



St. Stephen Academy

Reaching For Excellence

**St. Stephen Academy
2019-2020**

Parent Student Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME.....	1
MISSION STATEMENT.....	2
Vision.....	2
ORGANIZATION.....	2
PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE.....	2
HOURS OF OPERATION.....	2
HOLIDAYS.....	2
FOOD PROGRAM.....	3
OUTSIDE FOOD.....	3
BIRTHDAY PARTIES	3
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS.....	3
TUITION.....	4
ARRIVAL.....	4
DEPARTURE.....	4
LATE PICK-UP.....	4
DRESS CODE.....	5
EXTRA CLOTHES/LOST AND FOUND.....	5
UNIFORM.....	5
EMERGENCIES.....	6
INJURY.....	6
ILLNESS.....	6
MEDICATION.....	7
CUBBIES.....	7
SHARE DAY.....	7
REST TIME.....	7
PROGRESS REPORTS.....	7
FIEL? TRIPS.....	8
FUNDRAISERS.....	8
BITING.....	8
ACTIVE TIME.....	8
CURRICULUM	9
INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM.....	9
INFANT/TODDLER DAILY COMMUNICATION.....	9
CHAPEL.....	9
DISCIPLINE POLICY.....	10
DISENROLLMENT.....	10
SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS.....	10
CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS.....	10
PROMOTING TO KINDERGARTEN.....	11
CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION.....	11
COMMUNICATING CONCERNS.....	11
CONCILIATION AGREEMENT.....	12
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.....	12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HANDBOOK.....	13

St. Stephen Academy

Infant - Preschool - Elementary

WELCOME TO ST. STEPHEN ACADEMY! We are honored to offer an educational program where **REACHING FOR EXCELLENCE** is our standard. St. Stephen Academy is committed to providing an educational experience that will inspire our students to have a thirst for learning and a hunger for a relationship with God.

St. Stephen Academy commends you for choosing a Christian education. We look forward to developing a positive relationship with you, as we partner in investing in our future today. St. Stephen Academy will play an important role during these informative years. We believe early education is the key in preparing our students for a successful, well-balanced future. Our intent is to ensure our students continue a journey of high educational achievement. Our goal is to develop our students to become compassionate, motivated independent thinkers that will take their knowledge and use it to impact positive changes not only in the community, but in their personal lives, as well as in the lives of those around them. Our philosophy and teachers make St. Stephen Academy uniquely qualified to help support your child's journey.

The purpose of this handbook is to share information about our academy with our parents, to promote understanding of our program, and to foster a cooperative Christian focused relationship. We hope you will find this handbook to be a useful tool to the policies and services of our school.

St. Stephen Academy looks forward to an **EXCELLENT** school year, as we continue to be **God's Servant, /11 God's Service, Serving God's People.**

God Bless,
June Davis, Principal
626-918-9476

Maria Villegas, Preschool Director
626-918-0796

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Stephen Academy is to provide families a Christian-centered, biblically- directed education which encourages the development of a personal relationship with God and which instills the vision and practice of academic excellence, character and service to God and others.

VISION

To Be God's Servants - Focusing on our relationship with Christ. This establishes who and whose we are.

To Be in God's Service- Focusing on our relationship with Church. This describes what we do.

To Serve God's People - Focusing on our relationship with Community. This describes where and how we serve.

ORGANIZATION

St. Stephen Academy was organized by St. Stephen Baptist Church of La Puente. The academy is a non-profit community outreach run program. St. Stephen Academy is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and fully licensed by the State of California.

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

We, the church, administration, and staff of St. Stephen Academy are committed to the academic, physical, social and spiritual education of students. The bible and Christian philosophy of life is the core of this process. We assist with the discovery of God's teachings and how that becomes a personal part in each student's young life. These early years are the foundation of successful learning. St. Stephen Academy recognizes that a committed staff is vital to effective teaching and to student learning. We continually train and support our staff members in all aspects of educating young minds. We also recognize the importance of strong parental support to promote the spiritual and educational development of the students and strongly encourage cooperative participation from families. Our goal is to provide sound academic foundation supported by our families, God and St. Stephen Academy staff members, so that each student achieves their fullest potential.

