

# **Parent to Parent: Things You Need to Know**

## **A Guidebook to St. Bridget School**



**Compiled by the parents from the  
St. Bridget School Home and School Association**

Welcome!

We are so happy to have you and your family here at St. Bridget School. There is no place quite like St. Bridget, and we hope your children have a happy and productive experience here. As a new family, there are many things you need to know as your child starts school. Most of the information you will need is covered in the official school handbook, which can be found on the school website.

This booklet was prepared by parents who have already been here awhile and contains the information that will help make the transition easier. We will try to explain our school traditions and let you know what to expect as you move through the school year and through the grades. We will try to answer questions that new families have asked at Home and School Association (HSA) meetings through the years. Hopefully, you will find that this reference will help answer the questions that come up through the school year.

We encourage everyone to be active in the Home and School Association, since everyone is a member! If parents give input and opinions, the HSA can provide better service to the school and our children. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend HSA meetings; please check the HSA calendar on the HSA website for meeting dates.

### **How do I enter the building?**

The school building is locked during the day for security reasons. There is a doorbell located on the right hand side, and the office staff will buzz you in. The children and parents are told not to let anyone in the door. If they walk right by you and do not open the door, they are not being rude. This rule is a strictly enforced to keep everyone safer!

The Main Office is located through the double doors on the left. When you enter the school, you will need to sign in. There are 2 binders outside the Main Office, one for if you are picking up your child for 'early dismissal' and the other for if your child is 'tardy' to school. There is a binder inside the Main Office to sign if you are visiting a classroom or volunteering in the school. If you are visiting or volunteering, you will need to take a badge and wear it while you are in the school. When you are done in the school, you will need to sign out and return the badge.

Parents of students in pre-kindergarten 3 and pre-kindergarten 4 are able to walk their child to their classroom beginning at 8:30 a.m. Parents will need to sign in and sign out of the visitor book located in the main lobby. A staff member is present in the lobby upon arrival if you should have any questions.

### **What does my child wear?**

Please refer to the Student & Parent Handbook, found on the school website, for uniform requirements. We use Dennis Uniforms and Land End's as uniform suppliers; contact information for these suppliers is at the end of this document.

**We suggest you order uniforms early.** Dennis Uniforms usually runs out of items in the summer, especially gym clothes.

### **Is there a way to get gently used uniforms?**

As soon as you register your child at St Bridget, you can check in with the Swap Shop to see if used uniforms are available.

The Swap Shop runs like a trading post for used uniforms. You get per item credit for anything you trade in. So, if you have 3 size 6 jumpers, you can trade them for any three items you might need. If you have nothing to trade, you can purchase items at a huge discount. The Swap Shop is open periodically throughout the year, but you can always order by emailing the parents who run the shop. Their contact information is at the end of this guide. The Swap Shop is located in the yellow house in the school parking lot.

### **Can my child ever wear regular clothes to school?**

**Dress Down Days** are scheduled throughout the year and will appear on the school calendar. Children must contribute a dollar (\$2 if they want to wear a hat) to participate in most dress down days. Make up is still not allowed and the children cannot wear shorts if we have not switched to summer uniforms.

**Spirit Wear Days** are scheduled the first Tuesday of each month. T-shirts/sweatshirts of clubs/organizations (like Drama Club, Cross Country, choir, Student Council) are permissible to wear with the rest of the uniform. Polo shirts with the St Bridget School logo are also permissible. Students who don't have the above shirts may wear their gym shirt/sweatshirt.

**Your child's birthday** is a free Dress Down Day. If it falls on a day we aren't in school, the day before/after will suffice. Summer birthdays will have a designated day in June. Also, if a child's birthday falls on a school-wide dress down day, they can choose the day before or after as well.

### **Where do I drop my child off in the morning?**

Families who are Cheshire residents are encouraged to have their children ride the school bus. The town provides bus service for all children in Grades K-8. Please contact the school office for further information on the buses.

If you are dropping your child off at school, please use the carline at the back of the building. Teachers and school staff are there to guide your child into the school. It is the easiest and the safest way to drop your child off. If you must come inside the building, you will need to park and walk your child in. Children are not allowed to walk in the parking lot alone. Students being brought to the door cannot be left in the lobby before 8:30am.

Pre-Kindergarten 3 & 4 students are to be walked in and brought directly to their classroom.

The school offers a before-care program (called Extended Day) for an additional fee, if your child needs to be dropped off earlier than 8:30am. Extended Day begins at 7am if you need this service.

The bell rings at 8:50am. If you arrive later than that, please go to the office and sign your child in. The office will be locked at 8:50am for announcements and opening prayer, so if you have business at the office in the morning, you will have to wait until prayer is over.

### **Where do I pick my child up in the afternoon?**

If your child needs to be dismissed early, you should get them out before 3:00 and the office prefers before 2:45. Once the dismissal procedure starts, it is very hard for them to pull a child out of the classroom.

