

St. Isidore School

Quakertown, PA



Parent Guide and F.A.Q.'s

2016-2017

"The information contained in this handbook is meant to be a general "quick-start" guide for parents. More complete information can be found in the St. Isidore School Handbook. Changes to this guide and the handbook may occur through the school year."

What should I know before school starts?

Bus Information

Students are bused by the public school district in which they live from Kindergarten through 8th grade. Students are eligible to be bused to St. Isidore School from Quakertown Community School District, Palisades School District, Pennridge School District, Southern Lehigh School District, Souderton Area School District, and Upper Perkiomen School District.

Most districts send a letter to parents with the bus schedule. Some districts post the schedule on their websites. QCSD requires families to register for busing through Infosnap which is found on the QCSD website (www.qcsd.org).

Routes for QCSD are listed on www.levybus.com. There is the possibility that your child may be hubbed. This is explained on the QCSD website.

If you have a kindergarten child, they will have the opportunity to ride a school bus at orientation.

Stationery Supply List

Stationery supply lists contain the items that you will need to purchase for your child for school. These are sent home with the report card and summer work at the end of the school year. They are also posted on the school website under the teacher's homework page.

You should put your child's name on everything. These items should be brought to school with your child on the first day of school.

Purchase Clear Contact Paper

Clear contact paper is primarily used to cover workbooks and homework books for grades kindergarten to 8. Some parents choose to cover folders as well for durability. Purchase this before school starts as supplies run low in local stores. It can be found at most retailers (Wal-Mart, Target, Staples) or online.

First Day of School

This is a full day of school, so you will need to pack your child a snack and lunch. Students are expected to wear their uniforms. Kindergarten students will be wearing gym uniforms only during the 2017-2018 school year.

Before and After School C.A.R.E.S.

C.A.R.E.S. stands for Children Are Receiving Extended Services. This program offers parents safe and affordable care for their children before and/or after school. The program is run by teachers and staff and qualified adults.

The morning program runs from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. in the pre-kindergarten room. Morning C.A.R.E.S. will be delayed if school is delayed for inclement weather.

Afternoon C.A.R.E.S. runs from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Children in the after school program are given time to complete homework, have a snack, and enjoy free play.

Contact the school office for pricing and the application form.

School Communication System

Upon registration, you are automatically signed up for our ALL CALL/TEXT system. It is through this means that you will receive phone calls/texts from the school regarding current events and any changes in the school day (i.e. a snow day or delay). If you would like to add/delete/change the device numbers that are included in the system, please contact the school secretary.

What are the important things to know once school begins?

Volunteer Clearances

Our school depends on volunteers!

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office for Child and Youth Protection and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have strict requirements for volunteers who work with children. All volunteers and chaperones who will be with children must have these documents on file in the St. Isidore Parish office. Having said that, many clearances can be obtained online and for free. The Archdiocese does require one in-person training session, but this is free and is offered many times at various sites throughout the year.

Please obtain these documents and either email or provide hard copy to the principal. Once she has cleared and updated the school records, they will be on file in the Parish office and will be available if you wish to volunteer for other Parish activities involving children such as CYO, PREP, etc. If a clearance expires, the school will contact you with a renewal reminder, but it is your responsibility to keep these documents current. You may want to keep a copy for your files. **ALL** of these documents **MUST** be on file in the Parish Office for any volunteer to be considered in compliance and able to continue volunteer services with the children of St. Isidore School.

For parents concerned about maintaining PAPA volunteer credits (4 per family), there are currently only **two** opportunities to fulfill that requirement that do not need volunteer clearances (such as working on or donating to the annual Auction and the Adult Bingo).

COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Archdiocesan policy requires all adult volunteers (unpaid) who may have any possible contact with or responsibility for children must obtain clearances, as required by Pennsylvania law.

Archdiocesan compliance guidelines state that clearances should be submitted **prior** to the commencement of volunteer service. There are certain circumstances under which provisional status might be approved. During the provisional period, individuals are not permitted to work alone with children.

