



Family and Scholar Handbook



Our Mission

Established in 1998, the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School, prepares culturally diverse pre-school and elementary school scholars in the District of Columbia to be leaders, scholars and responsible citizens who are committed to social justice. We teach children to think, speak, read, write and learn in two languages: English and French or English and Spanish. With a dual focus on academic excellence and community service, the Stokes School accomplishes its mission by creating an environment of achievement, respect and non-violence.

OUR THREE SCHOOL RULES:

I will take care of myself.

I will take care of others.

I will take care of my community.

One of the school's greatest strengths is our family's engagement in the education of their children. We hope this handbook will serve as a guide for families as partners in our learning community.



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ABOUT ELSIE WHITLOW STOKES COMMUNITY FREEDOM PCS

Our History

The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School was founded in 1998 and named for Elsie Whitlow Stokes, an elementary school teacher in Arkansas, whose instructional practice was based on three core beliefs:

- Every scholar can achieve academically and become a responsible citizen
- Every scholar must receive a solid foundation in reading, mathematics, social studies, science and the arts
- Community service activities prepare scholars to become caring neighbors and good citizens.

Using her three principles, the 36-year teaching veteran helped to lay the foundation for the successful educational development of over 1000 scholars. Stokes School, founded by Mrs. Stokes' daughter, Linda Moore, is a tribute to her life and legacy as an educator.

Our Goals

- Help scholars achieve the highest levels of academic excellence.
- Teach scholars how to speak, read, write, think and learn in two languages: 1) English and French or 2) English and Spanish.
- Actively involve scholars in community service learning while preparing them for responsible citizenship in a multicultural society.
- Increase scholars' knowledge of and respect for their own and other cultures.

We achieve these goals not simply by teaching in the classroom, but also by creating an environment of acceptance, respect and nonviolence among scholars and all members of our school community.

Our Parents

Stokes School must communicate with parents concerning:

- Their scholar's eligibility for special programs
- Their scholar's educational progress
- Parents' opportunities for involvement
- Parents' right to know the professional qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals serving their scholar
- The progress and status of their scholar's school (annual school report card)
- Parents/guardians' right to inspect and review their children's education records maintained by the school
- Parents/guardians' right to request corrections to records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading

Generally, Stokes School must have prior written permission from the parent/guardian in order to release any "personally identifiable" information from a scholar's education record to a third party. (Go to www.ewstokes.org for full FERPA policy)

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

Stokes School is a D.C. public charter school, and as such accepts applications from all Pre-K and elementary age scholars living in the District of Columbia. For a complete explanation of admissions and enrollment processes, please consult the school's website at www.ewstokes.org.

Stokes School participates in the My School DC common application and common lottery process. Please refer to www.myschooldc.org for detailed information. **Parents of returning scholars must complete an *Intent to Enroll* form each year directly with Stokes School.** Open houses and tours are held for prospective parents and scholars throughout the year.

Parents/guardians are **required** to provide the following information upon registration:

- Proof of residency required by DC government
- Transfer papers, report cards, and school records
- Physician-signed dental and health certificates
- Proof of immunization

*Registration is **NOT** complete (and, therefore, admission is **not** guaranteed) until all items have been submitted. Due dates will be announced on the Stokes School website and parents' newsletters.*

Approximate Schedule of Events

Actual dates and explanations can be found on our website at www.ewstokes.org.

- October: application for next year is available
- February: returning scholars submit their *Intent to Enroll* forms
- April: lottery takes place
- June: registration paperwork due by last day of school



SCHOOL SCHEDULE

In 2015-16, the school year will begin August 24, 2015 (*Pre-K will begin on Tuesday, August 25, 2015*) and will end on June 16, 2016. Make-up days may be added if school is closed due to weather or other situations beyond our control. (See school calendar at www.ewstokes.org for more details.)

Our scholars in grades 1 through 5 start each day in morning line-up, where we share announcements, celebrate birthdays, recite our school rules and sing our school song. Therefore, we ask that your 1st-5th grade scholar arrive by 8:05 am to participate in this important morning tradition.

School Schedule by Grade

Grade	Arrival	Dismissal
Pre-K	9:00 am	3:00 pm
Kindergarten	8:05 am (Class)	3:30 pm
Grades 1-5	8:05 am (Line up)	3:30 pm

Attendance and Truancy

Parents/guardians are required to notify the school on all days when scholars will be absent. Notification can be made by email, written note, or by calling the school at 202-265-7237 by 8:00am. Emails should be sent to attendance@ewstokes.org. Some absences will be excused if you communicate with the school. These include:

- Illness of the scholar (A doctor’s notice is required if a scholar is absent for three consecutive days.);
- An emergency that requires the presence of the scholar at home;
- Death in the immediate family;
- Observance of religious holidays; and
- Other absences approved by the Director of Student Services or Director of Teaching and Learning. Requests must be received for approval 2-weeks prior to the requested date.

If you do not notify the school about your scholar’s absence or if the absence is for a reason not considered valid, the absence will be considered “unexcused”. Each time a scholar has one (1) unexcused absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent or guardian by 4:00pm of the same day. The law requires that the school contact DC Child and Family Services Agency after the accrual of ten (10) unexcused absences. After twenty (20) consecutive days of unexcused absences, the scholar will be removed from the school roster and parents/guardians will be required to complete the re-enrollment process. After twenty five (25) unexcused absences within one school year, school officials will contact truancy court.

Not only can unexcused absences result in failing grades but there is also growing evidence of the long-lasting effects of childhood truancy on future success. Additionally, chronic truancy can result in interventions by DC Child and Family Services. Chronic truancy is defined as a school-aged child, (i.e. between ages 5 -18) who accrues 10 unexcused absences within a single school year.

Arrival and Tardiness

For 1st –5th grade scholars, school begins with morning line-up at 8:05am (Kindergarten begins at 8:05 in the classroom). A scholar who arrives in their class after 8:15am is considered tardy. Scholars must sign in at receptionist's desk and pick up a tardy pass to take to class. Habitual tardiness disrupts class learning, puts your scholar at an educational disadvantage, can be considered educational neglect, and can be referred to DC Child and Family Services.

Dismissal and Early Dismissal

Please note the dismissal times of each grade and please be on time to pick up your scholar. Scholars who are not picked up within 15 minutes of their dismissal time will be automatically enrolled in the Aftercare Program and parents will be charged the daily aftercare rate.

Whenever it is necessary for a scholar leave during school hours, parents/guardians MUST notify his/her teacher in writing. When picking up a scholar before his/her regular dismissal time, the parent/guardian must report to the receptionist's desk to sign the scholar out and the receptionist will notify the classroom teacher. Appointments away from school should only be scheduled during the school day when absolutely necessary.

Scholars will only be released from school to an adult who is authorized by the parent/ guardian.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Parking on Oakview Terrace is extremely limited. Please obey traffic patterns, abide by all road signs, use common sense and respect our neighbors. This means do not park in front of any driveways (even "just for a minute"), in front of the fire hydrant or in a way that blocks traffic. This also means to use sidewalks—not our neighbors' yards—and no littering. Any car illegally parked on school grounds is subject to be towed at owner's expense.

Oakview Terrace and Perry Street (to be used by Pre-K thru 1st grade)

During morning drop-off, parents may drop off their children at the bottom of Oakview Terrace, and scholars will be accompanied by an older scholar who has been trained as a Safety Patrol Officer. Alternatively, parents are encouraged to park on nearby streets and walk their scholar(s) up Oakview Terrace themselves, and to do the same for pick-up.

