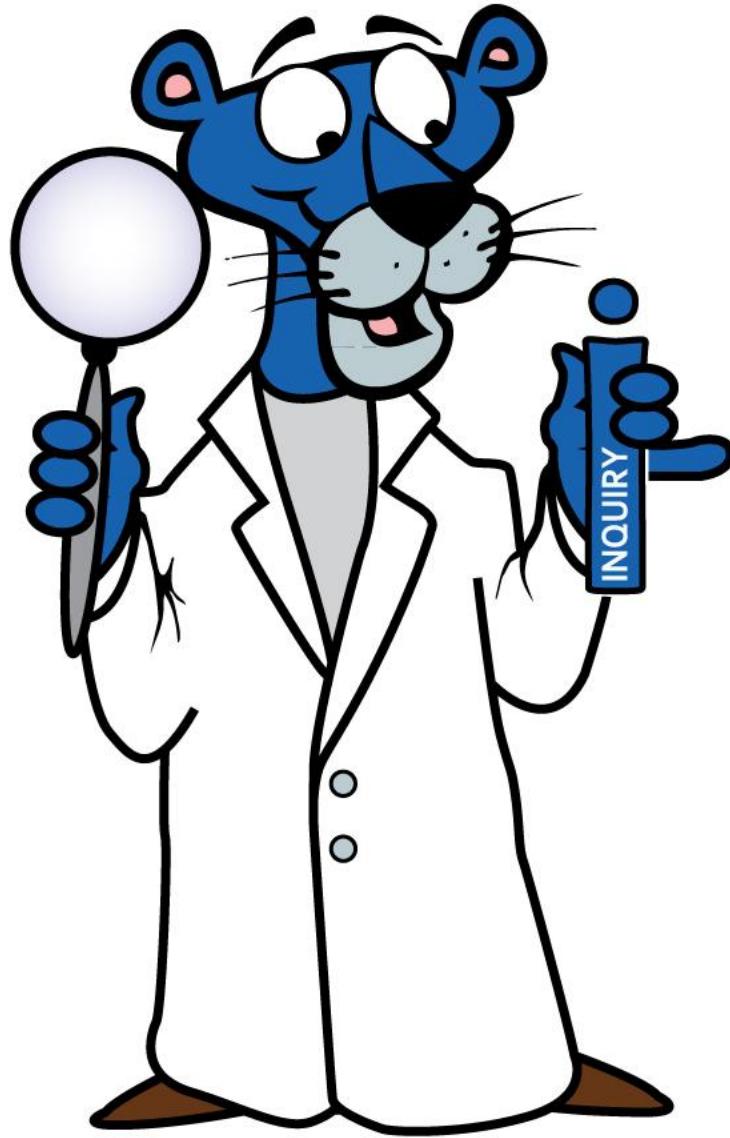


*Carolina School for Inquiry*  
Family Handbook





Dear Families,

The following handbook offers information about our program. The handbook is an evolving document as our program is constantly striving to grow and enhance the high quality of care and education we provide. The following are our school priorities:

*Academic rigor with an emphasis on inquiry*

- We believe that young children construct knowledge by experimenting and exploring with materials, reflecting, asking questions, and sharing ideas. Our teachers plan explorations that incorporate standards, assess each child, and strive to create students who are critical thinkers.

*Active Nurturing*

- Active nurturing is the love and care we provide to the community of our school on a daily basis. As the centerpiece of our school, we value the mutual respect active nurturing fosters between our families and staff. Active nurturing is also recognized by our persistence in tailoring our curriculum to meet the students' individual needs as a learner. We are committed to maximizing the cognitive and social-emotional development of our students in a safe learning environment.

*Praxis/Social Justice*

- Praxis means the translating of an idea into practical action. We value social justice and the belief that each person can change the world. Children are taught that small acts of kindness and larger social justice projects are part of their lives. Facilitating the children's recognition of these opportunities affords the highest goals of learning.

Whether one is attuned to the students constructing knowledge, the school coupling with families to best serve children, or the laughter and joy as children work together, it is evident that CSI is an environment where the safety, care and academic needs of children are the focus.

Sincerely,

Victoria Dixon-Mokeba,  
Director/Lead Teacher

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Carolina School for Inquiry is to teach a diverse population of children in an atmosphere of kindness that encourages active inquiry, fosters individual growth and promotes respect for self, others and the world in which they live.

## **Inquiry**

CSI's teaching methods do not look like those of traditional schools. CSI teachers and administration work to implement inquiry based instruction that includes alternative assessment techniques, and providing student choices, as well as other innovative initiatives. We ask that parents support us in making our school of choice different and innovative.

