

SPARK Schools Need-to-Know Guide 2021
Primary Schools - Grade R - 7
Updated 12 January 2021

Read these notices carefully so that your family is prepared for the 2021 school year!

COVID-19

The following information is subject to change based on regulations regarding the National State of Disaster and any announcements regarding lockdown levels.

To ensure our school meets all health and safety measures as stipulated by the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Health, we will continue with alternating day attendance in cohorts, as introduced in 2020. Cohorts will be communicated to all families via email. We will also continue to offer both in-person and remote learning opportunities until such time that the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Health deem it safe for schools to operate in person at full capacity.

Our schools will enforce required health and safety measures for scholars and staff, including the mandatory wearing of cloth masks, social distancing, sanitisation, and symptom and temperature screening.

Our COVID-19 School Handbook for SPARK Parents is updated regularly on our website. It provides all information regarding procedures that SPARK Schools has implemented in line with the COVID-19 regulations set out by the Department of Health and the Department of Basic Education.

First Day of School

The first day of school for scholars in cohort A attending in-person is **Wednesday, 20 January 2021**. Sparks Fly, our daily morning assembly, will begin promptly at 7:45 am. The first day of school for scholars in cohort B attending in-person is **Thursday, 21 January 2021**. All scholars may begin remotely on Wednesday, 20 January, including those attending in-person who are part of cohort B.

To minimise scholars' potential exposure to COVID-19, parents will not be able to remain on-site during the first day of school. However, we will confirm later dates when parents will be able to view Sparks Fly in small groups, observing all health and safety protocols.

Placard Pickup

To ensure our scholars' safety, please note that parents must pick up their child's placard, which is used during daily dismissal before the school year begins. **Placards for returning and newly enrolled students will be available for pick-up 13-15, and 18-19 January 2021 from 9 am to 4 pm.**

When you pick up your child's placard, please abide by our COVID-19 drive through procedure and ensure that you have updated your contact information with a member of our staff. **Please note the dates and times for placard pick up, as this is mandatory.**

Please refer to the Scholar and Family Handbook for information on the use of placards during daily dismissal.

“Back to School” Events

We are thrilled to be able to invite all SPARK parents for a series of “Back to School” events to meet our spectacular SPARK educators. Depending on the National State of Disaster and lockdown regulations, these events may be held virtually. Your child’s school leaders will be in touch by e-mail to announce the dates of these events at your child’s school.

School Hours

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

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

Minimum Days are indicated on the instructional calendar with a yellow circle around the date.

Arrival Procedures

Since SPARK Schools are located within communities, we strictly enforce arrival procedures to ensure our children and staff’s safety and 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 7:00-7:40 am. It is strictly prohibited for scholars to arrive unaccompanied or to enter the school grounds before 7:00am. Parents of scholars who arrive unsupervised before 7:00am repeatedly will be asked to meet with school leadership. This behaviour may be characterised as neglect and dealt with according to our Child Protection policy.

Please note that, as and when regulations regarding COVID-19 are updated, we will communicate a return to our earlier school opening time. However, to ensure social distancing and the safe supervision of scholars during COVID-19, we can only open our gates at 7:00am daily.

Aftercare, Holiday Care, and Extracurricular Activities

Aftercare is available from dismissal until 5:30 pm five days a week (Monday-Friday) during the school terms will cost R8640 per year, which is payable over 12 months at R720 per month. **While alternating day cohort attendance is in place, aftercare will be billed at 50% of this rate.**

All families that wish to enrol in aftercare for 2021 should reach out to the Office Manager at your child’s school to sign-up or email registrar@sparkschools.co.za to activate aftercare.

Please note that extramural activities will not be offered in our schools until further notice.

Holiday care is not provided at our schools during term break. Please note term break dates on the instructional calendar to ensure that you have arranged care for your child in advance.

Stationery

The annual fee for stationery for 2021 is **R700**. This fee covers all stationery required at school, and no additional stationery should be purchased or sent with scholars.

Please ensure that your child has sufficient stationery at home to complete daily homework.

Uniform

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.

The summer uniform will include a navy blue golf shirt with school badge, a navy blue peak cap or floppy hat with school badge, khaki shorts or skort, white socks, and white takkies. Scholars should carry a backpack that does NOT have wheels but has sufficient space for a homework folder, water bottle, and lunch box.

Please speak to your child's school to locate our uniform supplier most convenient to your location.

Healthy Food Policy

We believe that healthy bodies fuel healthy minds. Therefore, we ask that snacks and lunch packed for scholars include healthy options, like sandwiches on brown bread, vegetables, rice, pasta, eggs, fruit, crackers, yoghurt, and cheese. Students 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.

Social Media and Website

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](https://twitter.com/SPARKSchools))!

All school locations and contact information are posted on www.sparkschools.co.za.