Complete information on this can be found on the school website under the "Parents" tab. If you have additional questions, please contact the principal. **In order to attend field trips all clearance requirements must be in by April 1st.**

Back to School Night

Back to School Night is held at the beginning of the school year. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know other parents, learn about events, and meet your child's teacher(s). The evening begins in the school gym with a prayer and brief presentations by the school principal and PAPA board members. After this meeting, you will be dismissed to your child(ren)'s classroom for a presentation by the teacher. Typically three sessions are held so families with multiple children can visit more than one room. This meeting is for parents only and is not a time for conferences with teachers.

Grading System

In grades Kindergarten through 3, students receive the following grades: O (outstanding), VG (very good), G (good), S (satisfactory), I (improvement needed), U (unsatisfactory). In grades 4 through 8, students receive a numeric grade. Passing grade is 70 and above.

Parents of children in grades 1 to 8 are able to monitor their child's grades through the My Students Progress website <http://mystudentsprogress.com/>.

Sick Child Procedures

If your child is sick and needs to stay home, please call the school office that morning before 10:00am. You may leave a message if it's before school opens. When they return, they will need to bring in a written note signed by you stating why they were absent. Children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Children with more than 3 days sick may be required to provide a Doctor's note.

If a child becomes sick at school, the school nurse or school secretary will call you.

Thursday Communication Envelope

The Thursday Envelope is a one-way communication from the school to you with information that can not be sent home electronically. You will be notified via the weekly newsletter sent through email if there are hard copies of things coming home. Be sure to check it and look through it thoroughly. You will receive a weekly email every Thursday when it's ready to view for that week.

Pictures

Students will have their school picture taken regardless if they will purchase them. Pictures are taken in the fall and the spring. For the pictures taken in the beginning of the year, students are required to wear their regular school uniforms. In the spring, students are allowed to wear dress down clothes. There is a picture make-up day for the fall pictures only.

Sacramental Preparation

Penance and First Holy Communion are prepared for throughout second grade. The students receive First Penance in late winter. First Holy Communion is received in the spring. Confirmation requires a two year preparation. At the end of fifth grade, students receive information regarding volunteer hours. At the beginning of sixth grade, students begin religious preparation for the sacrament in school. Confirmation at St. Isidore parish requires a commitment to service (volunteer hours), proof of knowledge of the sacrament and our faith, and the completion of a portfolio. The sacrament is received in the fall of seventh grade.

Is there a certain traffic flow I should follow?

(See attachment A at the back of this guide for a visual map of the school and parking lot)

Car Rider Drop Off Procedures

If you are dropping off your child in the morning use the car rider line, which is open between 8:00am - 8:25am. The line forms in the parking lot, enter from 4th street. This is a one-way lane in front of the school, parallel to Broad Street. Pull up to the school before you let them out. A teacher will be helping smaller children out of their cars and will make sure your child gets in safely. Please be considerate and keep the line moving. For safety purposes, we ask you to not pass any cars that are discharging their children. If you arrive after 8:25am, your child will need to be buzzed in at the School Main Entrance and sign in late at the office.

Car Rider Pick Up Procedures

If you wish to pick up your child after school instead of them taking the bus, you will need to write a note to their teacher letting them know your child will be a car rider (call the office if it's an emergency). The car rider students will exit the School escorted by a teacher. Car riders are dismissed around 3:20pm, if you arrive before this time please form a line along the fence to the left of the parking lot. Please do not block the entrances and exits, buses will be entering and exiting through the entrances at 4th street. As with drop off procedures please be considerate and keep the line moving. Also, for safety purposes, we ask you to not pass any cars that are picking up their children.

Visitor Parking and Traffic Flow

The students use the parking lot (school yard) for outdoor recess, so during recess hours there are cones blocking the parking lot at the 4th street entrance/exit. This is typically from 10:30am - 11:00am. And then from 12:30-1:20pm. To enter the parking lot during this time, you should use the Broad Street entrance and park in a visitors spot, which are designated. If you plan to be at the school during these hours remember to avoid parking in the school yard, it could be difficult to exit at the time when children are out for recess and your car may get hit or scratched.