HOURS OF OPERATION: Preschool

The preschool is open from 6:30am to 6:30pm, Monday through Friday, and is a year-round 12-month program. The half day preschool program is from: 6:30am to 12:00pm or full day program 6:30am to 6:30pm.

Administration Office Hours: 8:30 am - 6:00 pm.

HOLIDAYS

Generally, the academy is closed all day on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Veteran's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Any additional days or alterations to this schedule will appear in communications from administration or visit ststephenacademy.com for calendar event.

FOOD PROGRAM

St. Stephen Academy prides itself with providing breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks that are both nutritious and fun. Preschool's breakfast is served at 8:30 am, lunch at 11:30 am and afternoon snack around 3:00 pm. School Age program is dependent on if the students are in school or out of school. Our monthly menu is posted, so when variations occur substitutions will be posted as well. Please notify administration and the teacher of any food allergies your child may have.

Breakfast will be served from 8:30 am - 9:00 am

Lunch will be served 11:30 am - 12:00 pm

St. Stephen Academy will not provide meals after designated times.

OUTSIDE FOOD IS NOT ALLOWED If you bring your child with outside food, your child must eat their food in the gym with their parent(s). If your child has allergies or a dietary condition, arrangements can be made for you to provide your child with food; arrangements must be made with the director; however, a doctor's note must be provided.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

We enjoy helping your child celebrate his or her special day. Please contact your child's teacher to make birthday party arrangements as we should not interrupt academic time. In addition, parents should be aware that some children in the class might have food allergies. Students and parents bringing foods and beverages to school for celebrations are encouraged to provide healthful options. The snack should be individually portioned so that it can quickly and easily be distributed to the entire class. It is not the teacher's responsibility to provide napkins and plates. Invitations to private celebrations are to be extended to the entire class, or invitations must be distributed away from the school.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

When the family tours the academy, the administration will explain the programs, policies and answer any questions you may have.

- Each child, before the admission day, must have all required forms and fees completed, (preschool- includes a physical examination by a doctor, to be certain that the child is in good physical health and able to participate in our program and a copy of the child's immunization records, which must be kept current).
- Parents are responsible for keeping the school's information updated as to changes related to your child's health and safety such as allergies as well as address and other emergency information, i.e. employment change, new cell phone number, etc.
- Our academy admission policies operate on a non-discriminatory basis, equally accessible to all regardless of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry.
- An annual, non-refundable registration fee is required of each child. (See reservation agreement for information)
- On your preschooler's first day of school please bring: a blanket (labeled), a change of clothes in a zip-locked bag (labeled) and if not potty trained, diapers and wipes.

TUITION

Please refer to our Reservation Agreement for current tuition and enrollment fees.

- Tuition payment is done by an automatic withdraw payment plan (FACTS). The tuition charge is applied to your account on the 5th or the 20th of every month. FACTS will make one attempt to withdraw no re-attempts will be made. There will be late charge of \$30.00 applied to your bank account.
- Non-refundable \$200.00 Annual Registration fee, due at the time of enrollment.
- To request for schedule changes from one tuition rate, decrease attendance days or request for additional days, you must have prior approval of the administration. A decision will be based on space availability and your acceptance of tuition adjustment.

MANDATORY FUNDRAISER

\$300.00 per family, funds can be earned through our yearly Walk-A-Thon. Funds not raised by January 19th, will be withdrawn from your FACTS account January 20th (if payments deducted the 20th) or February 5th (If payments deducted on the 5th). The school sponsors other fundraisers throughout the school year in which we encourage all parents and students to participate. Fundraisers support the many expenses which are not covered with tuition alone.

ARRIVAL

Our arrival and departure policy must follow licensing requirements. At arrival, Preschool parents must sign their child in through Child Care Manager System, and school-age parents must sign in. Our teachers are required to do a daily inspection/wellness check for injury and illnesses. Parents will need to remain until teacher completes inspection/wellness check for possible illness and or injury.