Inquiry-based learning is a meaningful process. In this process: TEACHERS and STUDENTS are actively exploring interests and taking ownership of their learning by

- asking questions
- working together
- thinking and problem solving
- reflecting and sharing new understandings

While TEACHERS and STUDENTS are creating a safe environment by

- accepting mistakes
- respecting students' ideas
- sharing leadership with students

And are guiding student learning by

- knowing students well enough to address individual needs and interests
- helping students make new connections
- nurturing a sense of wonder
- encouraging students to create their own understanding

## **Who We Are/Non-Negotiable**

- The faculty and staff support the mission and vision and further clarify the fundamental beliefs of our school community.
- We foster inquiry-based teaching and learning, creativity, and personal growth for all members of the school community.
- **Children are the heart of the school** and all decisions take into consideration their individual physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs.
- Learning is a continuous process, enhanced by experience. We will always be lifelong learners.
- **Because we have a unique opportunity to be professional decision-makers, our professional responsibility and accountability are paramount.**
- All members of our learning community are encouraged and expected to continue learning.
- We work to create a community in which we foster open communication in order to grow professionally and to resolve conflict.

- We actively seek to show that our students are learning and we are able to explain our teaching and the inquiry process. We are accountable to our students and their parents, each other as faculty members, the Board of Directors, the larger professional community, the State of South Carolina (SDE) and the local community at-large.
- We are a unified group of diverse thinkers.
- We are expected to be involved in decisions that affect our school and our classrooms.
- We are creative as problem solvers and teachers.
- We promote the care and respect of others.

# CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR INQUIRY

## “Where Learning Begins with Wonder”

Carolina School for Inquiry (CSI) is a K-6 public elementary charter school. In partnering with Richland School District One, the Richland County Recreation Commission, the University of South Carolina and Benedict College, CSI has established a broad base of community and educational support. An attribute of CSI is that all faculty members share the same philosophical approach to teaching and learning. This approach emphasizes teaching a diverse population of children in an atmosphere of kindness that encourages active inquiry, fosters individual growth and promotes respect for self, others and the world in which they live.

CSI is located on the campus of Crane Creek Community Center. We will serve approximately 126 students residing in the warmth of small-town living in the shadows of the capital of South Carolina. The warmth of community is carried into Carolina School for Inquiry, where all of our employees work to serve and support the children.

CSI facilities include eight large classrooms adjacent to a spacious open gathering area, full-size library, large computer lab and cafeteria. The self-contained classrooms are configured as follows: Primary (grades K, K/1,1-2, 2), Early elementary (grades 3/4) and upper elementary (grades 5/6). This multi-age approach to instruction allows students to benefit from having the same teacher for a two year period. CSI is credited by the SC Public Charter School Alliance, the State Department of Education and Richland School District One. We are an equal opportunity employer.

In addition to regular classroom instruction, CSI students participate in the following extended learning classes on a weekly basis:

**Art Education** – All students have art two times per week with the art teacher. A wide variety of materials and techniques are used to enhance student understanding and appreciation of art.

**Music Education** – All students have music two times per week with the music teacher. The music program combines movement, dance, rhythm, music appreciation, introductory musical instruments, and singing.

**Physical Education (P.E.)** – All students have P.E. two times per week. In P.E. students improve motor skills, coordination and physical fitness while learning about organized sports and games.

**Mandarin Chinese** – All students have Mandarin Chinese two times per week. In Mandarin Chinese, students learn basic fundamentals of the language, common vocabulary and conversation.

**Computer Technology Education** – All students will have access to the Computer Lab. In Computers students are introduced and taught technological concepts as outlined in the state standards. Classroom teachers also integrate computer use and technology into the classroom. Currently we are seeking parent volunteers to help staff the lab.

**Guidance**-All students will have access to guidance services at CSI. Most of the instruction will take place in small groups or individual counseling sessions.

**Yoga** – All students will receive yoga instruction once per week. Mats are provided.

Carolina School for Inquiry maintains a schedule similar to other Richland School District One schools and incorporates state and district standards within its curriculum.

### **WHAT IS AN INQUIRY BASED CURRICULUM?**

Children must begin any learning experience with what they currently know, perceive, and feel. Curriculum begins with a child's current concept of language (Short, Harste & Burke, 1996). If children are to grow as literate beings, teachers must "lead from behind" (Wells 1986) using the child as the curricular informant (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984).