What about the school day?

School Hours

School opens at 8:00am for the students. The school day for K-8 is from 8:25am to 3:10pm. Preschool and PreK begin at 8:25am and end at 3:00pm. If you need to pick up your child during the school day, please send a note to their homeroom teacher (call the office if it is an emergency). When it's time to pick them up, go to the office to sign them out, and the office will call for them.

School Year Breakdown

The school year is broken down into three trimesters. Progress reports are sent home in your child's folder in the middle of each trimester. You will need to sign and return them the next day. Report cards are also sent home in your child's folder. They also will need to be signed and returned the next day (except for the last one which you receive on the last day of school).

Specials

All grades (K-8) have each of the following specials once a week: Art, Computer, Gym, Library, Music, and Spanish.

Honors Math is available for grades 4 - 8. Your child's eligibility for Honors Math is based on multiple factors including Terra Nova Math Score, Terra Nova Reading Score and the teacher's recommendation based on their classroom work. A letter will be sent home in late August if your child qualifies for Honors Math.

Safety

Our school has many safety measures in place. Throughout the year, the school will hold unannounced fire drills, emergency shelter in place drills, and stranger alert drills. Buses also hold emergency drills.

When entering the school you will need to use the intercom system to speak to someone in the school office. They will ask you to state your name and reason for entrance. You will then be 'buzzed-in' which will momentarily unlock the rightmost door. Do not hold the door open for anyone or allow a person to enter as you exit.

Religion Awards

Every child from kindergarten to grade 8 is encouraged to complete the requirements for the religion award. There are grade-specific activities that must be completed throughout the year to achieve this award. Teachers will send home the information and requirements.

What about snack and lunch time?

Snacks

Snacks are eaten in the classroom around mid-morning for everyone. You can pack them in your child's lunchbox along with their lunch or if they purchase lunch (K-8), separately. The exception to this is Kindergarten. The Kindergarten teachers will send home a sign-up list for snacks and parents will be designated days to bring snack for the entire class.

Lunch

Lunch is eaten in the Gymnasium for K-8 students. Preschool and Prekindergarten students dine in their classrooms and then have their naps. There is a separate peanut-free table for students with allergies. Parents are able to sign up for lunch monitor if they wish; this is also an opportunity to earn volunteer credits. You will have an opportunity to order hot lunch (k-8) or you can pack a lunch for your child. There are no refrigerators to store lunches, so please pack a cold pack in your children's lunch.

Hot Lunch is available usually the third week of school and is run completely by volunteers. Lunch menus are usually emailed two weeks prior to the beginning of the month. You need to pick your hot lunch days and make a payment for that month. Hot lunch is not available for daily purchases, with the exception of snack items such as chips, ice cream, etc. Because this is a volunteer program food is purchased monthly based on orders. If you wish to volunteer to help with the hot lunch program please contact the office. This is also another way to earn volunteer credits. Proceeds from the Hot Lunch Program help offset the costs of class field trips in the spring.

Milk and juice are available for purchase by trimester. You should receive a milk/juice form the first week of school.

Here is the lunch and recess schedule by grade:

K-4 recess 12:25 – 12:50pm

lunch 12:50 – 1:15pm

5-8 lunch 12:25 – 12:50pm

recess 12:50 – 1:15pm

What are they supposed to wear again?

Uniforms (see School Handbook)

Uniforms can be purchased from Flynn & O'Hara and Land's End. Gift Cards from the Scrip Program can be purchased and used for Land's End.

Uniform Exchange

If you have uniforms you no longer need that are still in good shape, you can donate them to the uniform exchange. At any time you can access the used uniforms closet by contacting the school secretary. Used uniform pieces are sold at a bargain price, so check there before you hit the store or website! You don't have to drop off uniforms to be eligible.

