangers of the internet, including taking part in or encouraging cyber bullying.**
- Be alert to signs of unhappiness in their child's life. Any change in attitude, **sleep, appetite**, 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 and social media platforms
- 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.
- **Parents who discover that their child is a bully need to respond by addressing the behaviour, and taking the matter seriously. Bullies who grow up into adults with the same behaviour can experience many problems later in life.**
- **Find out the reason behind the bullying (victim of bullying from older people, unable to process emotions, sadness, struggling academically, trauma) without absolving them from their actions.**
- **Be open to the disciplinary process should their child be found to have bullied another scholar.**
- 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 of 2005 that impact and inform 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

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 composed 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

SPARK Schools 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, attend school meetings, and extracurricular activities.
- Complete classroom tasks, as requested by a teacher.
- Donate recyclable art supplies or other specific items required by the school for a project or initiative.

Pre-COVID -19 , we established the role of “**Class Parent Committees** ” in our schools. While many parents contribute to our schools through volunteerism, this year, we are selecting two parents per driver to provide a critical link between parents and the school leadership and staff.

The primary responsibilities of the Class Parent are to:

Assist with promoting the 4 Key Drivers of our Schools

1. School Operations

- Provide valuable feedback on Arrivals and Dismissals
- Provide valuable feedback on Aftercare and Extra Murals
- Provide valuable feedback on stationery
- Planning school/family gatherings to build a strong relationship between parents at a grade level.
- Provide feedback on service received in school uniform stores.

2. School Culture

- Actively promote the Core Values of the organisation and the school's 6th core value.
- Support parents in understanding the School Code of Conduct and the role each parent plays in ensuring their child upholds the code of conduct.
- Actively promote a positive school culture by encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education journey
- Connect with new spark families and onboard with school culture.
- Liaise with parent body to celebrate with staff e.g. world teachers day ect, coffee with teachers

3. Scholar Achievement

- Reinforce correct channels of communication and active participation regarding scholar academic concerns, social/emotional wellbeing, and other school-related matters.
- Encourage parents to attend Report Card Conferences to be informed on their scholars' academic growth and ask any questions.
- Promote use of online platforms at home to support scholar growth.
- Feedback on book looks and teachers feedback.

4. Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

- Positively contribute to school communication and measures to improve.
- Drive community-based projects in order to support the wider community, and ensure our scholars and parents serve others.
- Encourage attendance at Parent Community Meetings and School events
- Collect donations for special projects or celebrations e.g. Heritage Day
- Liaise with parents to promote parent volunteer hours.

- Encourage the completion of Parent NPS surveys and provide detailed accurate feedback.
- Effectively connect and engage with public services (police, fire department, councillors, CPF) in support of the school and parents

5. School Leadership

- Plan whole school events with the school leadership team.
 - Provide leadership with constructive feedback from parents.
- Attend monthly meetings with the School Leaders and fellow Class Parents to plan events and discuss school-wide initiatives that support the 5 key drivers of the organisation..
 - Connect with new-to-SPARK parents during their initial onboarding to assist them in understanding the SPARK Schools culture and procedures at the beginning of the school year and end of each school term.
 - Participate in Open Days.
 - Encourage volunteerism amongst all parents in order to help families achieve their 30 parent volunteer hours.

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 2024 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 and it is imperative that we co-exist harmoniously with communities--we therefore 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 the School Principal, 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.

Dismissal Procedures and Placards

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's name off the placard to another staff member stationed inside the school grounds. At this point, the scholars 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's licence and public driver's permit, and they must have a valid licence disc for their vehicle.