Teachers and staff of the Carolina School for Inquiry cherish children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and their desire to cooperate with others in work and play. The curriculum is structured to follow the lead of the children's inquisitiveness, and to use their interests to lead them to the joys of exploration and discovery. By fostering self-motivation in this way, children become inventive and independent thinkers who are confident in their ability to learn and to master challenges. Participation of each of the members of our culturally diverse population of parents, students, and teachers nurtures the mental, physical, and spiritual well being of all of our students. Carolina School for Inquiry students will one day be able



to take full responsibility for their own education and for the quality of their relationships with others.

We will strive to provide children with real life experiences that further their understanding of the basics of reading, mathematics, science, history, and writing while learning to do what scientists, authors, historians, and mathematicians do. Children will be engaged in rigorous units of study that require an understanding of the concepts, content, skills, and strategies inherent in individual subjects as well as the interrelationship among subjects. In an effort to mirror real life experiences, subject areas will be integrated. This will take place in individual, study, small group and whole group inquiry projects, strategy lessons that focus on skill development, and direct instruction. Carolina School for Inquiry will provide students with a rigorous, inquiry-based curriculum. State curriculum standards will be uncovered in the exploration of the world around them. Children will be engaged in hands-on integrated units of study that allow for research and analysis of content at a deeper level. As a result students will be able to articulate a deeper understanding of core subject material as indicated by teacher made rubrics, student/teacher made assessments, Dominic Assessment Reading and Writing Profiles, and PASS results from state testing mandates. Interdisciplinary focus studies and/or expert projects will integrate the use of all subject areas. Skills, strategies, content, and concepts will be taught within the context of the inquiry-based curriculum. The following chart delineates the basic curriculum areas and demonstrates how each topic will be taught.

### **Subject Area Carolina School for Inquiry Teaching Strategies**

**Reading** Consistent with best practice in literacy instruction, children will learn to read through real reading experiences, primarily using children's literature. Reading skills and strategies will be taught through whole-class instruction using structures such as shared reading and mini-lessons. Guided reading will address the needs of small-groups of readers, and individual readers will be coached during reading workshop and individual conferences. Children will be given the keys to understanding the reading process beginning with the Cue Systems (Clay, 1979) and looking carefully throughout the year and at each grade level for what good readers do when they come to words they don't know.

### **Writing/Handwriting**

Writing for authentic purposes will be done on a daily basis. Topics will be generated by individual students and the teacher. Writing skills and strategies will be taught through whole-class or small-group mini-lessons and writers will be coached

individually during writing workshop. Students will be given ample opportunity to share their published writing and will spend a great deal of time learning the craft of writing from carefully studying authors that they love. Manuscript will be taught in first grade and cursive in second and third. Students will practice handwriting when their work is published. Students will be encouraged to focus on content in draft work and to concentrate on handwriting in final drafts of writing.

### **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary will be identified by individuals, small groups, or whole class through inquiry into language use by readers and /or writers. New words will be highlighted in various ways (including wondrous word charts, key words, and language we love) and students will be encouraged to hold important words in their writer's notebooks for later use in writing and conversations.

### **Spelling**

Emphasis will be placed on helping children understand and use English spelling patterns. Spelling instruction occurs through mini-lessons focusing on spelling patterns and strategies. Spelling patterns will often be addressed in daily shared reading lessons and interactive writing lessons. Spelling will also be addressed with individual children in writing conferences.

**Mathematics** Math will be taught through mini-lessons or demonstration lessons. Instruction will focus on how, when, and why the math concept is used. Concepts learned will be practiced through application during math workshop or as a tool for learning during a focus study. Emphasis is placed on effective strategies for problem solving or posing. Children will have many opportunities to apply the mathematical concepts they learn through interacting with the world they live in. Math literature and math manipulatives will be used to deepen understanding of mathematical concepts.

### **Science**

Science units of study will be developed using the South Carolina State Curriculum Standards as one of many resources. Teachers will create lessons that provide baseline information regarding the topic or concept under study and then have children work independently or in small groups to inquire further. Children will be expected to learn the content standard and to develop special expertise through expert projects. Students will have weekly science observations available to explore the scientific process and an annual science fair will be held.

**Social Studies** Social Studies units of study are developed using the South Carolina State Curriculum Standards as one of many resources. Teachers create lessons that

provide baseline information regarding the topic or concept under study and then have children work independently or in small groups to inquire further. Children are expected to learn the content standard and to develop special expertise through expert projects. Year long studies of cultural diversity will be a feature of the social studies curriculum.

