

Parents

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haring tips and Advice

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t. Vincent de Paul School

This is what works for our family.....

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Uniforms

I have always bought my kids three pair of pants and three shirts at the beginning of the year. This number works well because the younger ones can sometime wear them twice.
Sue Newburg



I have found that Land's End reinforced knee pants for boys last longer than French Toast
Jennifer Fernandez



I want to make sure parents take advantage of all the free uniforms available from the uniform exchange. The uniforms are put out at the open house and conferences. They can be looked at during the school year by asking Jan Endris in the office. For new uniforms I have found French Toast is a terrific brand that holds up very well. I purchase them through www.MarcusUniforms.com (it seems odd because this is a

catalog for nursing scrubs) they are cheaper than purchasing direct from French Toast. Another reason I like French Toast pants is because they come with a clasp instead of buttons which comes in handy when little ones are in a hurry to use the bathroom.
Jill Sampica



As a past co-coordinator of the uniform exchange, I've seen many different uniforms and how well they hold up over the years. French Toast appears to be the best pant for wear.
Barb Curwick



The uniform exchange is great because everything on the table is free. Families turn in what they no longer need and another family just picks it up for their children. I have never purchased a sweatshirt. For new parents don't worry about the exchange part. You can take what you need and donate when you can. For new uniforms I buy one pair of shorts usually from Target

in Plymouth (they are on the sales floor early in July). I Purchase 3 pair of reinforced knee pants from Sears. The Polo shirts I buy in the fall when they are on clearance. My kids prefer the short sleeve shirts.
Cathy Hadzema



Kids grow soooo fast I only get 2 or 3 pairs of pants to start the year because by Christmas they often need new ones. I have found pants at Walmart that come in slim and have adjustable waists. If you buy the logo polo shirts, do not use bleach. The logo turns a redish color.
Mae Paluck



I shop JC Pennies at the end of Sept. beginning of Oct. when they clearance uniform shirts down to under \$2.00. Shop Sears by the end of June early July before they sell out.
Michelle Gooley



We like Old Navy for uniform pants because they come in slim and have an adjustable waist. My daughter also really likes their modern styles. We usually buy 2 skorts big enough to be worn in the fall and the spring. We then buy 3 pair of pants and 3 short sleeve polo shirts. If she gets cold she uses a cardigan that we purchase from Lands End. We also make sure to buy tennis shoes that look good with the uniforms because that is what my son and daughter wear everyday.

Christine Olson



When winter hits, I send a pair of snow-pants and boots to school that can be kept in their lockers. This keeps us from having to wear them to school every morning (I drive them to school so many days the snow gear is not necessary). It also keeps us from having to stuff them into a full backpack. If there is a snowstorm during school hours the kids wear their stuff home.

Sheryl Boren

Lunch & Snacks

To save money we pick hot lunch once a week. It's fun to add a note or smiley face to their lunchbox once in a while. For snacks we prepare a snack container for the week or month. Each night the kids grab a snack out of the box and put it into their backpack. I have them help me bag the snacks into snack size bags or empty the fruit snack boxes into the container so

it's ready to grab and go.
Michelle Gooley



I enjoy eating lunch at the school because it gives me some time to be with my kids and meet their friends. They like me to dine with them on days their favorite meals are being served.
Dominic Hadzima



We try to have lunch with each of our kids on their birthday. You can bring your own lunch or call Jan before 9:00 if you want hot lunch. I sometimes stop in around lunch time to just say "hi" and sit with my child for a minute. The kids love the surprise! My youngest loves to eat hot lunch with her brother and sister - she can't wait to go to St. Vincent's so she can eat lunch there every day!
Christine Olson

Bus

The bus has been great for us. We have had awesome drivers. They know my children's names. They talk about things that are going on in their lives (example, they have a 2 yr old.) My son has made friends with several of the high school students and received a birthday card from one. For the most part, they have left them alone. I'd recommend not wearing the opposite high school clothing. That didn't go well for my son.
Michelle Gooley



My children have ridden the Osseo Senior High bus for 7 years now and have had no problems. The senior high kids take good care of mine.

When my son was in 4th grade all the students on the bus and the driver decorated a white t-shirt with "Happy Birthday" and sang happy birthday to him. Also, when they transfer busses at the high school, the principal let's them in the school to warm up while waiting for the other bus.
Barb Curwick



My son LOVES the bus ride. With the older St. Vincent students helping them out, they immediately have a cool, older child that knows them and says "hi" in the hall. He is proud to be a big kid on the school bus! St. Vincent's children are wonderful mentors and caregivers.