Otis Street (To be used by 2nd thru 5th grades and their younger siblings)

The gate on Otis Street is opened from 7:30-8:30am for drop-off and 3:00-4:00pm for dismissal. For safety reasons we ask that parents drop their scholar off on the school side so that they don't have to cross the street.

Before Care

Starting at 7:30am, scholars may be dropped off at school for our before care program. Scholars are offered breakfast and a variety of activities promoting a healthy and happy start to their day. There is no cost to parents/guardians for Before Care.

Aftercare/After School Program

Our *All About Kids and Families* after care program begins at **3:00** and ends at **6:00pm**. Scholars are served supper and participate in academic support, enrichment and recreational opportunities.

We also offer extracurricular after school activities to all of our scholars. These include music lessons (such as steel drums, violin, choir and more), and clubs (such as robotics or martial arts). Please stop by the front desk for this year's activity list.

Fees for the after school program and extracurricular activities are charged on a sliding scale, depending on family income, and are due bi-weekly. Clarence Bell-Alston directs our *All About Kids and Families* after school program. He can be contacted at stokesaakf@hotmail.com.



Emergency Procedures

The school must have a current list of phone numbers and emergency information for parents/guardians and scholars. Please notify the school's front office when you have a change of address or telephone number. The office telephone number is 202-265-7237 ext. 101. Our emergency plan is updated annually.

If Stokes School is closed/delayed due to inclement weather, the school will contact parents using Send Word Now via phone call, text message, or email. If Stokes School has a 2-hour delayed opening the doors will not open until 10:05. All scholars are expected to be in class by 10:15. **IF THERE IS A DELAYED OPENING BEFORE CARE WILL NOT BE PROVIDED.**

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Stokes School complies with the DC Healthy School Act. As a result, we have healthy and nutritious school meals prepared on-site, a flourishing school garden, health education classes, and daily PE classes for scholars.

Food Services

Food fuels the brain and affects behavior and academics. Our school-wide wellness initiative was implemented to support developing healthy habits that last a lifetime. Our food service and policies reflect our emphasis on leading healthy lifestyles. Stokes School serves breakfast, lunch and supper (for scholars who participate in the after school program).

Scholars may bring their own lunches or eat meals created daily by our school food service staff. Your scholar can eat the school lunch daily or when you choose. Special meal options are available for scholars with dietary restrictions. Fresh fruit and vegetables are available throughout the day for scholar consumption. No pork or nut products are used in our school lunch. The menu is published monthly on the school website, posted in classrooms and in common areas around the building. If you choose to send lunch with your scholar, please note that **due to severe allergies of some of our scholars, Stokes School has a strict NO NUTS policy.** We encourage parents and guardians to join us for lunch, as scholars learn manners and conversation skills.

Refrigeration is not available for scholars who bring lunch from home; therefore, please keep in mind that the lunch should be packed so that it remains fresh and safe to eat. Microwaves are also not available for student use. To the best of our ability, the school also maintains a “no sharing lunch” policy.

Fees for School Meals

Parents/guardians are asked to complete a meal application before the first day of school in order to determine the cost of school lunch. Breakfast and supper are available at no cost to families. The fee scale ranges from free to full payment, depending on household income. Parents and guardians are billed for lunch on a monthly basis and are expected to pay all bills that are incurred.

Snacks

All classes have a designated snack time. Please check with your scholar’s teacher to determine how and when snacks are managed in the classroom.

We ask that you send snacks that are healthy and sustaining such as fruit, carrot or celery sticks, nut-less granola bars, hummus, cheese, crackers, veggie chips, etc.

Stokes school prohibits snacks such as donuts, cookies, potato chips, chocolate or any type of candy or sodas. If any of these prohibited items are sent to school, scholars will be asked to return those items to their backpacks, as they will not be allowed to eat them in school. Healthy snacks are offered to all scholars free of charge.

But my kid LOVES peanut butter!! What's the big deal about nuts?

This is a good question, and one that deserves an answer. The issue is the severity of the reaction compared to other allergies. If you have an allergy to cats, dogs or ragweed, you know that you'll sneeze and get watery eyes. An allergy pill and 20 minutes later, your symptoms are gone. Food allergies are considerably more serious. Allergies to dairy, wheat, eggs and most other foods usually result in symptoms that range from a little rash to painful skin cracking eczema to belly aches or vomiting, and sometimes even moodiness. However, none of these are life-threatening.

The problem with a nut allergy (peanuts and all tree nuts) is that they CAN BE life-threatening (like bee stings for some people). Reactions to nut allergies range from rashes to anaphylactic shock; a whole-body allergic reaction that comes on suddenly, progresses rapidly and could kill in a matter of minutes.

Some people who are extra-sensitive to nut allergies may only need to come into indirect contact with the nut in order to trigger a reaction. This might be dust particles or from another scholar who didn't wash her hands well enough at lunch (or maybe just kissed her friend on the cheek). So while it's definitely inconvenient for some parents, it's a necessity to keep ALL of our scholars safe.

Birthday Celebrations

We want all children to feel special on their birthdays and we celebrate throughout the day of his/her birthday. We start the day by singing happy birthday in all three languages during morning line-up.

In accordance with our wellness policy and to limit class disruption, once each month classes may hold a celebration for all scholars who have birthdays during that month.

- **Parents must make arrangements with classroom teachers for birthday celebrations at least one week in advance.**
- Parents are encouraged to bring healthy snacks, natural fruit juices or water, and limit sweets to **1 small muffin** per scholar.
- Please no chips, candy, soda or sugared drinks, goody bags or piñatas.
- Parents may also provide an activity, like games or reading a story. Talk to your teachers for ideas and approval.

To honor your scholar's birthday, consider donating a book to the library. Your scholar's name can be listed on the donation plaque inside the book.

Health Issues

A medical record is kept on your scholar and updated yearly. The records are confidential and kept in a secured file cabinet. Stokes School complies with D.C. laws that require physical, dental and immunizations records to be updated yearly. You are required to have your physician complete the forms provided and return them to the school by the first day of school. Documentation of immunizations must be presented upon entry to school.

Parents/guardians should make every attempt to give medication to scholars before or after school. The school is unable to dispense any medication, including over the counter medications, to scholars without an authorization for administration of medication form completed and signed by a doctor. Disciplinary action will be taken in the event that a scholar brings controlled substances to school. If your scholar needs medication during school hours, please see the school nurse for the proper paperwork and procedures. This includes children who have received permission from their physician to carry an asthma inhaler.

Head lice and ringworm are common problems among school-age children. If you find that your scholar has either of these, please notify the school so that preventive measures can be taken. Scholars with head lice or ringworm may not attend school until they are successfully treated with medication and they are no longer at risk of infecting other scholars and staff.

For your scholar's welfare and for the protection of others, it is important to keep your scholar home if he or she has:

- A fever over 100 degrees during the past 24 hours;
- A cold in the active stages;
- A sore throat and/or swollen neck glands;
- An undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions;
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours; and/or
- Head lice or ring worm that has not been treated with medication.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Dress Code

We do not have school uniforms, but we require that scholars dress appropriately for the weather and learning activities. We discourage t-shirts with negative messages, halters, midriffs, short shorts, short skirts or short dresses. Hats are discouraged except in cases of religious beliefs or medical conditions. Because of gang activity, bandanas are highly discouraged as well. We encourage scholars to wear sturdy shoes that are suitable for outdoor play and physical education. Scholars can be asked to change their clothes or sent home for clothing that is deemed inappropriate.