### **Classroom Management**

The teacher and children will begin the year by establishing a list of responsibilities that support student rights. The focus will be on developing and implementing expectations for behavior that build a strong sense of community and establish healthy work habits for individuals and the class at large. Community building strategies such as class problem-solving sessions and Friendship Circles promote respect and appreciation of all members of the class and enrich opportunities for children to learn from one another through the curriculum (Mills 2000).

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Absences

AfterCare (CSI Extended Explorations)

Application and Selection to CSI

Assessment and Evaluation

Discipline Plan

Dress Code Policy

Drop-off, Pick-up, and Parking

Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

Early Dismissal

Emergency Procedures

Emergency School Closings

End of the Year Packets

FERPA

Gatherings

Going Home with another Student or with a Different Ride

Guest Procedures

Health Issues

Homebound Instruction

Home/School Communications

Homework Policies & Procedures

Library Procedures

Lunch Fees

Media Release Form

Medication

Opening/Closing Times

PASS Testing

Research at CSI

Rights and Responsibilities

Snacks

Special Areas

Suspension/Expulsion

Tardy Policy

Transportation

Visitation

Volunteers

Web Pages and Pictures

Withdrawal from CSI

## **ABSENCES**

If a child misses school because of illness or injury, a written excuse, signed by a doctor or the parent, should be sent on the first day the student returns to school. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor the number of absences that a student incurs during the course of the school year. To assist parents with monitoring, tardies and absences are listed on the progress reports received at the end of each of the nine weeks. By law, a student can have only 20 absences during the school year of which no more than ten (10) can be unexcused. A child is considered truant if he/she has three consecutive unexcused absences or a total of five unexcused absences. Once a student is truant and accrues three consecutive unexcused absences, five or more cumulative unexcused absences parents will be contacted to complete an "Attendance Intervention Plan." Excused absences are those for which a medical excuse has been written or prior approval has been obtained. In the case of an illness lasting longer than three days, the CSI Director/Lead Teacher should be contacted to discuss the possibility of accessing Homebound Instructional services.

## **AFTERCARE (CSI EXTENDED EXPLORATIONS)**

AfterCare Extended Explorations will be provided for CSI students. Extended Explorations is an afterschool program that is an extension of the school day. The program is staffed by certified teachers and professionals. AfterCare is provided for CSI students until 6:00 p.m. on all days that school is in session (including half-days). Registration can be completed at any time during the year. Students enrolled in Aftercare go directly from dismissal to the multi purpose room where AfterCare meets each day. Snack, free time, homework time, and outside play (weather permitting) are included in the daily routine. Appropriate behavior is expected from students and the school behavior code is enforced.

## **ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

Students at CSI do not participate in the district's Gifted and Talented Program (GTP). The academic needs of all students are accommodated in each classroom. CSI will not participate in district testing that qualifies students for gifted status during their enrollment at the school. All students may qualify for gifted status while at CSI and, those who do qualify, are eligible for GTP classes when they enter middle school. Students enrolled in GTP who transfer to CSI retain their gifted status.

## **APPLICATION AND SELECTION TO CSI**

Students who are eligible to enroll in grades K-6 in Richland School District One may apply to attend the Carolina School for Inquiry. Applications are accepted for the upcoming school year beginning in December. Closing dates are usually the end of January for kindergarten applications and mid-February for grades 1- 6. Exact

starting and closing dates for accepting applications are posted in the local newspaper and on the Carolina School for Inquiry web page ([www.carolinaschoolforinquiry.org](http://www.carolinaschoolforinquiry.org)). Elementary schools within Richland School District One are also provided information regarding application procedures. Anyone interested in submitting an application is strongly encouraged to attend orientation and participate in visitation day. Dates for these activities will be posted on the web page.

All applicants have an equal opportunity to be selected to attend Carolina School for Inquiry. Selection for the program is completed through a random process beginning shortly after the application period has closed. Selection continues until all 18 slots in each class have been filled or through the end of the first month of school. Students currently enrolled at CSI are guaranteed continued admission in the program for the next school year pending response to the call for notification conducted by the school. Incoming siblings of students currently enrolled at the Carolina School for Inquiry are given priority status in the random selection process.

### **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Teachers at CSI use a wide variety of assessment and evaluation strategies. For students in early/upper elementary, grades two through five a narrative progress report, rather than traditional report cards, will be used to document growth at the end of the first and third quarters. A second progress report, based on the South Carolina State Curriculum Standards is provided at the end of the second and fourth quarters. The primary classes, grades K/1 will use the South Carolina Readiness Assessment along with parent conferences, a mid-year student-led conference, and a final narrative report. Student-led conferences highlight academic progress and are conducted annually for all parents.