DEPARTURE

At departure, Preschool parents must sign out their child through Child Care Manager System, and school-age parents must sign out using the daily log. Children will NOT be released to anyone who is not on the Student's Information/Emergency Card and must be over 18 years of age. Photo ID will be required for those picking up students until they become familiar to us. When dropping off please accompany your child into the classroom or play yard.

LATE PICK-UP

We expect each child to be picked up by your contracted hour. There will be \$15.00 fee for each quarter hour or portion thereof, payable to the staff on duty. This rate is reviewed regularly, and we reserve the right to adjust as necessary. If late on a consistent basis, you will be asked to withdraw. There will be no reduction in tuition for holidays or if your child attends less than the agreed schedule for any given week. Vacation of three weeks is allowed without tuition charge while still reserving your child's spot. Notification of vacation tuition adjustments must be submitted by the 10th of the month so we can staff accordingly. If you temporarily pull your child for a month, a nonrefundable \$65.00 deposit to hold the spot is required and credited to your account upon return.

. DRESS CODE

St. Stephen Academy's preschool uniform consists of white, navy, light blue, or black collared button front polo shirts/t-shirts with the academy's logo on it (sweatshirts are available as well), dark blue or khaki pants/ shorts/leggings/skorts/skirts or jumpers.

- Please dress your child in clothing that is easy to manage (encourages independence and self-help) with socks and closed-toed, rubber-soled shoes.
- Sandals must be closed toed, worn with socks and have a back strap for support, no thong-type shoes will be permitted.
- Uniforms must be worn during the academic year with Fridays being free dress.
- The "out of dress code" notice will be sent home. Consistently being out of dress code may call for a one-day suspension. If your child continues to attend without uniform, Administration will communicate with the family.

CLOTHING

It is recommended that the boys and girls wear washable play clothes since painting, clay, mud play, etc. is usually available to your child. Many toilet accidents are prevented if children can unbutton or unbuckle pants and belts without a struggle. For the younger children, do not dress them in overalls or body suits and do not include belts, snaps, etc. "Pull-on" type clothes with elastic waists that can be easily manipulated by the child is preferred. All children are required to keep a complete change of clothing at school in case of an accident. Label each item with your child's name and place them in a plastic zip lock bag, also with your child's name. If these clothes are used, be sure to return them the next school day. All clothes belonging to the students will be returned at the conclusion of the school year. To prevent lost articles of clothing, all jackets, sweaters, coats, and hats must be clearly marked with the child's first and last name. The school will not be responsible for any lost clothing.

EXTRA CLOTHING/LOST AND FOUND

There are occasions when our classroom teachers provide activities for exploration which requires change of clothing. In addition, some students are still potty training or developing toileting skills. Please provide your child with extra clothing. Please prepare the following: 2 pairs underwear, 1 pair of socks, 2 pairs of pants, 1 shirt.

Please have your child take all belongings, including jackets, straight to their cubby before joining the classroom. Label all belongings: clothing, jackets, sweaters, etc. A lost and found box will be provided in the school for unidentified clothing. After 2 weeks, unclaimed unidentified lost and found items will be donated.

UNIFORM

School uniforms help to maintain a safe environment, eliminate distractions and promote fairness. Behavior and achievement are positively influenced by standards of dress. We teach and encourage neatness and pride of appearance. We rely on your guidance and encouragement in assisting your child dress daily. We have selected Red Dot Uniform's to provide our school with uniforms. Together we will help students or families who are having difficulty meeting the requirements of St. Stephen Academy. Red Dot Uniform (626)401-2923 Fax (626)401-2756 www.reddotuniforms.com

EMERGENCIES

St. Stephen Academy has written emergency policies and procedures. We have monthly emergency drills that we carry out, and document. These include fire, earthquake and evacuation drills. If ever an evacuation off-site is required, we will evacuate to the south parking lot. In the event of an area disaster, the school is prepared to keep your child up to 72 hours with food & Blankets.

All staff member are annually trained in infant, child and adult first aid and CPR. Reminder: Only those names listed on the emergency form will be allowed to pick up your child. If the adult picking up your child is unfamiliar to our staff member, we will require a picture I.D. before the child will be released. If at any time your emergency contact information changes, please notify the office immediately.