***We encourage scholars to wear their purple Stokes School shirt on field trips and every Friday to show school spirit!
T-shirts can be purchased at the front desk.***

Toys, Cosmetics and Electronic Games

Scholars are not allowed to bring toys, cosmetics, electronic games, radios, fireworks, CD players, iPods, or MP3 players unless these items are part of a classroom or school-sanctioned activity.

Scholars are allowed to bring cell phones, however they must be turned off and placed in their backpack while they are in school.

Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Stokes School has the ability to enhance the education of scholars through the use of computers. The school offers electronic network access for scholars, teachers, staff and parents within the school.

A component of the access is the Internet, which connects computers, computer networks and individual subscribers around the world. The Internet offers information and resources previously unavailable to schools. The goals of the computer network are:

- To support the Stokes School curriculum and instruction;
- To enhance learning opportunities by focusing on information retrieval, search strategies, research skills and critical thinking;
- To promote communication between and among scholars, teachers, faculty and families in a way that supports teaching and learning; and
- To promote life-long learning.

Through the Internet, scholars, teachers, staff and parents are able to access current information, news, resources from businesses, libraries, educational institutions, government agencies, research institutions and associations, and a variety of other sources.

Users and parents of users, if the user is under 18 years old, must understand that Stokes School cannot control the content of the information available on the Internet. Stokes School does not condone the use of controversial or offensive materials found on the Internet and takes reasonable precautions to limit access to these materials by providing adult supervision, using filtering software and by teaching scholars to use the service responsibly. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. School employees, scholars and parents must be aware that access to the Internet will be withdrawn from users who do not respect the rights of others or who do not follow the rules and regulations established by Stokes School.

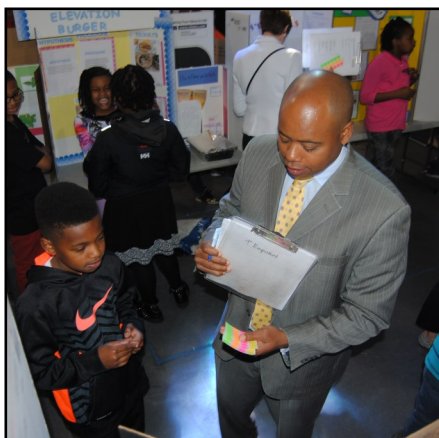
Parent/Guardian Volunteer Opportunities

Parents make all the difference at Stokes School, and we couldn't do what we do without you. Opportunities for involvement abound that give parents the opportunity to participate in programs and activities designed to help parents support their scholar's education and development. Additionally, parents have taken on initiatives that range from planting in the garden to organizing our storage closets to fundraising, and so much more.

Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Stokes School PTA
- Board membership
- Fundraising campaigns
- Scholar enrichment activities, service learning activities, classroom assistance and field trip chaperones
- Campus beautification days and handyman projects
- Advocacy and advisory committees

Parents/guardians, grandparents or other family members interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact Abby Sondak, Development and Communications Manager 202.265.7237 ext. 148; abbys@ewstokes.org for more information. Please note that for the safety of our children, school volunteers may be required to undergo a background check.



School Traditions

Stokes School has a number of school traditions with which families will become acquainted. Specific details about each tradition will be communicated through various modes including the school newsletter, website, Facebook and Twitter.

Throughout Year

- School Spirit Day (every Friday—wear your Stokes School t-shirt!)

August/September

- New Parent Orientation
- First Day Celebration
- Back to School Night
- Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month Celebration

October

- Fall Outing
- Taste of Stokes

November

- Student Government Elections
- Trimester Showcase

December

- Pancake Breakfast fundraiser
- Winter Break

January

- International Soup Sale Fundraiser

February

- 100th Day Celebration
- Friendship Ball
- Black History Month Celebration

March

- Dr. Seuss’ Birthday Celebration
- Trimester Showcase

April

- State Standardized Tests

May

- State Standardized Tests
- Teacher Appreciation Day
- 4th grade trip to Virginia Beach
- 5th grade Study Tours

June

- Field Day
- Stepping Up Day (Kindergarten)
- Graduation (5th grade)
- Alumni Luncheon
- Volunteer Luncheon

ACADEMICS AND LEARNING

Curriculum

Our curriculum emphasizes hands-on, student centered and inquiry based learning. As we transition to the Primary Years Programme (PYP), we are revising our Pre-K through 5th grade units of study to involve deeper transdisciplinary learning. All content areas will be taught through in-depth inquiry of transdisciplinary themes and central ideas and integrate our current curricula. In Pre-K, we currently follow the Creative Curriculum which emphasizes developmentally appropriate learning through play for our youngest scholars.

In K through 5th grade, we currently use an approach of Balanced Literacy to teach the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Language Arts, including Writer's Workshop in all languages and Words their Way for word study. Our K-5 mathematics curriculum is called Investigations, where students develop deep conceptual understanding of the CCSS and engage in the CCSS Mathematical Practices. As we develop our transdisciplinary units of study for the PYP, we will continue to draw upon the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the DC Standards of Teaching and Learning for Social Studies for K-5th grade.

Assessments

Parent-teacher conferences or APTT (Academic Parent Teacher Team) meetings are scheduled each trimester for families and teachers to discuss scholar academic and socio-emotional growth. Parents/guardians are asked to meet with their scholar's teacher at least three times throughout the year, but are encouraged to make appointments with their scholar's teacher more often than the scheduled dates for conferences. Each trimester, standards-based report cards are issued to document scholar learning.

As mandated for all DC Public and Charter Schools, our third through fifth graders take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) standardized assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Pre-kindergarten through second grade scholars are also given formative and annual standardized assessments (please refer to Table 1 on page 16). These, along with curricular aligned and teacher-generated assessments, give parents/guardians and teachers a variety of ways to monitor scholars' academic development. Classroom teachers are able to track scholars' mastery of specific skills and are available to discuss progress with parents/guardians.

Table 1: Stokes School uses the standardized tests below to determine scholar proficiency in various subjects.

Standardized Test	Skill Area Tested	Grade Levels Tested	Time of Year Administered
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers (PARCC)	Reading & Math	3rd—5th	Spring
Assessing Comprehension & Communication in English State to State (ACCESS)	English Proficiency	K— 5th	Late Spring
STAMP	Spanish or French Proficiency	5 th	Spring
Fountas & Pinell Benchmark Assessment System	English or Spanish Reading	K— 5th	Fall, Winter and Spring
DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)	French Reading	1 st –5 th	Fall and Spring
Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)	Reading & Math	K -- 5th	Fall, Winter and Spring
Teaching Strategies (GOLD)	Developmental assessment for early childhood	Pre-K	Throughout the year

Scholar Support Services

Support services are available to students who are not making adequate progress at school. Students who consistently display difficulties progressing or achieving in expected areas of growth and/or learning should be referred to the Student Support Team (areas of expected growth include, but are not limited to: academic, social/emotional, behavioral, cognitive, language and motor skills). The Student Support Team (SST) is composed of the SST coordinator, a general educator, a special educator, the school psychologist and a parent/guardian. The team may also include the Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Student Support, specials teachers, the school nurse, special service providers (e.g., speech-language pathologist and/or occupational therapist) as well as other school staff.