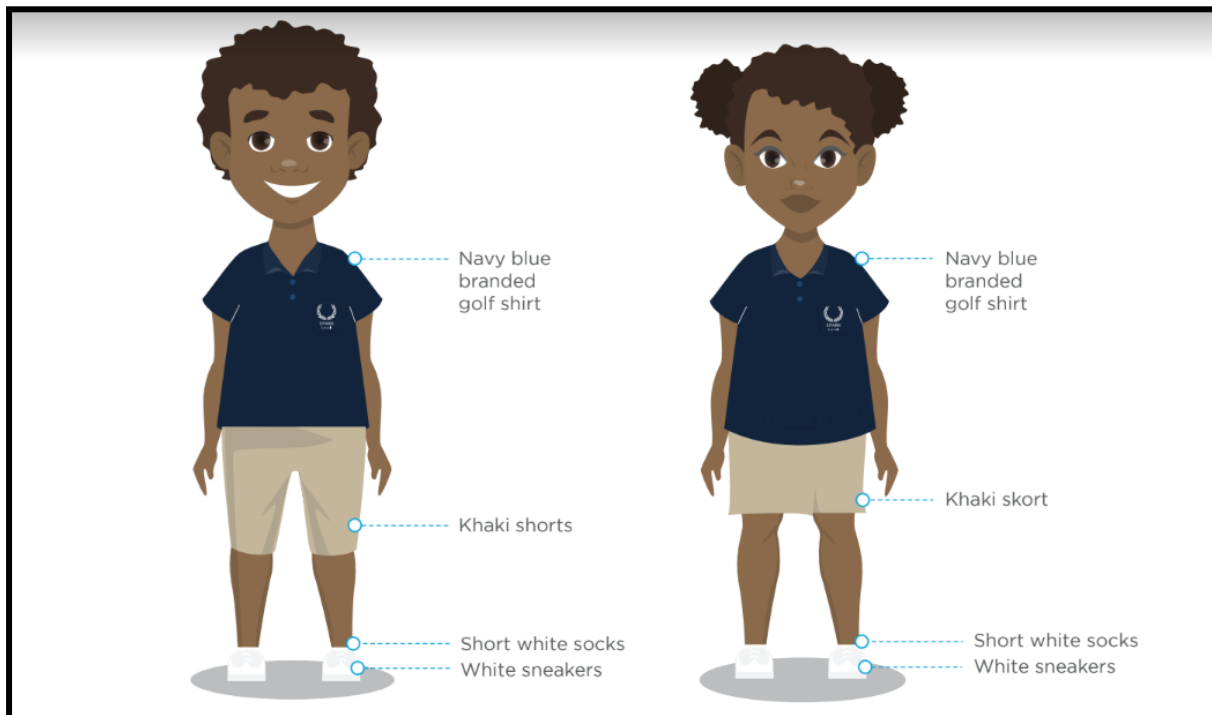
Transport drivers must be provided with the child's placard to pick up the child. If a transport driver is late to pick up a child or violates school rules and regulations, the child's parent is held responsible for late pick-up fees or breach of rules.