INJURY

All injuries will be reported on an injury report form. If the injury is above the shoulder, a phone call will be made to the parent notifying them of the injury. If the injury appears to be life-threatening or, in our judgment, requires immediate medical attention, "911" will be called. In the event of an emergency (illness and/or accident), the legal parent/guardian will be notified. It is important to have two adults (other than parents) listed on the emergency information. If a mark (scratch, etc.) appears on the child while they are at school, a note will go home to notify the parents.

ILLNESS

Before bringing your child to school, please evaluate him/her for the following common "sickness" symptoms: rashes, fever over 99, loose bowel movement (two or more), pink eye (mucus in the eye), and any out of the ordinary symptoms. The California Title 22 regulations state that we must conduct a daily health check to ensure that each child is well upon arrival.

- We ask that if you know your child is sick or has a fever, or contagious illness do not bring him/her to school. At arrival and or during school day, if we notice any of these symptoms, we contact you to come pick him/her up immediately in order to prevent contamination of other children and staff members. We ask that you make arrangements for your child to be picked up within 1 hour of receiving the phone call.
- If your student has a fever and or illness symptoms, they must be SYMPTOM FREE or on antibiotics for a full 24 hours before returning to school. Some symptoms/illnesses may need a doctor's release permitting the child to return to school.
- If, for any reason, your child will not be attending school please notify the preschool office at 626 918-0796.

MEDICATION

If your child needs either prescribed or over-the-counter medication administered during the day, you must fill out an Administration of Medication form. You can ask your child's teacher or stop by the office.

- For prescription medication, the child's full name and instructions must match the pharmacy's unaltered, printed label on the container with doctor's approval.
- For over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication, the medication label must have the dosage amount for each age and dosage times. If Your child's age must match the label.
- All medicines will be secured in a cabinet in the office closet and/or kitchen refrigerator.
- If your child requires medication for life-threatening conditions such as allergies, bee sting, etc., the prescription can be kept at the center and administered when necessary for as long as the child is enrolled. The child's parent must sign an authorization form and update it every six months. Expired medication will be returned to the parent/guardian.

CUBBIES

Each child has a labeled cubby where their belongings must be kept. Check it daily for artwork and school communications to be brought home. Please make sure to LABEL all items that come from home including jackets and sweaters. To prevent overstuffing the cubby, please do not bring large items such as oversized blankets, etc.

SHARE DAY

Share day has been designed for your child to bring one item from home to share with his/her class. Your teacher will communicate specific share days with you. Please leave all guns, weapons and aggressive action figurine toys at home. **Write your child's name using permanent marker.** Our staff will make every effort to keep your child's share items then place the toy in their cubby; however, St. Stephen Academy is not responsible for missing items. Communicate with the receiving teacher whether the share item is to be shared with friends or to be show and tell and then kept in the cubby.

REST TIME

All children who spend a full day with us will be required to rest. California Title 22 regulations require that provisions be made for children to nap after lunch. Depending upon their age, children are expected to rest quietly, allowing those who need to sleep the opportunity to do so. Each student will need a child-sized blanket labeled with his/her name. Blankets should be taken home on Fridays to be washed and returned on Mondays. The school provides the cot and sheet. Preschool sheets are washed weekly. Infant and toddler sheets are washed daily.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Three times a year (November, February and May) your child will be evaluated to assist us in further developing of his/her individual needs and skills. formal parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled for November and February to share the year's accomplishments. In May a parent/teacher conference will be held for Academic Deficiency only. Ongoing communication is encouraged to continue a teamwork effort for your child's benefit and success.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents will be notified of field trips (in-house/outside of school) and if needed provide a permission slip. Transportation to and from field trips is provided by St. Stephen vans. Parents are encouraged to participate in the field trips as chaperones, however, must provide their own transportation.

FUNDRAISERS

The school sponsors fundraisers throughout the school year. All parents and students are expected to support these fundraisers. The fundraisers support the many expenses which are not covered with tuition alone. We have one mandatory fundraiser in the fall in which each family is required to participate.