Prior to an initial SST meeting, student data is collected in the form of written observations, discipline forms, behavior data sheets, attendance records, class assignments and tests, standardized test results, parent feedback, school staff reports and other assessments. At the meeting, team members present and discuss scholars' data as well as intervention possibilities. With the aim of improving scholars' rate of

learning and their ultimate school success, team members choose appropriate strategies and interventions to be implemented for a six-week time frame. After the six-week period, the SST reconvenes, evaluates the effectiveness of the plan, and develops next steps.

Referring a Student for Support Services

Any adult in the Stokes School community (i.e., staff member or caregiver) may refer a student for support services. Completed referral forms should be directed to Bobby Caballero, Director of Student Support, Dr. Willa Jones, School Psychologist, or Diandra Dalson, Coordinator of Specialized Supports. Jonah Davenport, Prekindergarten Coordinator, processes referrals for our prekindergarten students.

Possible Interventions include:

- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)
- Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Classroom Behavior Interventions
- Teacher Consultation Sessions
- Evaluations:
 - Psychological
 - Physical Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Speech-Language
- Individualized Education Programs (IEP)
- Brief Individual Counseling Sessions
- Long-Term Individual Counseling Sessions
- Pair Counseling Sessions
- Brief Family Counseling Sessions
- Parent Skills Education Sessions
- Community Referrals
- In-Patient Hospitalization
- Alternative School Placement
- Residential Educational Treatment Center

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special

education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

For RTI implementation to work well, the following essential components must be implemented with fidelity and in a rigorous manner:

High-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction. All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the general education classroom.

Ongoing student assessment. Universal screening and progress monitoring provide information about a student's learning rate and level of achievement, both individually and in comparison with the peer group. These data are then used when determining which students need closer monitoring or intervention. Throughout the RTI process, student progress is monitored frequently to examine student achievement and gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum. Decisions made regarding students' instructional needs are based on multiple data points taken in context over time.

Tiered instruction. A multi-tier approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students. The model incorporates increasing intensities of instruction offering specific, research-based interventions matched to student needs.

Parent involvement. Schools implementing RTI provide parents information about their child's progress, the instruction and interventions used, the staff who are delivering the instruction, and the academic or behavioral goals for their child.

Though there is no single, thoroughly researched and widely practiced "model" of the RTI process, it is generally defined as a three-tier (or three-step) model of school supports that uses research-based academic and/or behavioral interventions. The Three-Tier Model is described below.

Tier 1: High-Quality Classroom Instruction, Screening, and Group Interventions

Within Tier 1, all students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. All students are screened on a periodic basis to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional support. Students identified as being "at risk" through universal screenings and/or results on state- or districtwide tests receive supplemental instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. The length of time for this step can vary, but it generally should not exceed 8 weeks. During that time, student progress is closely monitored using a validated screening system such as curriculum-based measurement. At the end of this period, students showing significant progress are generally returned to the regular classroom program. Students not showing adequate progress are moved to Tier 2.

Tier 2: Targeted Interventions

Students not making adequate progress in the regular classroom in Tier 1 are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention. These services and interventions are provided in small-group settings in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. In the early grades (kindergarten through 3rd grade), interventions are usually in the areas of reading and math. A longer period of time may be required for this tier, but it should generally not exceed a grading period. Students who continue to show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluation

At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). The data collected during Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are included and used to make the eligibility decision.

It should be noted that at any point in an RTI process, IDEA 2004 allows parents to request a formal evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. An RTI process cannot be used to deny or delay a formal evaluation for special education.

In addition to variations in the tiers used to deliver RTI services, schools use different approaches in implementation, such as problem-solving, functional assessment, standard protocol, and hybrid approaches. Although there are many formats for how a school might implement RTI to best serve the needs of its students, in every case RTI can be a school-wide framework for efficiently allocating resources to improve student outcomes.

Taken from the RTI Action Network, A Program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process that identifies specific target behavior, the purpose of the behavior, and what factors maintain the behavior that is interfering with a scholar's educational progress. An FBA can be used for scholars with behavioral or emotional problems that are interfering with their educational progress or the progress of classmates. Any scholar who is exhibiting challenging behaviors that are not responding to typical school interventions may benefit from a functional assessment. Conducting an FBA before a behavior escalates into a disciplinary action allows both the teachers and parents to focus on positive outcomes and can help build a positive relationship between the teacher, student, and family.

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) takes the observations made in a Functional Behavioral Assessment and turns them into a concrete plan of action for managing a student's behavior. A BIP may include ways to change the environment to keep behavior from starting in the first place, provide positive reinforcement to promote good behavior, employ planned ignoring to avoid reinforcing bad behavior, and provide supports needed so that the student will not be driven to act out due to frustration or fatigue.

Resolving Problems at School

If either you or your scholar encounter a specific problem or concern at school, the following steps should be taken:

1. Contact your scholar's teacher
2. If not resolved, contact Dr. Maura Varley Gutierrez Director of Teaching and Learning maurav@ewstokes.org or Bobby Caballero, Director of Student Support bobbyc@ewstokes.org
3. If not resolved, you may write a letter to Erika Bryant, Executive Director or email her at erikab@ewstokes.org
4. If not resolved, you may write a letter to Erica McGrady, Chair of the Board of Trustees, or email boardchair@ewstokes.org

Communicating With Your Scholar's Teacher

We encourage regular communication between parents and teachers. There are several ways for you to reach teachers:

- Via email - every teacher at Stokes School has an email address that they check regularly. Please check the staff page on the school's website (www.ewstokes.org) for teachers' email addresses
- Communication Folder/Planner - You can write a note to your scholar's teacher and place it in your scholar's communication folder/planner
- Face to Face - You can speak to your scholar's teacher before class begins or after class ends
- Appointment - You can set up an appointment with your scholar's teacher

Only emergency telephone calls be transferred to the classroom during instructional time.

Visiting The Class

Every person visiting their scholar's classroom during instructional time must:

- Make an appointment in advance
- Sign-in at the front desk
- Get a visitors pass
- Be respectful and mindful of teaching and learning time

COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

The goal of the comprehensive behavior intervention plan is to preserve the dignity of the scholar and the integrity of the classroom. The plan is designed to ensure a safe learning environment where scholars feel valued and they behave in a respectful manner. At Stokes School, our approach to discipline is holistic. A scholar’s individual life circumstances are taken into account during the behavior intervention process as much as possible. We invite parents/guardians to partner with us in solving scholar behavior problems.

Promoting A Positive School Climate

Our aim at Stokes School is to promote mutual respect, academic excellence, an appreciation of diversity, and exemplary behavior for all our scholars. Our school rules exist to create and preserve an environment in which scholars are free to learn and develop. Everyone within our school community agrees to adhere to the following three rules and core values.

The Three School Rules

- I will take care of myself.
- I will take care of others.
- I will take care of my community.

Core Values

- Excellence
- Respect
- Diversity

Rituals that Promote and Expand Positive Community

- Each morning we gather as a school community to increase our sense of community by singing together, recognizing birthdays and celebrating individual and school-wide achievements. In addition, examples of how scholars and staff have practiced the three school rules are shared.
- Periodic school activities bring us together to mark specific yearly events (e.g., Dr. Seuss’ birthday, Month of La Francophonie, Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month, Black History Month, Friendship Ball, Family Holiday Celebration, Heritage Day, Cherry Blossom Festival, etc.).
- On a daily basis, teachers are expected to implement the morning meeting of the Responsive Classroom to promote a peaceable classroom environment and develop scholar’s social skills.
- Teachers are trained in the Second Step Violence Prevention Program, and they provide the prescribed number of workshops to scholars which focus on developing empathy, impulse control, problem solving and anger management skills in response to a variety of common school conflicts.
- At the end of each trimester, outstanding citizenship, behavior and academics are recognized through awards assemblies.