### **COMMUNITY GATHERINGS**

An important feature of the Carolina School for Inquiry's structure is the development of school-wide community. One of the strategies used at CSI to support community is our School Gathering. To begin and end each week, all classes, K-5 come together for a Gathering. A different class each week is responsible for conducting the Gathering, making daily announcements, and providing the Thought for the Week. At Monday Gathering, announcements are made and the Thought for the Week is presented. During Friday Gathering, the class highlights what they have learned during the week and makes connections to the Thought for the Week. Parents and friends are always welcome at Gatherings. Weekly morning gatherings are held between 7:45-8:00 a.m. and Wednesday Gathering is held around 3:30 p.m.

In particular, parents enjoy coming to weekly gatherings when their child's class is presenting. Notice of upcoming Gatherings is given in class newsletters and in the weekly school newsletter.

## **DISCIPLINE PLAN**

Children are required to respect the school wide rights and to fulfill their responsibilities. If a child is consistently not fulfilling a particular responsibility, he or she will be referred to Lead Teacher's office. For students having consistent problems, a parent conference will be arranged and a plan for improvement will be created.

### ***Social and Behavioral Expectations***

Treating others with respect and being responsible for one's own actions are the goals of the social curriculum at CSI. We want our students to learn how to interact in a supportive, cooperative learning environment. Through the social curriculum, students internalize rules and procedures and develop self-control and self-confidence. Students are taught and encouraged to learn the principles of cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and compassion. Each class has a Meeting Time during the day where students build the class community through establishing expectations, participating in group-building activities and learning about the above mentioned values.

Students participate in creating rules and procedures to help our classrooms function safely and productively. We teach them the skills they will need in order to function as caring, self-responsible citizens by discussing, modeling and practicing appropriate ways to interact. However, we understand students sometimes test behavioral boundaries. When this happens, we ask the student to sit away from the group, but within the classroom, and reflect on his or her behavior. This time-out is an opportunity to regain self-awareness and self control and to prepare to rejoin the group or activity ready to participate. If a student is unwilling to take appropriate responsibility, or if a student has needed more than two time-outs on a given day, the next time out is taken with Lead Teacher. The student is escorted to the Lead Teacher's office and is given the opportunity to regain control outside his/her classroom environment. The amount of time a student remains in the alternative setting is dependent on the student's age and the individual circumstance.

If a student needs a fourth time-out, the Lead teacher will call the parent(s) to come pick him/her up from school. The student will remain in an appropriate, supervised location until the parent arrives. Having a child go home following a fourth time-out recognizes the important role parents have in supervising their child's behavior. Going home after a fourth time-out is not the equivalent of a suspension. Generally,

after a child sees that boundaries are firm, and that students will go home if they cross them, this final option is only rarely needed.

### ***Violence and Serious Misconduct***

In order to promote an atmosphere of learning, CSI will have a straightforward approach to violence and serious misconduct. All students must feel safe in order to learn; therefore, violence is never an acceptable way for children to solve problems. Violence or the threat of violence is not permitted at any time for any purpose within the CSI Community. Any child who chooses to inflict harm (including, but not limited to, pushing, hitting, kicking, biting or throwing things) or threatens to inflict harm on another child, even if in retaliation, will be immediately removed from class. Conditions of frequency, intensity and duration will be taken into consideration to determine the appropriate consequences. Violent behavior may result in suspension for up to 10 days or expulsion in accordance with Richland One Code of Conduct. If necessary, the proper authorities will be notified. Serious misconduct will not be tolerated and will be addressed at the discretion of the child's teacher and the Lead Teacher. Serious misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- physical abuse; fighting
- verbal abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs;
- assault;
- communicating threats;
- theft;
- destroying school property or
- bringing weapons to school.

Students must not bring to school weapons or items that could be used as a weapon. Types of weapons include but are not limited to, the following: firearms, knives/pocket knives), martial arts weapons, explosives, poison, bows and arrows, slingshots, laser devices, mace/pepper spray, or darts.

Regarding serious misconduct, teachers have the following procedures at their disposal:

1. Teachers send child to the office for parents to pick up their child.
2. If necessary, the teacher may seek assistance from the Director/Lead Teacher or another adult in dealing with the situation.
3. A student may be asked to discuss or write down the events that occurred and what they could have chosen to do differently.
4. The students resolve the issue with adult mediation.



5. If suspended, student(s) return to school with parent(s) for a conference.
6. Class meetings may provide support for student returning to class.
7. Formal records will be kept of all incidences of violence or misconduct.
8. Parent conferences will be scheduled to address patterns of unacceptable behavior.
9. Length of suspension will be based on the nature of the incident and past instances of violence or misconduct.