BITING

Research tells us that biting occurs primarily as a result of a child's inability to communicate. It is often likely that biting situations are lack of verbal skills and frustration by a new experience. When a child does bite, the child receiving the bite will be comforted, bite area cleaned to prevent infection and ice will be applied. An accident report will be filled out for both the child that was bit and the child that did the biting. The biting child will be redirected to appropriate activities.

Our staff will carefully assess the occurrence to take preventative measures to assist the child to be successful (i.e. classroom environment to minimize frustration for the child). The child will be closely supervised. The identity of the child that is biting will be kept confidential. Most children soon stop biting after these actions have been taken. Every attempt will be made to assist the child with changing this behavior. Refer to Discipline policy regarding continued behavior.

ACTIVE TIME

Weather permitting, the children will spend some time each day outdoors. Fresh air and exercise help the children grow and stay healthy. On rainy or extremely hot days, free play, games, marching, dancing, or exercises are done indoors in class or gym.

CURRICULUM

St. Stephen Academy uses the Abeka Curriculum throughout the preschool classrooms 2s, 3s, and Pre-Kindergarten. This curriculum ensures that students will be taught new material on each developmental level and that there will be sufficient review of former concept each year to build a solid educational foundation. Our goal is to have each student be successful, and steadily progress yearly. St. Stephen Academy's, small/large group and indoor/outdoor activities include: Bible, Reading Readiness, Phonics, Math, Music and Movement, Sensory Motor, Arts/Crafts, Language Development, and Social Studies.

Weekly homework packets are sent home Monday and due Friday. Homework is given as a means of reinforcing classroom instruction and serves as an assessment tool for the teacher to check for understanding of concepts. Homework should be completed by the student, with assistance from the parent. Homework serves several purposes:

INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM

We offer developmentally appropriate, Bible based curriculum for children enrolled in our six weeks to two-year-old program. Our Infant program prides itself in carrying through the written routine that parents have established, and which best fits their child's needs. In addition, routines are adjusted as needed in order to adapt to their every growing need.

INFANT/TODDLER DAILY COMMUNICATION

Our teachers will provide you with a daily log in sheet. On this sheet, you will find your child's feeding, diapering, and general information such as mood, activity, etc. Your teacher will communicate when additional items are needed. **IMPORTANT:** If diapers, wipes, extra clothing, or formula is needed, please provide these items. As soon as you are informed, we encourage you to check and provide these items.

CHAPEL

Once a week classroom: Older 2's, 3's, and Pre-Kindergarten will attend St. chapel time, Wednesday at 9 am in classroom 6. Children participate in prayer, worship, and Bible lesson.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

God made us all individual and for that reason St. Stephen Academy has various approaches used for our students to be well adjusted, and successful.

- Examples of some age appropriate discipline approaches used are: at child's level, eye contact for undivided attention, hugs, respectful valued communication by listening to their feelings and talking with them, immediate, sincere, specific, effective praise for desired behavior, and clearly stating expectations and consequences of undesirable behavior (consequences used include time out, loss of privileges, redirecting the student, a note or a phone call to home).
- A child will be sent to the office, after all approaches have been exercised and willful disobedience, deliberate defiance, or deliberate destruction and aggression continues. A note will be sent home explaining the problem or a phone call will be made to the parent. Options from there will be an arranged parent-teacher-director conference, suspension, or withdrawal may be considered.
- Staff is trained in how to work with children. We guide or redirect behavior of children for their protection and growth. By doing so, each child will develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules. Among the techniques used are redirecting a child to alternate activity, highlighting acceptable behavior, and encouraging children to speak about their feelings with teachers and children in a positive manner.