Mae Paluck



At first I had concerns about having my young kids on the bus with the high school kids. Despite my fears I put them on the bus because I was too lazy to pack the young ones up in the morning and drive the older ones to school. Over the years I have noticed 3 things. 1. I think riding the bus teaches kids to be independent by knowing when it is coming and being ready. 2. The younger kids are required to sit in the front of the bus so my kids always felt safe. 3. It gives the kids a little more social time with their friends especially after school.
Sue Newburg



My kids ride the bus and we have found it to be a pretty smooth process. Some of the kids who baby sit for us in the neighborhood ride

the bus and really look out for my kids. When my daughter was in first grade we had a few problems that were occurring during the transfer process at the high school. The problem was handled quickly and efficiently and never happened again!
Christine Olson



The bus for us has worked out great, and I was a "nervous nelly" about that. You can talk to the bus driver the first day, just to check in and meet him/her and make your request for sitting up front. We used to give "Diet Coke" to our bus driver because he loved it! Also don't forget them at Christmas, they work hard to transport our kids safely. This is VERY IMPORTANT FOR NEWCOMERS TO THE BUS: Remind your kids not to accept ANY candy or snacks or anything from anyone on the bus. One year a boy offered my son some candy and he took it home to me. It was all innocent, the boy was just being nice. We used the moment as a teaching opportunity to educate our kids about taking items from strangers.

Amy Holtan



Papers & Supplies

Each child has a magnetic clip on the firdge to place important papers, upcoming projects and peek at the week. I also look at the papers right away and recycle the ones I don't need.

Michelle Gooley



We fill out everything right away so it doesn't get buried. I keep the school calendar on our fridge. I rip out the month and keep 1 sheet up at a time. I have my son check to see what day he is on. I write down what he does on each day (example day 1 is gym). I also add to the calendar after we receive the Wed. School bulletin.

Tina kuharski



I personally found it helpful to have a magazine holder (a crock actually) just for my son's things. They get site words, little books and practice sheets that tend to get lost in the shuffle if they do not have a home. When it comes to reading bedtime stories, he can read to me first out of his things. St. Vincent's teachers really do a wonderful job with communication. A "Peek at the Week" gives you a heads up on what is coming that week. You know the topics that were covered and use your "Peek" to start a learning, sharing conversation.

Mae Paluck



I have heard from the teachers and other parents that the Crayola brand art supplies are far superior to the other brands and are worth the extra cost! I watch for them to go on sale throughout the year and purchase them when they do. It is often necessary to restock some lost and misplaced supplies throughout the year.

Lisa Blake

Volunteer



As a working parent, I try to fit it in when I can. I ask the teachers to send activities home for me to do. I let my child help me when they can so they can see that there are many ways to help their teacher. Volunteer where you have an interest or passion. My husband began volunteering by coaching baseball and basketball even though our children weren't old enough to play. It was something he liked to do and was able to help out with.

Michelle Gooley



For the past three years, I have been involved with the Home & School Assoc. Working with Home & School, you are able to have your finger on the pulse of ALL the school activities. The biggest bonus of Home/School is the fact that you can make changes within the school. I have been fortunate to be able to be a part of many great changes these past few years. From resurrecting the School Dance, to creating a new Kindergarten Round-Up. Changes in school uniforms and suggesting new ideas for the school, which are always listened to with open ears.

I have also had the pleasure to volunteer on the playground, in the library, and in phy ed. class. These are Some of my favorite days because I get to see my children in their "2nd home", surrounded by their best friends in the world. To see how they act outside of the home & witness them growing up right in front of my eyes. You gain great insight into your children by observing them in their

environment. You can sit down & eat hot lunch with them & their buddies to hear about what is going on in the classes. Volunteering is a great way to connect with your child's school and engage yourself with other parents who share the same values as you.

Sue White



I like working in the cafeteria because it gives me a chance to visit with my son, talk with teachers and moms, and serve our great catholic school community. It is a great way to get to know your child's friends, too!"

Amy Holtan



Fundraising

We ask all our neighbors, friends and family for the Marathon. The kids get prizes and they want their class to win so it is a great incentive to knock on doors. They are also getting exercise to obtain their goal. We don't participate in the magazine drive because we only want to ask everyone 1 time. We also participate in the script program which is quick and easy.

Tina Kuharski



SCRIP is awesome! I needed to get some furniture and things, so I ordered SCRIP and earned \$64.00 in one order. Timing is the key but it is well worth it. I would suggest the parents begin now even if their child has not started yet to bank up funds for the coming year.

Mae Paluck



Our family participates with the SCRIP fundraiser. This has been a very easy and painless fundraiser. We have been able to save \$250 off of our tuition bill without any effort at all (which also means \$250 for the school). We signed up for a standing order for groceries and gas only. Every two weeks our gas and food cards arrive home via our daughter's backpack. (Standing order means: same cards and dollar amount every purchase date -see school calendar for purchase dates but unusually every 2 weeks) and auto withdrawal from your account.)