Dress Down Days (DDD)

Dress Down Days are held once a month as a community service project so most require students to bring in a donation of \$1 to dress down. The money will go towards a designated fundraiser. Nonperishable food is collected for the St. Isidore Food Pantry some months instead of monetary donations. Dress down days are optional.

Be careful, dress down doesn't mean the students can wear whatever they want; they still have to follow the dress code. Shorts' length needs to be at or below the fingertips. No leggings, jeggings, or knit pants without a top that extends beyond the upper thigh (shorts length). Also, no inappropriate words or sayings can be on t-shirts, no tank tops, bare midriffs, pajamas, spaghetti straps, or sandals of any kind. Hats are not allowed.

Are additional Student Services Offered?

Bucks County Intermediate Unit

The intermediate unit provides speech, counseling, and remedial services. Teachers will discuss the need for these services with parents and provide them with the necessary paperwork.

Several teachers offer tutoring outside of regular school hours. Your child's teacher can recommend teachers for your child's needs. Teachers may be contacted via their school email.

Testing

Terra Nova Tests

Terra Nova tests are standardized achievement tests. These are given in the spring to grades 3-7. These tests do not affect your child's grades. They are used to track progress and adjust instruction. Results of these tests are sent home for parental review when they become available.

Final exams

Students in grades one to eight are given final exams in the spring. These results are part of your child's grade for the third trimester. Teachers will provide review materials to the students.

Are instrumental music classes offered?

Band

In 4th grade, students will get a band demonstration during the school day. Band is available for students in grades 4-8 (alto sax, baritone horn, French horn, clarinet, flute, bells, snare drum, trombone, trumpet). Lessons occur during the school day. There are lesson and instrument rental/purchase fees. Winter and spring concerts will be performed during the school year.

Orchestral String Instruments

In 3rd grade, students will get a string demonstration during the school day. Students in the 3rd grade also learn recorders as part of their music instruction. There is no cost associated with the recorder lessons. Violin lessons are available for students in grades 3-8. Lessons occur during the school day. There are lesson and instrument rental/purchase fees. Winter and spring concerts will be performed during the school year.

Choir

This group is taught by our music teacher and is offered to students in K-8. Practices are usually once a week in the evenings at St. Isidore Church. The students typically sing at a mass once a month. More information will be sent home during the school year.

Traditional Events at School

We Live Our Faith

As a Catholic school, we embrace and practice our faith every day. We begin and end our day in communal prayer and pray before lunch together. Additionally:

First Friday Masses: We celebrate Mass at 9:00 a.m. in the gym on the first Friday of each month that we are in school. Classes take turns organizing the Mass and acting as greeters, readers, and gift bearers. Any student may participate in the choir for any Mass. Parents are invited to join us.

Holy Days of Obligation: We attend school on Holy Days of Obligation. These Masses are held in the gym at 9:00 a.m. Parents and family members are invited to attend.

Rosary: Children have the opportunity to recite the Rosary at lunch most days. As a school, we have a community Rosary in October, the month of the Rosary. Parents are invited to participate in these prayers.

Lenten Adoration: Students have the opportunity to attend adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with their class during Lent.

Stations of the Cross: During Lent, students in grades three through eight attend Stations of the Cross and Benediction in the school gym in the afternoon. Day and time are in the weekly newsletter. Parents are welcome to join us.

Prayer Services: Prior to most school breaks, we have a prayer service in the gym. These are announced through the weekly newsletter. (ie: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Last day of School).

Dances

Dances are held four times a year. Dances are sponsored by a different grade each time beginning with the eighth grade, then seventh, then sixth. For the first three dances, only those students in grades six to eight may attend. The last dance of the year is sponsored by the fifth grade and this is their first dance.

Blessing of the Animals

After the October First Friday Mass, we celebrate St. Francis and hold a blessing of the animals. You are invited to bring your pets to be blessed that day. We have had hundreds of dogs and cats, but also a few bunnies, goats, iguanas, fish, and even a pony!

Halloween

A tradition at St. Isidore School is the Halloween Parade. All classes participate in this fun walk through the school and around the block. Great photo op!