Opportunities and Programs for Strengthening Emotional Competencies

Stokes School provides a variety of programs and activities designed to help scholars strengthen social and emotional competencies:

- Our teachers are trained in the Responsive Classroom Approach, which consists of practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day;
- Our teachers are trained to use positive approaches to behavior intervention;
- Children are engaged in service-learning projects;
- Cross-curricular and after-school activities focus on fun, learning, social and emotional skill building;
- Our physical education program promotes collaboration;
- Our scholars can receive individual, pair, or group counseling;
- Our staff conducts monthly parent education;
- Individual parent education sessions are offered.

Parent education workshops are designed to provide parents with tools to assist in developing collaborative relationships with their children. This promotes mutual respect at home and in the classroom.

Encouraging Appropriate Behavior

In accordance with the Responsive Classroom, during the first six weeks of school, teachers in each classroom create a set of rules with scholar input, establish daily routines, assist scholars in getting along with each other, and help them learn to take responsibility for the maintenance of the classroom. All of these activities set the stage for a harmonious learning environment. **For each rule, consequences for misbehavior are identified so that scholars are aware of them in advance.** It is during these first several weeks of instruction that the foundation for a positive school climate is built.

As the primary caregivers for the scholars during the school day, Stokes School's goal is to respect and affirm all scholars. Showing respect for their personhood as well as affirming scholar compliance and achievement positively affects their sense of self-esteem and subsequent academic performance. These goals are made clear to all school staff at the beginning of the year and they are held accountable for upholding them. To that end, all new staff members participate in professional development activities where they are introduced to our prevailing philosophy, provided with positive strategies to encourage appropriate behavior, and undergo periodic observations. We follow the general tenets of the Responsive Classroom.

The Four Behavior Tenets of the Responsive Classroom:

1. **Logical Consequences** – Teachers are trained to use proactive versus reactive discipline strategies to redirect scholar behavior.
2. **Apology of Action** – Scholars are taught to make amends for their misbehavior.
3. **Individual Scholar Conferences** – Teachers meet with individual scholars to discuss and resolve issues.
4. **Class Meetings** – the entire class works together to resolve concerns.

Scholar Discipline/Behavior Intervention

At Stokes School, the goal of behavior intervention is to help scholars develop habits that promote self control and self respect. Our approach is instructional and corrective. Where scholars do not demonstrate the social skills required to effectively engage in our demanding learning environment, staff at Stokes School employ a variety of interventions to assist them in developing needed skills. We have created a structure of intervention according to the degree of severity of the behavior.

At Stokes School, misbehavior is typically handled in the classroom, where the teacher approaches undesirable behavior as learning opportunities. If the unacceptable behavior persists, the following steps may also be taken:

- Teachers typically inform parents of the incident.
- Scholars may complete an in-class Take Care Plan.
- The scholar may be referred to the Director of Student Support for redirection.
- The teacher and/or Director of Student Support may schedule a conference with parents/guardians to discuss the problem, solution and consequences.
- If a scholar's behavior is continually inappropriate, he/she may be recommended to the SST Team, in which interventions, including a behavior plan may be put in place.

Stokes School complies with federal guidelines when disciplining scholars with special needs. In the event that a suspension lasting more than 10 days is deemed necessary for a scholar, a "Manifestation Determination Meeting" must be conducted no later than 10 days after disciplinary action.

Bullying

We take bullying behavior very seriously at Stokes School and we comply with all DC regulations regarding bullying. Stokes' bullying policy can be found on our website at www.ewstokes.org.

Redirection

Redirection is Stokes School's way of working with scholars who are consistently disrupting teaching and learning in the classroom. It is the first step before other forms of intervention are attempted. It is designed to remove scholars from their environment when they choose not to participate positively in school activities. Redirection typically occurs under the supervision of the Director of Student Support. Scholars are kept safe within a firm, respectful climate and are engaged in completing Take Care Plans and identifying meaningful next steps. A staff member stays with scholars as they transition back to the classroom.

The goal of Take-Care plans is to engage scholars in reflective thinking, leading to a better understanding of the impact of their actions. Take-Care plans serve three functions:

1. Help the scholar understand the circumstances leading to his or her misbehavior
2. Help the scholar take responsibility for his/her actions and identify appropriate choices
3. Inform the parents of their scholar's behavior

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an evidence-based practice effectively used to reduce suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals. Restorative justice focuses on righting a wrong committed and repairing harm done. The goal is to place value on relationships and focus on repairing relationships that have been injured. The victim and the wrongdoer have the opportunity to share with one another how they were harmed, as victims, or how they will work to resolve the harm caused. Stokes School's aims to engage in restorative justice practices whenever possible.

Suspension

When a scholar is suspended, she/he is not allowed to attend classes or participate in other activities at Stokes School. We do not compromise on the positive behavior qualities that are necessary to create a secure and nurturing learning environment. When a scholar does not respond to any of our interventions, she/he may be temporarily suspended. Suspensions may last from one to five days and may be served in school or out of school, depending on the behavior and the scholar's home-life circumstances. The terms of reinstatement generally involve creating a behavior plan for the scholar and parent to follow. This plan will be discussed with the parents/guardians and clearly explained to the scholar. We expect our families to follow the recommendations of the suspension plan. In addition, when a scholar is suspended, parents are expected to attend at least three individual parent education sessions with the school psychologist and our monthly Parent Enrichment Program (PEP). Other steps deemed appropriate by school authorities may also be imposed based upon the infraction. If the parent/guardians do not meet the stated requirements the school may take additional actions.

Expulsion

When a scholar is expelled, she/he is not allowed to be present in the school environment. If a scholar repeatedly engages in undesirable behaviors that necessitates suspension, she/he may be expelled from Stokes School. Additionally, a scholar who brings in or is in possession of weapons, illegal drugs or alcohol while at school, will be expelled. A serious breach of discipline may result in immediate suspension or expulsion without warning.

Appeal Process

Parents/guardians can appeal any discipline decision. However, the appeal must be made first to the Executive Director, Erika Bryant (erikab@ewstokes.org), in writing. If not satisfied, parents can appeal to the school's Board of Trustees, in the form of a letter or by emailing boardchair@ewstokes.org. The Board of Trustees may invite the parent/guardians and scholar to appeal in person at a regularly scheduled, or special meeting of the Board. The decision of the Stokes School Board of Trustees is final.

Consequences and Interventions for Inappropriate Behaviors

In carrying out these policies, the school has identified both the behaviors that are unacceptable in our school community and the corresponding consequences and interventions if these violations are committed. However, Stokes School reserves the right to suspend or expel if deemed necessary by administration.

As mentioned above, a scholar's individual life circumstances will be taken into account during the behavior intervention process. The scholar's age and developmental level may also influence the consequence he or she ultimately receives.