Children are dismissed in bus waves and rider waves. The rider waves are done alphabetically and by color. There are colored flags in the courtyard where the children come to find their parents. The flags are: Red (last names A-F), White (last names G-M), and Blue (last names N-Z).

Pre-Kindergarten 3 & 4, Kindergarten and their siblings are dismissed at 3pm in the Dining Hall.

Again, the school offers an aftercare program (Extended Day), for an additional fee, if you cannot pick your child up at 3pm. Extended Day ends at 5:30pm. Please visit the school website for more information and fees.

### **Does the school offer a lunch program?**

The lunch program at St. Bridget School is offered to students in grades K-8. Pre-K 3 & 4 children eat in their classroom but can purchase juice or milk. Parents can add money to their child's lunch account to be used as they wish. This is generally done online, or parents can send a check to the office. Some students bring in cash for lunch. Parents are able to track online what a child buys. The lunchroom staff is very accommodating to families with allergies and food sensitivities. They are happy to provide ingredient information.

The lunch program offers a lot of choices to our children. The best bet for kids under Grade 3 is to purchase the “Meal Deal” for \$5.00, which includes a drink and a dessert. More information about the lunch program can be found on the school website.

### **What are some fun, social/school events that happen throughout the year at St. Bridget?**

We have a lot of events here at St. Bridget School. Here is a sampling of the events.

1. The **Halloween party** is an HSA event and one of the largest social events of the year. We generally have over 400 people in the school. The children and many parents come in costume. The Student Council and teachers run a trick or treat hallway for the students where candy is given out. You get a number when you arrive and go into the hallway as your number is called. There is also a DJ and arts and crafts. It is loud and crazy - organized chaos at its best.
2. This is not to be confused with the **Halloween Parade**. Please refer to the school calendar for the date. It is usually scheduled on the Friday before Halloween. Grades Pre-K-3 dress in costume and parade around the campus. It usually starts at 2:00pm, but get there early because the parking lot fills up!
3. **Stuff a Bus** is run in the Fall in conjunction with the annual Food Drive. Students are asked to bring in non-perishable items and the 8<sup>th</sup> graders fill a school bus with the bounty. St. Bridget Families have been very generous in the past few years and have filled the bus to the brim!
4. The **Santa Shop** is a service the HSA provides for the children to shop for family members. The HSA runs the shop in early December in the Library. Each Pre-K-5 class is given a chance to go to the shop during school. Middle school students generally go after school. Families are asked to send children in with a list of who to buy for and are asked to try and limit the list to 5 or 6 people. Parent volunteers will help your child shop. This is a very fun event to work at and really gets you into the Christmas Spirit!
5. **Valentine decorating** is a big deal for the lower grades. The children make cards for family members and for local nursing homes. Families are asked to provide trim and stickers and parents often come in to help.
6. **Play Day** is an HSA event and occurs in late May or early June. A committee of teachers and parents organizes outdoor games and activities for the children. Lots of parent volunteers and water balloons are needed for this event!

### **I really want to be a part of my child's school experience. How can I volunteer?**

There are lots of opportunities to volunteer at St. Bridget School! You will have to participate in VIRTUS training in keeping our children safe in order to volunteer at the school. It is offered at St. Bridget in the fall and across the Archdiocese year round.

Anytime you come to the school to volunteer, please go to the office to sign in at the visitor's book and collect a volunteer badge. When you are finished, please sign out and return your badge.

The **Home and School Association (HSA)** hosts many social events and fundraisers, and is always in need of volunteers. You can sign up to volunteer for a HSA event through a website called Sign Up Genius. Please refer to the HSA website for a calendar of events and links to Sign Up Genius volunteer pages.

Our **Annual Auction**, run by the HSA, is the biggest social event and fundraiser of the year. We are always looking for volunteers to assist with the auction. Planning begins months before the event, and jobs range from donation acquisition to decorating. It is a great night out for parents and teachers!

**Lunch & Recess Volunteers** are always needed. The school relies on parent volunteers to cover the dining hall and recess areas. Many parents get on a regular schedule, but walk in volunteers are welcome.

**Room Parent** sign-ups are in the classrooms when you go to meet the teachers in August. If you do not see the sign-up and are interested in being a Room Parent, let your child's teacher know. Room Parents are asked to organize the Class Baskets for the Annual Auction. The baskets are the class' major donation to the auction. Themes are chosen, and parents are asked to send in donations to compile the basket. Other Room Parent duties vary based on teacher needs and wishes but generally include helping with parties and Play Day.

### **What does the Home and School Association (HSA) do for fundraising?**

The Home and School Association is responsible for fundraising a portion of the school's operating budget. The HSA's largest fundraisers are the Annual Auction followed by the Annual Golf Outing. Additional fundraisers are held throughout the year.

