



Spectrum 2023-2024 FAQ for New Families

What is the first day of school? *Monday, August 28th. The Academic and Year at a Glance calendars can be found on our website under the **Student Life** tab.*

What times does school start and end? *All school morning drop off begins at 8:10am. The school day starts at 8:30am. Morning only preschool pick up is at 11:30. Afternoon pick up for preschool is at 2:50PM. All other levels are dismissed at 3:00PM.*

Where do I drop off and pick up my child? *Preschool parents park in the lower lot. AM only preschoolers 11:30 pick up on the playground or outside of the main office. Early drop off and pick up at the upper driving circle. Intermediate and Upper gets picked up at the middle-level lot.*

What about lunch? *In addition to lunch, a healthy snack from home should be provided each day. Consider sending fruits, vegetables, crackers, yogurt, or other healthy options, as well as a juice box or water. Soda and gum are not allowed at school. Children will eat in their classrooms.*

What if my child needs to take medication at school? *Please talk to Gloria and see the Spectrum School Handbook.*

Who do I contact if I have a family emergency? *Please call the main office and inform the staff. They will inform teachers and support necessary actions.*

Who do I contact if I have a question or concern about my child's progress? *The child's homeroom teacher is always the first point of contact. Please feel free to communicate TO the school via phone, texts, email, or a written note to the teacher. It is best protocol to first contact the staff member closest to your child or the situation should a question or concern arise.*

Who do I contact with any tuition or fee questions? *Marci Hallgren, Director of Finance at m.hallgren@spectrumschool.org*



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How does the school communicate and share information with parents?

- *Email blasts,*
- *the school website,*
- *Email from the teachers and staff*
- *Text messaging if worked out with the teacher/staff*
- *Social Media Platforms:*
 - *A private Facebook group **Spectrum Progressive School Community**, (note, the Public Facebook page is Spectrum Progressive School of Rockford). You can search for this on Facebook and ask to join the group, or you can ask our Facebook admin to send an invite. (r.barnett@spectrumschool.org)*
 - *We will also be using a communication platform called ClassTag. Every parent on our email distribution will receive an invite to ClassTag. This is an option for non-Facebook users. Parents are of course welcome to use both platforms.*

What is my child's schedule? *Teachers will provide class schedules early in the school year. They are also available in the 2023-24 Spectrum School Handbook.*

How can I find out more about the curriculum? *Please see information and videos on our website. Refer to the school handbook, located on our school website. Schedule a meeting with Mary Beth. Talk to a member of the Education Committee. We can share contact information on request.*

How do you announce Emergency closures? *We will send emergency notifications to cell phones via Bright Arrow, post on Facebook and ClassTag, send an email blast, post on the front page of our website (under bulletin board), and announce through the news media as early as we can.*

Is there any before or after school care? *Yes. Morning Compass begins at 7:00am and includes morning supervision and breakfast or snack. Cost is \$5 per day with a discount for the full week. After school Compass begins at 3:00. \$10 is charged for afternoon care from 3:00-4:30pm, with a discount for the full week. An additional \$5 is charged for extended care from 4:30pm - 5:30pm. At times, we may offer programs from external providers which may incur additional fees. Compass offers supervised play and scheduled enrichment activities. Full day Compass is offered on days for \$35 (\$25 for sibling) when there is no school due to staff development or conferences.*

Are there volunteer opportunities? *Yes! The Volunteer Form (located in the Spectrum School handbook on our school website) lists some ways you as parents and/or your family members might be willing to participate. Please add any interests, skills, talents you would be interested in sharing that are not mentioned. Know that Spectrum is respectful of your time and other*



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obligations, but if you could find something you would be willing to commit to, it would be greatly appreciated! Thank you! Please let Marci Hallgren or Principal Cunat or any Board member (listed in front of the school handbook) if you are interested in serving on the Board, on a committee. Please contact Aly Vavra a.vavra@spectrumschool.org for all other volunteer opportunities.

How do I get more involved? *Contact Gloria, Marci, or Mary Beth for more information on opportunities for involvement. RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THEIR EDUCATION IS THE ONE FACTOR UNIVERSALLY COMMON TO STUDENT SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND.*

Can I chaperone field trips? *Field trips are a valuable part of a child's education and expand his/her learning experiences. Every field trip at Spectrum Progressive School serves an educational purpose. Extra precautions are taken to ensure the safety of every student while participating in the field trip. Parents/Guardians indicate their permission of the student to attend field trips by enrolling their child at Spectrum Progressive School and by signing both the registration form and the field trip form. Parents are always informed of field trips prior to the event. During the summer of 2019, staff decided to institute a policy similar to public schools and not have teachers as drivers. Teachers need to be able to get to and from the location to manage the excursion, and need to be available to manage emergencies. It is critically important for parents and guardians to sign up to drive. If we do not have enough drivers, the trip will be canceled. Also, we do not want to put teachers and staff in the position of having to install car seats. This will require driving chaperones and parents of children with car seats to show up early enough to put the car seats in before school or before the start of the trip. Teachers will determine who is going in which car well enough in advance to coordinate this for families. We know this is inconvenient, but we strongly believe in field-based experiential learning and that it is worth it both for learning and safety*

What about celebrations? *We honor every child on his/her birthday in appropriate ways such as singing special songs, reading birthday stories, and giving him/her the opportunity to personally choose satisfying activities. Each month a special celebration is held in each classroom for all the children who had a birthday, or half-birthday for those with summer dates. (Preschool and Early Elementary groups celebrate birthdays on or close to each child's birthday). If contributing, parents/guardians of the celebrants are asked to send individually wrapped store packaged snacks and paper products needed for a classroom celebration. The observance of a child's birthday at school is not intended to take the place of an "at home" party and must blend in with the regular daily program. Invitations for "home" parties should not be distributed at school unless all the children in the class are invited. Transportation to after school parties is the responsibility of parents. The school will not release a child for a party to a parent other than his/her own without written permission from his/her parent or guardian (email consent*



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is fine). Please use the same consideration for after-school party transportation as you would for invitation distribution.

What does “progressive school” really mean? *At Spectrum, progressive approaches are grounded in a deep knowledge and understanding of each individual as a whole person and as a learner. This requires designing a program of inquiry and learning that authentically engages students, cultivates student ownership of learning and work, and nurtures a love of learning. Content is integrated by themes, and processes matter as much as product. Strategic thinking is core, that is teaching students how to think and helping them develop strategies to understand text, address challenges, solve problems, and design solutions. There is no lock-step scope and sequence. The curriculum is responsive, and students have a voice in how they demonstrate what they are learning. Creativity, curiosity, collaboration, and caring for others and the planet are core. Classes are taught in teams with low student-teacher ratios. Students learn by doing, making sense of and articulating their experiences to connect concepts.*

As applies, there is updated information in the 2023-24 School Handbook for our approaches and procedures regarding student clothing, weather-related outerwear requirements, and student use of cell phones. Safety, Responsibility, and Respect are our ESSENTIAL concerns with all of these efforts.