Canned Food Contest

Beginning on November 1st and continuing until the Thanksgiving Feast, classes compete to collect food for the food pantry. The class who collects the most items (average number per student) is awarded the coveted "Golden Can" award for the year.

Thanksgiving Feast

In November, students enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal at lunch. This is a great opportunity for parents to volunteer preparing and serving the meal. Two feasts are scheduled: one for the pre-school through kindergarten and one for grades one to eight.

Christmas Fun

On St. Nicholas Day, students put their shoes outside their classrooms for treats from him. Santa's Secret Shop is held for a week in December. All students are able to shop for gifts for family and friends. Many volunteers are needed to help students shop and to wrap gifts.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated at the end of January/beginning of February. Each day is marked by a special activity, presentation, or surprise. Other events vary, but have included spaghetti dinners, community breakfast and open house, and school-wide parent/child competitions. One hallmark of this week is a school-wide service project.

Grandparents are our Hero's

The Grandparents' Luncheon is held this week for students in grades one to three.

May Procession

The May Procession is held during the First Friday Mass in May. 8th grade carries through a procession and also supports the crowning Mary. First Communicants wear their Communion attire.

Field Day

Field Day is held near the end of the year. Students participate in a fun, non-competitive atmosphere that builds camaraderie and teaches sportsmanship.

Graduation

Ceremonies are held for kindergarten and eighth grade students. The kindergarten graduation is held in the gym. Eighth grade graduation is held in the church and includes a Mass and graduation ceremony. Family and friends are invited to share these milestones with the students.

Academic Events

Students can participate in a variety of academic events. The Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee is held for grades six to eight in the spring. Students in grades seven and eight can participate in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition as well as other STEM challenges. Students in fourth grade compete in the Sertoma Club essay contest. Teachers present additional opportunities for students to use their math, writing and science skills in other contests as well.

Additional Events

A variety of other events are held during the year. These have included Fiesta Day, where the entire school celebrates a Spanish-speaking country with food, informational presentations, and dance; Math, Science, and Reading Nights; and Kid Bingo. These events depend on volunteers and are a great way to earn volunteer credits.

What else do I need to know?

Science Explorers

This is an after school science club offered once a week for five weeks. There are four sessions throughout the year and information is sent home in the weekly communication envelopes. There are lots of interesting and fun themes great for those students with a curiosity for the sciences. This is available for students in grades 1-5. There is a cost associated with this group.

Student Council

Leadership positions are open to students in grades 6-8. Classroom representatives are composed of students in grades 4-8.

Altar Servers

All parish students currently enrolled in fifth grade through high school (12th grade) who have received their sacraments through Holy Communion are encouraged to serve our parish through the Altar Server program. Two servers are needed for each of our four weekend Masses, and Holyday and Vigil evening Masses. Training for new servers is held at the church in the spring, usually one or two evenings and Saturdays over a 6 - 8 week span. Servers who are finishing fourth grade and up who are interested in becoming altar servers must complete five trainings/practices before being added to the schedule.

Intro Swim Lessons

Swim lessons are offered to students in grade 1 in the spring for a minimal cost. These lessons are given during the school day at the local YMCA. More information will be sent home in the spring.

Field Trips

During the spring each grade has a field trip during the school day. Permission slips are sent home with details and associated costs. Volunteers are needed to help chaperone, but they must have completed all of the required clearances.

Snow Days

In the event of school closings or delays, due to inclement weather, parents should first check, the QCSD website. Weather-related closings are determined by Quakertown Community School District (QCSD). If QCSD is closed so is St. Isidore School. Some days marked 'No School' on the school calendar may also be marked 'Snow Make-Up Day'. You will be notified during the school year if they will be used or not.

What is PAPA?

Parents As Partners Association (PAPA)

PAPA is the **P**arents **a**s **P**artners **A**ssociation, which serves as the Parent Teacher Organization for St. Isidore School. The PAPA board consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Elections (volunteers) are held to determine board members. Each month the Board holds an executive session followed by an open session. Usually from 7-8pm on the same day of each month (ie: first Monday of the month).