Each family is required to pay an assessment fee of \$275, which includes a mandatory fee for the Home and School Association membership. The \$275 assessment fee can be paid in full or by participating in designated fundraising activities during the year. See the HSA website for a list of participating fundraisers.

The HSA also participates in shopping fundraisers including Box Tops, Amazon Smile, local grocery store reward programs, and Scrip cards.

Scrip cards are a good way to earn funds towards your assessment while buying items you use every day. Order cards for groceries, gas, and even school uniforms, and get a

percentage of the sale price donated to the school and to your assessment account. To learn more, go to the Scrip webpage on the HSA website.

### **How can I learn about all of the “goings on” at the school?**

Please read Mrs. Furlong’s newsletter every Friday. It includes news, important dates, and more.

Similarly, every teacher writes a newsletter. Depending on the age of the class, it might be daily, weekly, or monthly. Please read all newsletters thoroughly to keep updated on information.

The HSA also has a newsletter which is sent via email and can be found on the HSA website. All upcoming HSA events are also listed on the HSA website.

### **How do I communicate with my child’s teacher?**

The teachers send an email as needed with regards to the upcoming week’s events. Each teacher has a webpage that can be accessed through the school website, where the teacher can post classroom happenings and assignments. If you need to contact a teacher, you may email the teacher, call the office and leave a message, or send in a hand written note with your child.

### **Emergencies and School Closings/Delays**

The school uses a service called ‘School Messenger’ to notify parents of dire information- school closings/delays (usually due to weather), real lockdowns, etc. It is **not** used for reminders about events, etc. Parents receive a voice mail, email, and if they sign up for it, a text for emergencies. Because this system is only used for emergencies, it is important to read/listen to the entire message, and **not** call the school.

Also, for school closings, the school follows the Cheshire PS schedule. We have a 2 hour delay if a delay is needed. The weather closings/delays/early dismissals are broadcast on Channels 8(WTNH), Channel 3 (WFSB), and Channel 4(NBC). Again, if you see Cheshire Public Schools before you see St. Bridget School CHESHIRE (there are two other St. Bridget Schools in CT!) you can follow that.

### **Are individual or class pictures taken?**

Individual student pictures and class pictures are taken in the fall where the student wears their school uniform. Individual student pictures are also taken in the spring, where the student has the option of wearing casual clothing.

### **My child is interested in being a part of a sports team. Is this offered?**

Team sports and cheerleading are offered to older students. We are always looking for coaches for our sports teams. If you have skill at a sport and are willing to donate some time, you can start a team at our school. The athletic program is run by a volunteer athletic director; contact information for the current athletic director is at the end of this document. More information about our athletic program, including our Athletic Handbook, can be found on the school website.

### **Are there any clubs for my child to join?**

A variety of clubs exist, such as Student Council, Homework Club, Yearbook Club, and Lego Club. Many of the clubs are for specific grades and only run during a portion of the school year. Volunteers are needed to run some clubs like Chess Club and Robotics Club; without volunteers, these clubs may not occur every year. If you would like more information about a club or would like to volunteer to help with a club, please contact Mrs. Cummings.

### **How is faith incorporated throughout the school year?**

**Faith class:** Faith is taught in every grade for a minimum of 30 minutes a day.

**Weekly Mass:** Pre-K3 through Grade 8 celebrate Mass every Friday (or another day of the week if it's a holy day) at 9am. Parents are welcome to attend these Masses. If you attend, please sit in the 'wings' of the church, because the school takes up the entire center section of the church.

**Adoration:** Teachers may also bring their class to Adoration on Friday afternoons. Parents are welcome to come and pray as well.

**First Communion** is received in the third grade. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is received before First Communion. The children receive together at a Mass in early May. The third graders also present the **May Crowning** ceremony for the school, usually a week after First Communion. They wear their first communion outfit, which consists of a white dress and optional veil for the girls and a white shirt and tie with khaki pants for the boys. This happens during the school day and is followed by a breakfast that the second grade parents and the HSA put on. This is a big event. Families usually attend and take the children home from school after the breakfast.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

St. Bridget School website: [www.stbridgetschool.org](http://www.stbridgetschool.org)

HSA website: <http://www.stbridgetschool.org/hsa/>

Swap Shop contact information: Susan Lonergan [suecatz@snet.net](mailto:suecatz@snet.net)

Athletic Director: Richard Casey (1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher) [RCasey@StBridgetSchool.org](mailto:RCasey@StBridgetSchool.org)

### **Uniform Suppliers:**

#### **Dennis Uniforms**

[www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com)

school code: WB00BS

Walk-in store located @

500 Boston Post Rd

Orange, CT 06477

#### **Lands' End**

[www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com)

preferred school number:

#9000-9626-4

#### **Logo Information**

Logo Description: School Name

Logo Number: 0441643K