## **DRESS CODE POLICY**

The Carolina School for Inquiry expects that all students will dress in a manner appropriate for a classroom setting. CSI observes the Dress Code Policy of the Richland School District One which states that a student's dress and appearance should not be such that it causes disruption, is immodest, distracts others from the educational process or creates a health or safety problem. Therefore, students must wear shoes or sandals; their torsos must be covered; no strapless garments are permitted; all undergarments must be covered; profanity, offensive language or images, and advertisements for firearms, alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia or tobacco products may not be affixed to any clothing. Administrators shall use discretion in determining when hats can be worn. Additionally, footwear should be appropriate and safe for activities such as outdoor recess and physical education class.

Issues related to the Dress Code Policy are dealt with on an individual basis. In general, parents of younger students, not the students themselves, are contacted. Older students, after a discussion with a CSI faculty member, are given an opportunity to make more appropriate choices without consequence. Continuous problems concerning Dress Code are addressed as a behavioral issue.

## **DROP-OFF, PICK-UP, AND PARKING**

### **Drop-Off (All Students)**

CSI staff members are on duty from 7:30 a.m. to 7:55 a.m. to welcome students in front of the school. Carolina School for Inquiry traffic may enter from Fairfield Road/Route 321. To drop off students, parents should pull into the circular drive in front of the school and proceed as far along the drive as possible before stopping (close to reentry to Fairfield Road). Students are to exit cars on the curb side only. To increase safety and efficiency, all drivers should remain in line and follow the car directly in front of them. Any student who arrives after 8:01 a.m. must be signed up by a parent in the office and will be marked tardy.

## **Pick-Up**

Students will be waiting by class near the end of the circular drive shortly after 3:30 p.m. dismissal. Drivers should display the name card issued by CSI on the passenger side of their windshield and pull as far forward as possible along the circular drive in order to pick up their student(s). All students must load from the curb side. As in the morning, cars are to stay in the line and are not to pull around to pass another car. If, for any reason, there is an exception to this, a faculty member will instruct the driver to pull around.

### **Pre-K – 2nd:**

Enter from Fairfield Road/Route 321 and proceed along the circular drive. A staff member will escort your child to your vehicle and load them into the rear passenger side.

### **3rd – 6th:**

Enter the school's rear parking lot from Crane Creek Church Road and follow the circular drive. A staff member will escort your child to your vehicle and load them into the rear passenger side.

**\*\* Please Note:** If you are retrieving children from both of these age groups, all of them will be picked up in the front of the school (Fairfield Road entrance).

All students in 3K and 4K must be signed in and out each day. A staff member will have a sign-in/sign-out sheet in the carpool line.

## **CUSTODY CONCERNS**

A student may be picked up from school by a parent, a guardian or by the persons designated on the locator card. Any other person must be verified by the prime custodial parent or guardian (i.e. the person with whom the child resides). If one parent is not allowed to pick up the child, the school must have a signed court order (restraining order) in our possession in order to prevent it. To ensure safety a CSI faculty member will request picture identification before releasing students.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS**

No student regardless of age will possess, use, sell, purchase, barter, distribute, or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or other controlled substance (as defined in the Richland School District One Behavior Code) in the following circumstances:

- On school property, including buildings, grounds, vehicles.

- At any school sponsored activity, function or event, whether on or off school grounds (including any place where an interscholastic athletic contest is taking place).
- En route to or from, or during any field trip.
- During any trip or activity sponsored by the board or under supervision of the board or its authorized agents. In determining whether a student is under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, the student's appearance, manner and any statements made by the student may be considered without regard to the amount of alcohol/controlled substance consumed. No student will aid, abet, assist or conceal the possession, consumption, purchase or distribution of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage by any other student or students in any of the circumstances listed above. All staff will cooperate fully with the law enforcement agencies and will report to them all information that would be considered pertinent or beneficial in their efforts to stop the sale, possession and use of controlled substances. The administration will suspend students who violate this policy and recommend expulsion. The board has a zero tolerance for alcohol or controlled substances on and around school grounds and at school-sponsored activities. The board intends to expel all students involved in these illegal activities and may, under circumstances it deems appropriate, permanently expel students involved in drug/alcohol offenses. All students who are expelled for a violation of this policy will be required to enroll in and successfully complete a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program approved by the school district as a condition of their readmission to school.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If a parent wishes to remove a student during the school day, the parent is required to come to the main office to pick up the child and sign the appropriate form. If the parent sends another person to pick up the student, written authorization is required. Proper I.D. will be requested by the office staff. Early dismissals will not be allowed after 2:30 p.m.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Bad Weather: Snow or other severe weather conditions may require that we close school or delay school opening for the safety of our students. Richland District One will make the announcement as soon as the decision is made, usually before 6:30 a.m. Occasionally, very bad weather develops during the day. The District monitors weather information continually and will close school early if conditions are becoming hazardous. If this seems likely, listen to your radio, tune in to Time Warner cable Ch. 12. School officials will stay at school until all students have left. Please make plans in advance for such occasions. Closing for other reasons: Sometimes it becomes necessary to close an individual school, due to lack of power, water or sewage problems. This may happen during the school day or before school has opened for the day. Again, listen to your radio, tune in to Time Warner Ch. 12 for instructions. Please do not call the school, the weather bureau, or radio or TV stations. If you and thousands of others try to call these agencies, vital communications will be delayed. You will be informed more quickly by one of the above methods. Make-up days: If make-up days are needed, they will be the days designated for that purpose on the annual school calendar.