Shelly Mattox



Catholic
Connection

I like to go to the Wednesday mass when I can. It's fun to see your kids sitting with their class and to see that YES, they can attend mass like they should.

Michelle Gooley



After Wed. Mass I wait with my little one in the gathering space to give my kids a high five and tell them to "have a great day". The priests do a great job of involving the kids in the homily by asking questions. The answers are often touching and funny!

Christine Olson



Every morning before we head out the door for school I trace the sign of the cross on my kids foreheads and say, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May you cause His face to shine

upon you. May He grant you peace." This was a tip I learned from a Jeff Cavins bible study I was in when our oldest son was in kindergarten. The kids love getting their blessing and won't leave the house until I have blessed them.

Cathy Hadzima



We start morning prayer by the front door 3 minutes before leaving for the bus. First we offer up our day to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, then we pray the Guardian Angel prayer and end with a blessing on the forehead from mom or dad.

Jean McGinty



We bring our kids in the morning, and find car time a wonderful opportunity for prayer. My son receives a kid version of daily word and we pray and discuss it in the car. We bless our kids with the prayer "may the lord bless you and keep you, may he shine his face upon you and be gracious unto you, may he lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads. Plus whatever else the Holy Spirit leads us to pray for great way to work on memorizing prayers, too. Rosary, etc.

Amy Holtan

Getting connected



When I was a newbie at St. Vincent's a bunch of ladies used to go out to coffee after Wed. mass and I thought, "how can I get to know people so I can do that?" These ladies soon

after invited me to coffee with them and said the best way to get to know people is to get involved. So I started volunteering as much as I could with two little ones still at home. Soon many friendships developed and over the years I was part of an "after mass coffee group". I felt like I had now become part of the St. Vincent community. I only have one student left and she will be leaving after next year. I am already starting to dread the day my student leaves because I feel like I will be moving away from a part of my family.

Sue Newburg



A great way to meet fellow parents and build community is to host a kindergarten parent potluck or luncheon. It is a great way to meet parents who will become your close friends for the next 9 years! Jean McGinty



A few moms got together and hosted a mom's kindergarten lunch. The kindergarten teachers helped us out by sending home a flyer that we had made. At the lunch we got to know one another and took the opportunity to pray a special teachers prayer for the Kindergarten teachers.

Christine Olson

Allergies & Health



My son has life-threatening food allergies, (peanut, tree nut, soy). He always sits at the peanut/nut-free table. He enjoys that this special table is always full of his friends, who are eating a

"safe" lunch that day. The lunch-aides use a special cleaning bottle and papers towels to wipe down the table/chairs. The kitchen staff does a great job regarding this. I also volunteer my time helping the lunchroom staff during lunch time. As a parent of this scary situation, I always have a meeting with my child's teacher at the beginning of the school year. This helps the teacher understand our concerns and I can answer any questions they may have. This meeting also makes me feel better regarding the situation. Let them know you are available to help in anyway. Also try to be available to help with classroom parties, treats, field trips etc. The nurse has info regarding food allergies provided by The Food Allergy Network. (Including a VHS tape about an Elephant who has a peanut allergy to show the class.) I have noticed it has become easier in the older grades for my son. For example, less messy eating to be smeared on hands, pencils, etc. Your child's classmates take on a caring/protecting role. They are a huge advocate on helping your child stay safe!!

Sue Hohenstein



When one of my children was in 1st grade, we were having behavior problems after school. Our normally easy going child would go into complete melt down mode. She would cry and act irrational over the smallest things. We were also having some issues in the morning. After lots of trial and error we traced some of

the behavior to her diet. In the morning we would make sure she ate right away. We would have her eat peanut butter toast, turkey sausage or oatmeal. For after school I would make sure she had a glass of milk or some cheese right when she walked in the door. We saw a profound change in her behavior.

Christine Olson



my child has mild Asthma and always goes to the nurses office before the mile run to use his inhaler. The nurse is great and there are always other kids in there doing the same thing!

Amy Holtan



sometimes after being in a structured environment all day a little "letting loose" running through the yard is all they need! Plopping them in front of the TV is not the answer! Regular exercise improves your mood, decreased anxiety, improves sleep, improves resilience in the face of stress and raises self-esteem." *Newsweek*, 26 March 2007

Pam Baker



Last Words

Overall, always assume positive intent on the teachers and principals part. If something does not sound as it should, investigate. Teachers and principals at our school are supportive and will make sure the 9 years at St. Vincent's is full of quality education, love for our Heavenly Father and his child, your child.

Mae Paluck