Violation	Level	Consequences & Intervention
Stokes School complies with federal guidelines when disciplining students with special needs.		
A consistently negative attitude toward others or toward the learning experience	1	Classroom management strategies that promote: prevention, problem solving, maintenance, support, and self-discipline.
Running, yelling, and/or disruptive noises, except during physical education or other appropriate events, or refusal to cooperate	1	Classroom management strategies that promote: prevention, problem solving, maintenance, support, and self-discipline.
Leaving the classroom without permission	2	Automatic Redirection, Take Care Plan and parental notification, contract with scholar, parent, teacher, Dean of Students Apology of Action (AA) intervention.
Talking disrespectfully to teachers, staff or another adult.	2	Automatic Redirection, Take Care Plan and parental notification, contract with scholar, parent, teacher, Dean of Students Apology of Action (AA) intervention.
Swearing, name calling and excessive teasing	2	Automatic Redirection, Take Care Plan and parental notification; contract with scholar, parent, teacher, Dean of Students Apology of Action (AA) intervention.
Destruction of property or vandalism, stealing	3	Automatic Redirection, Take Care Plan and parental notification for initial offense. Apology of Action (AA) intervention. For repeat offenses within the same trimester, possible 1-5 day suspension with a parent-teacher-Dean of Students conference and contract prior to return to class, may be referred for counseling intervention.
Threatening, fighting or other physical and verbal aggression	3	Automatic Redirection, Take Care Plan and parental notification for initial offense. Apology of Action (AA) intervention. For repeat offenses within the same trimester, possible 1-5 day suspension with a parent-teacher-Dean of Scholars conference; may be referred for counseling intervention.

Violation	Level	Consequence & Intervention
Cheating/Plagiarism	3	Automatic Redirection, possible 1-5 day suspension; parent-teacher-Dean of Students conference. Apology of Action (AA) intervention.
Bullying behavior	3	Bullying interventions: interview, completion of reporting forms, discipline rubric, verbal parent notification, Apology of Action (AA) intervention; possible 1-5 day suspension with parent-teacher conference.
More than 3 Take Care Plans in one trimester	3	Parent conference and creation of logical consequences. Possible referral to Strategic Intervention Program.
Sexually suggestive behavior or language	3	Automatic Redirection, Take Care Plan, parental notification and possible 1-5 day suspension for initial offense. Parent-teacher-Dean of Scholars conference; may be referred for counseling intervention.
Leaving the school premises without permission	4	Automatic Redirection, possible 1-5 day suspension, parent-teacher-Dean of Students conference, logical consequence.
Assaulting any school personnel (verbal or physical)	4	Automatic Redirection, possible 1-5 day suspension, parent-teacher-Dean of Students conference Apology of Action (AA) intervention.
Sexually explicit behavior, language or sexual harassment bringing music or print containing sexually explicit language or profanity	4	Automatic Redirection, possible 1-5 day suspension, parent-teacher-Dean of Students conference Apology of Action (AA) intervention; referral for counseling intervention.
Bringing weapons, illegal drugs or alcohol to school or possessing such items at school	5	Mandatory referral and notification to police or juvenile authorities and may result in extended suspension or mandatory expulsion.
Multiple suspensions	5	Possible expulsion from school may be referred for counseling intervention.

Pre-K Section



Pre-K Parent Handbook

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School

Pre-K Goal and Guiding Principles
Language model
Program Background
Daily Schedule
Parent-Teacher-School Communication
Visitor guidelines
What to Wear
Food and Snacks
Rest Time
Field Trips
Items to and from home
The First Day of School
Expectations/Discipline
Toileting

Pre-Kindergarten Goal

Our goal is to create an environment where scholars are encouraged to explore, play, create, and wonder. Teachers promote inquiry, initiative, respect, and love through positive modeling, recognition of the unique value of each scholar, and the steady assessment of all areas of scholar development.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) inform ours. Our vision of education resides within the statements below.

Creating a Caring Environment

Children are intense explorers. Puzzles and paint and people are out there to be solved, expressed, and discovered. We seek to provide inviting, highly-interactive, and purposeful spaces in which scholars may best demonstrate their intelligence. The classroom space should not only function, it should inspire.

Time is also an essential element of our play and explorations. Scholars are given sufficient time to develop play schemes and follow questions to an answer.

Perhaps the most important element in a scholar's daily environment is a teacher. We all teach and learn through the relationships we build with each other.

Teaching to Enhance Development

It is our job as teachers to understand your scholar and scholar development. By observing, documenting, and measuring your scholar's actions, we are better able to suggest more enticing challenges and minimize frustration and boredom. We seek to address the whole scholar. All developmental areas are important. Language, social-emotional skills, big and small motor skills, and cognitive tasks all feed each other and, eventually, academic subjects.

Planning Curriculum to Achieve Important Goals

The basis of our curriculum is Creative Curriculum. Many school-based programs are significantly scripted, dictating the order and duration of each area of content. Creative Curriculum is open to following each scholar's lead, while providing sufficient structure to address all areas of development.

Assessing Children's Development and Learning

Teachers must know where scholars are to best help them grow. We are continually recording our observations of each scholar and comparing this information to standard developmental expectations. Over time, we develop a big picture of each scholar's strengths and challenges. This picture informs us on how to structure activities for each scholar and the class.

Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families

You are the most important teacher for your scholar. We strive to connect with you and your values as a way to best promote the growth of your scholar, as well as build our classroom and school community. The tapestry of cultures, languages, experiences, talents, and interests inherent in our school community provides challenges and opportunities. Working together toward a common goal will maximize learning for everyone.

Language Model

Pre-K scholars will experience 90% of their day in the target language and 10% in English. The home classrooms are the domain of the target language where the speech and written words are entirely in French or Spanish. The Pre-K Coordinator supplies instruction in English during Small Group time and Centers. Additionally, all teachers guide language acquisition through lunch, morning meetings, lunch, and transition times.

Program Background

EWS started in 1998 in a church basement in Mount Pleasant. We moved to our current site in 2008 and expanded to Pre-K at that time as a way to better prepare young learners for the expectations of kindergarten and the significant language component of our school. Our early childhood immersion program builds vocabulary and the sound of the language in each scholar. These essential elements of language acquisition flourish when started at a young age.

Daily Schedule

A typical schedule is below. Music is offered on a biweekly basis. Talk to your scholar's teacher for his or her specific schedule.

9:00-9:20	Arrival / Morning Meeting
9:20-9:40	Music
9:40-10:20	Recess
10:20-11:40	Snack
10:40-11:10	Whole Group/AM centers/Story
11:10-11:40	Small Groups
11:40-11:50	Hand washing/Lunch Prep
11:50-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Quiet rest
1:30-2:45	Centers
2:45-3:00	Closing Meeting
3:00	Dismissal

Parent-Teacher-School Communication

Consistent and reliable communication with families is essential. Three and four year-olds develop very quickly and can be sensitive creatures. It is important that you know key details of your scholar's day and that teachers are aware of any changes at home that will affect your scholar's behavior in school.

We have many methods for communicating. Teachers create a weekly newsletter full of information about our classroom plans, letters of the day, upcoming important dates, teacher requests, and photographs from the past week's activities. Included on this weekly newsletter will be daily notes from teachers about scholar progress and challenges. We also use a parent-led list serve. Often weekly newsletters and other announcements are sent through e-mail to families who opt in to the list serve group.

In addition to the classroom communications, we hold parent-teacher conferences at least every trimester. Stokes School provides a weekly newsletter, a website (www.ewstokes.org), and holds numerous parenting workshops and volunteer opportunities.