## **FIRE DRILLS, BOMB THREATS AND LOCKDOWNS**

CSI participates in drills along on a regular basis. By law, we are required to hold fire drill, hurricane/tornado drills, and earthquake drills. As well, we practice building evacuations for bomb threats and building security for lock down situations. Teacher communication procedures are regularly reviewed and revised by CSI faculty and staff members. In the event that something highly unusual occurs on campus, every effort is made to notify parents by sending a note home with students, if appropriate. It is extremely important that parents do not call the school in the case of an emergency so as not to tie up phone lines or personnel. An evacuation plan will be posted in all classrooms.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

In the case of inclement weather, the Richland School District One superintendent will decide if school will be open with a delayed start or closed for the day. This decision will be broadcast on the radio and television stations by 6:30 am. Listen to your radio, tune in to Time Warner cable Ch. 12. In the event of a late start, arrival times will be adjusted accordingly. For example, if a two-hour delay is announced, school will begin at 10:15 a.m. and morning supervision time will be at 9:30 a.m. In the case of an emergency closing during the school day, this decision will be broadcast on the radio stations and Time Warner cable Ch. 12. CSI will follow the directions of Richland School District One.

## **END OF THE YEAR PACKETS**

Progress Reports, Curriculum Reports, reports from Special Areas, end of the year materials, and supply lists for the upcoming school year are available for pick up approximately one week after the close of school. If it is not possible for a packet to be picked up within a week, arrangements can be made for another parent to pick up the packet, or it can be left in an outside location for after hours pick up. If possible, all packets should be picked up within a week.

## **FIELD STUDIES**

In the event of a school cancellation while students are on a field study, we will return to school immediately. If there is any delay in the opening of school, field studies will be cancelled for that day and rescheduled if possible.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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 FoCSI bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Return to Carolina School for Inquiry by August 31, 2014**

# Carolina School for Inquiry

## FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM



Your child will be attending field study to:

<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	

<b>Cost:</b>	
<b>Transportation:</b>	We will be traveling by bus
<b>Notes:</b>	

**Please return this permission slip by:**

I give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to attend the field trip to \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014-2015 from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_.

In case of an emergency, I give permission for my child to receive medical treatment. In case of such an emergency, please contact:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Phone Number)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Parent/Guardian Signature)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Date)*

## **GOING HOME WITH ANOTHER STUDENT OR WITH A DIFFERENT RIDE**

If it is necessary for a student to go home with another student or with a different ride, a written note from the parent to the classroom teacher is required. In the event of an emergency, please call the main office as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that messages received at the end of the school day will be delivered in a timely manner.

## **GUEST PROCEDURES**

All guests, including parents, grandparents, volunteers and visitors, must report directly to the CSI office to sign-in and pick-up visitor's pass. Upon completion of the visit, guests must sign out in the CSI office. Lunch guests are required to follow the same procedure. This rule will be strictly enforced to protect the safety of students and staff.

## **HEALTH ISSUES**

Parents are often concerned about communicable diseases and other health conditions that may be contagious in classroom settings. Parents should be aware that all Richland One schools adhere to guidelines recommended by DHEC and our district's Health Advisory Council. The Health Advisory Council is a district committee comprised of district nurses, doctors, pediatricians, and representatives from community health organizations. Carolina School for Inquiry policies and procedures strictly adhere to these district health guidelines. In the event that a student does contract a condition that is contagious, parents are strongly advised to notify the school. Information regarding any health concern is available from the Carolina School for Inquiry office.