DISENROLLMENT

Disenrollment of a student will occur under, but not limited to, the following conditions:

- Tuition payment has not been received by the 20th of the current month.
- Constant late pickup (12:00pm for the half day program and 6:30pm for full day program).
- Behavior causing a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of your student, other students or staff, and chronic or persistent misconduct may result in a one to three days suspension and/or disenrollment. You will receive the following notices prior to suspension or disenrollment: letter and or meeting with your teacher or administrator

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS/NISJTORS

All school visitors and volunteers must check in with the school clerk. Visitors Volunteers must sign in and wear a visitor's badge. When leaving, the visitor/volunteer must sign out. Parents may visit their child's class by first notifying administration at least one day in advance.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Classroom assignments are based on age and developmental progress. In addition, our will assess students the first two weeks of school and communicate with parents any necessary accommodations or recommendations. Your student may be moved based on the assessment and or observations. Before any changes are made, parents will be notified, and a meeting will be held with parent(s).

PROMOTING TO ST. STEPHEN ACADEMY KINDERGARTEN POLICY

St. Stephen Academy will make every effort to provide instruction that results in each student mastering the concepts of their grade level and showing proficiency to be promoted to St. Stephen Academy Kindergarten. Students who do not show mastery of concepts needed to be successful in the next grade level will be recommended to be retained.

Cut-off dates for incoming kindergarten students: Your child must be 5 on or before October 4. If your child's turns five after October 4; we will meet with parents and discuss options as well as assess your child for promotion.

The decision to promote or retain will be discussed by parents, teachers, and administration. However, administration has the ultimate authority to make such a decision, regarding retention. If retention is decided upon, a student retention agreement must be signed by the parents.

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

For your daily reference, each class has a parent board that posts information about curriculum, events and/or activities. Also located in the entrance hallway is a parent communication board, which will have posted information about the academy's events. A Newsletter is sent home to keep you apprised of important dates, events and activities.

COMMUNICATING CONCERNS

To discuss concerns regarding academics or classroom behavior (classroom, class work, assessments, homework, etc.), first contact your child's teacher. St. Stephen Academy strongly encourages direct communication/relationship with our staff. If a resolution with the teacher could not be made and you feel the issue requires further attention, please contact administration immediately. Concerns regarding serious or chronic behavior should be directed to both teacher and administration. Concerns regarding teaching, staff, philosophy, policies or financial matters should be directed to the administration.

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CONCILIATION AGREEMENT

As an outreach of the Baptist church's Christian ministry, we believe that the Bible (Matthew 5:25, I Corinthians 6:1-7) commands believers to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church. Therefore, any controversy or claim arising out of the relationship between the school and the home shall be resolved with the assistance of a Christian conciliation service through mediation, or as a last resort, through legally binding arbitration. Both parties agree that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim and waive their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision stated below:

A. The provisions of this Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California. Any arbitration proceeding related in any way to the provision of services under this Agreement shall be filed in the County of Los Angeles .

B. This Agreement represents the entire and integrated agreement between St. Stephen Academy and Students, Parents, Legal Guardian and Family and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements, either written or oral. This Agreement may be amended only by written instrument by St. Stephen Academy.

C. In the event of any dispute arising out of, or in connection with, this Agreement, or the Work to be performed hereunder, the prevailing Party shall be entitled to have and recover, in addition to damages, injunctive or other relief, its reasonable costs and expenses, including without limitation, its attorney's fees.

D. Should any dispute arise between St. Stephen Academy and Students, and Parents, Legal Guardians, Family of Students the matter shall exclusively be settled and determined by arbitration in accordance with the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association ("AAA"). The decision and award of the arbitrators shall be final, and binding and the award so rendered may be entered in any court having jurisdiction over the matter. The arbitration shall take place in Los Angeles County, California.

INSPECTION AUTHORITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Department of Social Services has the authority to visit and interview anyone in licensed facilities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARENT HANDBOOK: See next page.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

The Parent Handbook acts as a means of communication. This handbook outlines the policies and procedures of St. Stephen Academy. An understanding of and adherence to these policies and procedures will ensure orderly school operation. As a parent of a St. Stephen Academy student, please read the statements below, sign and date, tear out the acknowledgement sheet, and return it to your child's teacher.

1. I have received a St. Stephen Academy Parent Handbook.
2. I have read and understand the St. Stephen Academy Handbook.
3. I understand that there may be additions and/or revisions to the handbook.
4. I will adhere to the policies explained in the handbook.

Print Child's Name _____

Print Parent Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____