If you need to contact the classroom about a scholar absence, call the main school number, 202-265-7237, and inform the receptionist. More specific messages may be delivered to the teachers directly. The Pre-K Spanish A extension is **114**; French A is **134**. Spanish B is **120**. French B is **133**. Please be aware that if you are calling into the classroom between 9 and 3, there is a high likelihood that teachers will be heavily involved with scholar activities and may not be able to discuss anything at length. Leaving messages on classroom voicemail is not a reliable means of communication. Teachers are responsive to e-mail. Teacher e-mail addresses are shared with classes at the beginning of each school year and available in the Leadership and Staff section of the website.

Visitor Guidelines

Parent visitors are always welcome. Family involvement in our program strengthens our mutual understanding and goal achievement. Ask your scholar's teacher for a time that will work for everybody. We strongly encourage parents or any visitor to be involved, not just to observe. You may help facilitate small groups or a center activity. Some ideas for classroom involvement are to ask scholars questions, wonder aloud about ideas to expand play, follow their lead, and gently moderate disputes. Teachers appreciate any assistance for transitions times such as lunch and the beginning and end of the day.

What to Wear

Scholars need comfortable, active clothing every day. Putting on and taking off jackets and other outerwear is a challenge for three and four year-olds. We strive to make our scholars as skilled as possible with zippers, buttons, snaps, jackets, and backpacks. These skills serve to make each scholar more independent and speed transition time. Please label all of your scholar's gear.

Please also make sure that your scholar can navigate his or her clothes so that he or she can quickly use the bathroom. Button-fly jeans can quickly frustrate a three year-old and lead to accidents. Shoes with laces are rarely manageable for Pre-K scholars. Scholars should have a change of clothes appropriate for the weather. This should be placed in a labeled plastic bag in their cubby on the first day of school.

Food and Snacks

We are a nut-free campus. You may feel inconvenienced by this rule, but keep in mind this can have life threatening implications for some children. Our policy also prohibits soda and candy. If you choose not to send a snack with your scholar, fresh fruit is provided.

Breakfast is provided to all scholars during before care. We request that you or a care-taker bring your scholar to the dining room to help him or her get settled.

After school programs provide a substantial snack/supper at 3:30pm. Your scholar must be enrolled in After Care to eat this meal. A weekly meal calendar is available at the EWS website or through the weekly newsletter.

Rest Time

Almost all of our children benefit from a chance to recharge their batteries after a busy morning. We cannot mandate sleep, but we encourage scholars to rest and relax their bodies.

Each scholar should bring a labeled crib sheet for our mats and a labeled blanket. Other rest time items such as a special “lovey” or a pillow are encouraged if they are calming or help your scholar sleep or relax. Sheets and blankets should come to school clean on Monday and will be sent home each Friday.

Field Trips

Periodically one or more of our Pre-K Classrooms will leave the school campus in search of educational opportunities in our neighborhood and beyond. We will solicit parent volunteers for these outings and will do our best to give all parents sufficient notice to arrange their schedule if they wish to participate.

Field trips range from walks around our school block to grade-level trips to a distant destination. Each field trip has purpose, for example looking for signs of spring or classifying buildings in our neighborhood. Field trips also allow us to teach safe and respectful behavior in our greater community.

Items from Home

Generally, items from home should be left at home. A **backpack** and a school **folder** are the only mandatory items. Toys and dolls quickly become a distraction to the toy's owner and peers. We have a large quantity of games, puzzles, dolls, and toys at school.

Each class holds a sharing time in the daily calendar for items from home to be displayed to the class in a structured group format. A calendar will be issued so you will know which day is your scholar's turn for sharing. **(is this current information?)**

1st Day of School

The first day of school is often the first day *ever* that a scholar leaves his or her parents on a regular basis. It can feel traumatic for children and parents. Having witnessed and facilitated many difficult morning separations, we have a few suggestions:

- DO – Keep a routine. Do the drop-off the same way each morning, gradually
- stepping back your involvement so that your scholar freely enters the classroom or before care.
- DO – Let teachers help. We can work with you to establish a plan that will ease this transition to school.
- DON'T – Go away then come back “just to check.” If your upset scholar sees you, we often have to start over and it can be that much more difficult to resettle. Often the best advice is “just leave,” as difficult as it is for parents.
- DON'T – Bribe (I'll give you a cookie later,” lie (I'll be right back,”) or disappear. Each of these tactics may work in the short-term, but undermines the building of trust which we need to teach.

We promise to be sensitive to each family's routines and patterns and we know that we can successfully work together to ensure each scholar can come to school happily and on-time

Expectations/Discipline

It is frequently asked how we view discipline. Our primary response lies in our teachers' relationships with each scholar, the structure of our classrooms, and the educational opportunities we provide. Keeping our expectations of children reasonable and developmentally appropriate is a key to avoiding most misbehavior. As we have stated above, children are active explorers and primary agents in their own learning. Given a rich learning environment, enough space, and enough time, we are confident that

disruptions and conflicts will be kept to a minimum. But when problems do arise, we strive to address each situation in context of the scholar's age and abilities. Every incident of misbehavior is an opportunity for growth.

One of our expectations for our scholars is a measured degree of independence. Having 19 three and four year-olds in one room can be daunting if each requires significant attention every time coats are worn to go outside. As a general rule, what children can do for themselves, we let them. Carrying his or her own backpack is a great start to instilling responsibility. The morning routine (putting backpacks and lunch boxes away) is another time for each scholar to show how much he or she can do alone.

Toileting

Children **must be out of diapers** by the time they start our program. We realize that potty training does not always follow adult schedules and will work with each family to help provide a plan to prevent accidents. Two changes of clothes are especially important at the beginning of the school year.

Our expectation is that toilet training must include a scholar independently undressing and dressing, wiping and flushing. Teachers are always on hand to assist with emergencies, but this is among the most important independent tasks for our young scholars.

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Title	Name	ext.	email address
Founder	Linda Moore	104	lindam@ewstokes.org
Executive Director	Erika Bryant	103	erikab@ewstokes.org
Director of Teaching and Learning	Dr. Maura Varley Gutierrez	102	maurav@ewstokes.org
Director of Student Support	Bobby Caballero (Mr. Bobby)	136	bobbyc@ewstokes.org
Director of Data and Assessment	Julia Senerchia	102	julias@ewstokes.org
School Psychologist	Willa Jones	123	willaj@ewstokes.org
Administrative Services Manager	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Development & Communications Manager	Abby Sondak	148	abbys@ewstokes.org
Special Education Coordinator	Diandra Dalson	180	diandrad@ewstokes.org
Business Manager	Bill Moczydlowski	124	billm@ewstokes.org
Pre-K Coordinator	Jonah Davenport	100	jonahd@ewstokes.org
Security	Gerald Menslah	100	

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you have questions about:	Please contact directly:		
	name	ext.	email
Attendance , Absences & Tardiness	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Admission to Stokes	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Aftercare	Clarence Bell-Alston	100	stokesaakf@hotmail.com
Before Care	Bobby Caballero	136	bobbyc@ewstokes.org
Behavior of another scholar	Your scholar's teacher or Bobby Caballero	136	bobbyc@ewstokes.org
Behavior of your scholar	Your scholar's teacher Bobby Caballero or	136	bobbyc@ewstokes.org
	Dr. Willa Jones	123	willaj@ewstokes.org
Behavioral consultation	Dr. Willa Jones	123	willaj@ewstokes.org
Birthdays at school	Your scholar's teacher		
Curriculum and instruction (grades K thru 5)	Dr. Maura Varley Gutierrez	102	maurav@ewstokes.org
Dress code	Bobby Caballero	136	bobbyc@ewstokes.org
Drop-off & Pick-up procedures	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Health issues	Nurse Kometa	118	nurse@ewstokes.org
Immunizations (shots)	Nurse Kometa	118	nurse@ewstokes.org
Meals at school (billing)	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Meals at school (menus)	Kimberly Williams	122	kimberlyw@ewstokes.org
Metrobus and Metrorail-passes (discounted rate for scholars)	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Saturday Academy	Mariam Orantes	100	mariamo@ewstokes.org
School schedule	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
School supplies	Fresia Cortés	101	fresiac@ewstokes.org
Volunteer opportunities	Abby Sondak	148	abbys@ewstokes.org