Uniform

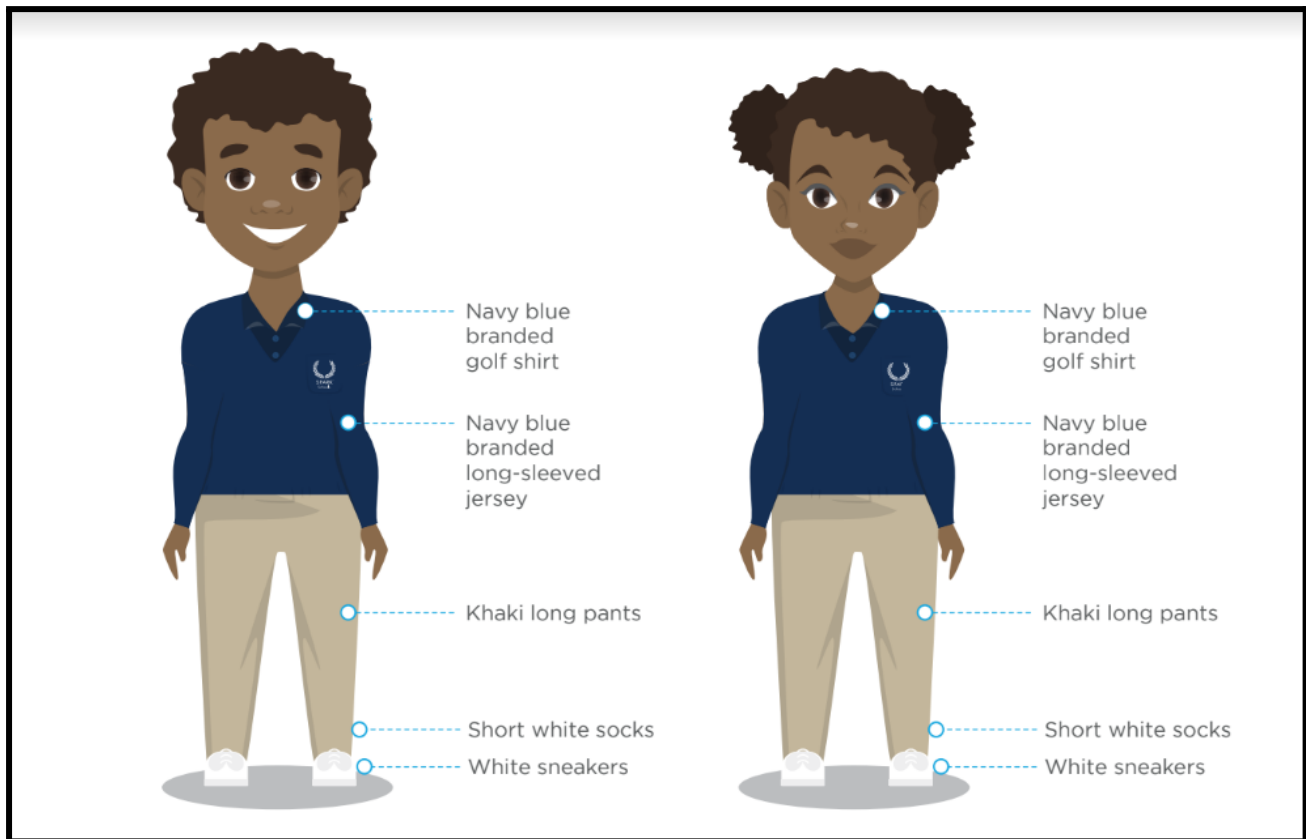
Your scholar's appearance and uniform reflect your scholar and your family's commitment to the SPARK Schools culture. Encourage your scholar to "dress for success" by grooming themselves neatly and taking care of her appearance at all times. Scholars must wear the full school uniform during school hours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

SPARK Primary Schools Summer uniform

- a navy blue golf shirt with a school badge
- khaki shorts or skort
- a navy blue peak cap or floppy hat with a school badge
- white socks
- white takkies



SPARK Primary Schools Winter uniform



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 tidy. 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. Hair Bands 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 and termly 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 for career purposes, we offer affordable extramural activities after school weekly.

How can my child participate in sports 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 primary 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.

Do 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 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 lunches 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.

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 a 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.

What is included in the annual stationery fee?

The stationery fee includes the following:

- Stationery Buckets for use in classrooms
- Pencil bags containing:
 - Sharpener
 - Pens
 - Clear ruler (30cm)
 - Glue stick, erasers
- Plastic coloured pencils
- Wax crayons (retractable)
- Assorted jumbo crayons
- A4 individual whiteboards

- Whiteboard erasers
- Whiteboard markers
- Scissors - 160 mm (Foundation Phase)
- 210mm (Intermediate Phase)
- Workbook: Plastic sleeves
- Feint Margin - 72
- Blank, 32 pages
- 7mm lined, 32 page
- 2 Quire feint and margin
- Assessment Portfolio File

Foundation Phase Projects, arts and crafts materials.

- Ponal Wood Glue
- Glue Gun sticks
- A2 Sugar paper
- Card A3
- Card A4
- Masking Tape
- Powder Paint
- Paint brushes
- Paper Plates

Intermediate Phase Projects, arts and crafts materials.

- Potters Clay
- Sketching Charcoal
- Staples
- Ponal Wood Glue
- A2 Sugar paper
- Card A3
- Card A4
- Masking Tape
- Powder Paint
- Paint brushes
- Paper Plates
- Kebab Sticks
- Glue Gun sticks
- Prestik

Thank you!

We look forward to a fruitful academic year!