The PAPA board works with the parents to organize social events and fundraisers throughout the school year. Parents who volunteer for these events receive volunteer units; after accumulating four volunteer units, the family is eligible for reduced tuition for the next school year (also requires that parish donations are satisfied).

Each year, PAPA's goal is to raise \$40,000 to repay the parish for operating expenses. Any amount raised above the \$40,000 can be spent toward class and school improvements, such as iPads, gym equipment, etc.

Are any sports/activities offered?

CYO (Catholic Youth Organization)

CYO teams are organized at the parish level. Participants must be registered families of St Isidore Parish attending P.R.E.P. and/or attending St. Isidore School, and have received their sacraments. The sports offered in the Fall: Cross Country grades 2-8 and Girls Volleyball grades 5-8, in the Winter: Basketball grades 4-8, and in the Spring: Track and Field grades 4-8 and Coed HS Volleyball grades 9-12. Information will be provided when registration is open for each sport. Registration is done on- line at <http://www.saintisidorecyo.com/page/page/4248883.htm>. There are fees charged to sign up and vary based on the sport.

There is also an option for CYO Football for grades 5-8 through St. Agnes Sacred Heart's CYO signups can be found at <http://olsh-hilltown.com/jointcyo/football.html> .

Another option is Ice Hockey through Lansdale Catholic's hockey club. The Middle School team is for players in 5th through 8th grade and is geared toward those with some hockey experience. The Developmental Team program is designed for the beginning player or those with some experience who are not yet ready for a full team commitment. It is available for girls and boys in 4th through 8th grade. More information can be found at www.lcicehockey.com.

Can you tell me about the fundraisers?

SCRIP

The Scrip program allows parents, alumni or friends of St. Isidore's to purchase gift cards at face value through the [Shop With Scrip](#) website. A percentage of your purchase is rebated to your account. This amount (minus an annual processing fee used to cover postage) is used to offset tuition costs for the **next** school year. The [MyScripWallet](#) website provides access to e-cards from your smart phone or other mobile device. The cards may be physical and/or e-cards. Cards may be a refillable option depending on the retailers. There may be a Scrip Now option that delivers an e-card to your email in minutes. A presto pay option exists that lets you directly debit your checking account for purchases for a small fee. When used regularly, scrip can help you offset tuition expenses by hundreds or even thousands of dollars! The Scrip Coordinator can be contacted at isidorescrip@comcast.net for more information.

Box Tops for Education

Our school receives 10¢ for each box top submitted. You may send them to school in a plastic baggie with your child's name and homeroom on it. Contests are sometimes run where homerooms will get prizes for the most box tops submitted. Visit www.boxtops4education.com to learn more about the program and how you can earn additional box tops for our school.

PAPA Fundraisers

PAPA holds many fundraisers throughout the year. The biggest fundraisers in the past have included a Coach Bingo held in the fall and an Auction held in the spring as well as various other events. These fundraisers help us to reach our \$40K commitment back to the church.

My Coke Rewards

Visit <https://donate.mycokerewards.com>, find St. Isidore's school and sign in or create an account. As you collect My Coke Rewards, just enter the codes and they will be applied to St. Isidore's school.

CapriSun Juice Pouch

These pouches can just be sent in with your child. Each classroom has a collection area.

GIANT A+ School Rewards

If you register your GIANT card on-line, our school can earn cash through this program. You can sign up for this program on their website: <http://giantfoodstores.com/savings-and-rewards/rewards-program/aplus/>. You will need your Giant Bonus Card number. Last year the school received over \$3500.00 from this program! This in no way affects your accumulation of gas points or the scrip rebate you receive. It is a win, win, win!

Target

Target tracks purchases made by REDCard holders and sends a donation to the school. To sign up, visit the website: <http://www.target.com/redcard/benefits-target-rewards>. Scroll down to "Take Charge of Education" and follow the links from there.

Attachment A: School Map and Parking Lot