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR SCHOLAR LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE

- Use your primary language. It is VERY important that scholars become fluent speakers, listeners, readers and writers in their primary language. Your scholar's competence in your first language will directly affect second language learning.
- Be a role model for your scholar. It is very encouraging for your scholar to see you using your native language during various activities including: talking to others, reading newspapers, attending cultural events, etc.
- Help and encourage your scholar to join activities after school and to have social contact with friends where they are practicing English, French and Spanish in real situations.
- Making mistakes is all part of learning a new language. Don't correct every mistake, as this is discouraging to your scholar. Remember when your scholar was a baby and you were so happy and encouraging when they started to speak in your native language, no matter what mistakes they made.
- Be patient with your scholar's language learning. It's a learning process that will take some years.
- Encourage your scholar to read every evening, or read to them. This helps scholars learn new vocabulary.
- Encourage your scholar to write a journal in English, French or Spanish. This is especially good during holidays.
- Make sure that your scholar has a translation dictionary. Encourage them to use it at home and to label things around the house.
- Have bilingual materials at home (books, posters, music, videos, etc.) as a part of everyday life. Some materials are available from the school library and the Parent Resource Center.
- Give your scholar lots of praise! Learning a new language can be very frustrating.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ("The Age Act"), applicants for admission and employment, scholars, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School are hereby notified that the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Scholars, parents and/or guardians having inquiries concerning the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School's compliance with Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act as they apply to **scholars** or who wish to file a complaint regarding such compliance should contact: Bobby Caballero, Director of Student Support, bobbyc@ewstokes.org, (202) 265-7237 x136, who has been designated by the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School to coordinate its efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and the Age Act as they relate to scholars.

For inquiries or to file a complaint regarding the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School's compliance with ADA, Section 504, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act as they relate to **employees or third parties**, contact: Erika Bryant, Executive Director, erikab@ewstokes.org, (202)265-7237 x103, who has been designated by the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School to coordinate its efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and the Age Act as they relate to employees or third parties.

Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Grievance Procedures for Parents and Scholars

Parents, guardians, and scholars who want to learn more about their rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act can obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards from the Section 504 Coordinator: Bobby Caballero, Director of Scholar Support, bobbyc@ewstokes.org, (202) 265-7237 x136, 3700 Oakview Terrace, NE, Washington, DC 20017.

Anyone who believes that Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School has violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ("The Age Act") may submit a complaint pursuant to Elsie Whitlow Stokes Public Charter School's Grievance Procedures. A copy of the grievance procedures can be obtained by request through Bobby Caballero, Director of Student Support, bobbyc@ewstokes.org, 202-265-7237 x 136 or Erika Bryant, Executive Director, erikab@ewstokes.org, (202)265-7237 x103.

Section 504 Grievance Procedure

If any person believes that the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School has violated the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI, Title IX, and/or the Age Act by discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, he/she may submit a complaint to the designated individuals below.

Complaints involving scholars who attend the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School may be submitted to:

Bobby Caballero, Director of Student Support, 202-265-7237 x136,
bobbyc@ewstokes.org,
3700 Oakview Terrace, NE, Washington, DC 20017.

Complaints involving employees or third parties of the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School may be submitted to:

Erika Bryant, Executive Director, 202-265-7237 x 103,
erikab@ewstokes.org,
3700 Oakview Terrace, NE, Washington, DC 20017.

The grievance procedures outlined below establish how complaints will be investigated and resolved. These grievance procedures are intended to provide for a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. These grievance procedures may be used by employees, scholars, parents, or third parties. These grievance procedures do not bar individuals from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law.

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School encourages individuals to discuss their concerns with appropriate school officials before resorting to a formal complaint. However, individuals are not required to do so before filing a formal complaint.

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School prohibits retaliation against individuals who file a complaint or participate in a complaint investigation.

A formal complaint may be filed by following the steps outlined below:

Step 1

Within 90 days of the alleged discrimination or harassment, written notice of the complaint must be filed with the individual designated above. If the complaint is being made against the designated individual above, the complaint can be submitted directly to the Executive Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees who will designate an appropriate individual to investigate the complaint. Complainants may use the complaint form attached to the grievance procedure. The written notice must include the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of the occurrence, the desired result, and must be signed and dated by the person making the complaint.

Upon receipt of the written notice of the complaint, the designated individual to whom the complaint was submitted will immediately initiate an adequate, reliable and impartial investigation of the complaint. Each investigation will include, as necessary, interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents, and allowing parties to present evidence. All information related to the investigation will remain confidential.

Within thirty (30) business days of receiving the written notice of the complaint, the individual investigating the complaint will respond in writing to the complainant. The response will summarize the course and outcome of the investigation, and identify an appropriate resolution. If, as a result of the investigation, it is determined that discrimination or harassment have occurred, appropriate corrective and remedial action will be taken.

Step 2

If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision from Step 1, he/she may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Executive Director within ten (10) business days after receipt of the response. If the complaint is being made against the Executive Director, the appeal can be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees who will designate an appropriate individual to address the appeal. The Executive Director, or designee, will review all relevant information and meet with the parties involved, as necessary. Within twenty-one (21) business days of receiving the statement of appeal, the Executive Director, or designee, will respond in writing to the complainant summarizing the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action to be taken.

Step 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision from Step 2 he/she may appeal through a signed written statement to the school Board of Trustees within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the Executive Director’s response. A statement of appeal to the Board may be submitted to the Executive Director who will provide the statement to the Board. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the Board shall review all relevant information and meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within thirty (30) days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within fifteen (15) business days of this meeting.

The complainant may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights at any time . The regional office for the District of Columbia is located at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202 and can be reached at (202) 453-6020 (ph.), (202) 453-6021 (fax).



The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice)

COMPLAINT FORM (Sample)

Date: _____

I. Name of Person on Whose Behalf Complaint is Being Brought:

Name of Person Bringing Complaint: _____
Relationship/Title: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Alternate Phone: _____
Email Address: _____

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT:

II. _____

If others are affected by the possible violation, please give their names and/
or positions: _____

Your suggestions on resolving the complaint: _____

III. Please describe any corrective action you wish to see taken with regard to the
possible violation. You may also provide other information relevant to this
complaint.

Signature of Complainant Date

Signature of Person Receiving Complaint Date

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

School Song

Elsie Whitlow Stokes
Community Freedom Charter School
We love your lessons,
Your rules
And all of your principles.
We will be scholars
Who you will want to claim
We'll always be true
And we will honor your name.
(da da da)



Elsie Whitlow Stokes
Community Freedom Public Charter School
3700 Oakview Terrace, NE
Washington, DC 20017
phone: 202-265-7237
fax: 202-265-4656
web site: www.ewstokes.org