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

If a parent wishes to enroll their child in homebound instruction, the CSI Lead Teacher should be contacted. Following the South Carolina Department of Education guidelines, the procedure for requesting medical homebound instruction is established by the school district. Therefore, parents should submit a request for homebound instruction to the CSI Lead Teacher. State Board of Education Regulation 43 241 requires that a licensed physician certify that the student cannot attend school as a result of an accident or illness, despite the aid of transportation, and that he or she may profit from instruction given in a home or in a hospital. The physician must complete the state's medical homebound instruction form provided by the school district. The CSI Lead Teacher may or may not then approve the student's participation in a program for medical homebound instruction.



## **HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

Communication is key to the success of your student and to the development of a positive learning community here at the Carolina School for Inquiry. Please know that we will do everything possible to keep you abreast of all that is happening within our learning community and that we expect you to keep us informed of your student's successes and challenges at home as well. Only through positive, on-going communication will your child's needs be best met. Each student has a folder that contains our school newsletter and other important papers. We encourage you to review the contents of this folder each and every week. The newsletter features school level announcements, the weekly menu, and a monthly calendar of events. Additionally, each classroom teacher regularly includes an informative newsletter in the weekly folder containing class news, information about upcoming class events, and curriculum information. At the beginning of the year, each classroom teacher provides a communication plan for their parents which details times and methods for contacting them during non-school hours. Parent conferences should be arranged by contacting the teacher and setting up an appointment.

## **HOMEWORK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Below are the basic agreements we have made about homework:

1. For each student, written homework should take approximately 10-15 minutes per grade level. (Students who are missing some grade level competence or are slower workers will need more time.) Even for the most challenged older student, we do not want any student working on homework for more than one hour.
2. In addition, students need to read or be read to every night for approximately 20 minutes.
3. Homework priorities are in Mathematics, English Language Arts. Social Studies and Science work will be done mostly in class except for reading the weekly readers, studying for quizzes and projects which parents will receive advance notice or through homework logs.
4. Homework should be a meaningful extension of what students are learning in class. Sometimes that means that students will not all receive the same homework assignments depending on their level of mastery of the skills being taught in class. Also, some homework assignments will be given one day and due the next day, but all will be recorded for your information.

We are in hopes that by having all teachers follow the same homework guidelines that this will simplify the homework process for all. Homework is a recitation of what

has occurred in the classroom during the school day. Most importantly, homework should be a way for teachers to see if students remember what they learned in school and that they can do the work independently after school hours with minimal assistance from parents. As always my door is open for your suggestions.

### **LIBRARY PROCEDURES**

The Carolina School for Inquiry library is available to all students. Students will be allowed to access the library on an as-needed basis, with their teacher's permission, in order to conduct research. In addition, CSI will maintain a Parent Lending Library that will have both adult and student resources available for check out and home use. Because CSI will not have a librarian on staff, parent volunteers will assist in managing the library's collection of books and materials. If you would like to volunteer a few hours per week to help insure success of the CSI library, please contact the school's office.

### **LUNCH FEES**

Breakfast/ Lunch

Full Price \$0.75 (breakfast) \$1.35 (lunch)

Reduced Price \$0.30 (breakfast) \$0.40 (lunch)

## MEDIA RELEASE FORM



### Parent Release Form for Media Recording

I, the undersigned, do hereby grant or deny permission to **Carolina School for Inquiry** to use the image, written ideas and work samples of my child, \_\_\_\_\_, as marked by my selection(s) below. Such use includes the display, distribution, publication, transmission, or otherwise use of photographs, images, work samples and/or video taken of my child for use in materials that include, but may not be limited to, printed materials such as brochures and newsletters, videos, and digital images such as those on the **Carolina School for Inquiry** web site or other instructional websites.

- Deny permission to use my child's image at all.
- Grant permission to use my child's image in the following ways **Unrestricted usage:** I give unrestricted permission for my child's image to be used in print, video, and digital media. I agree that these images may be used by **Carolina School for Inquiry** for a variety of purposes and that these images may be used without further notifying me. I do understand that the child's last name will not be used in conjunction with any video or digital images.

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make a copy of this form for your own records and mail or fax the original to:*

**Janice Greene**  
**Office Manager**  
**Carolina School for Inquiry**  
**P.O Box 2428**  
**Columbia, SC 29202**  
**803-691-1047**

*If you have questions, contact Victoria Dixon-Mokeba at 803-691-1250.*

## **MEDICATION**

If a student requires medication administration during the school day, proper authorization forms must be completed. Please see the School Nurse for more information and to obtain the correct forms. The doctor's orders and signed permission from the parent must be on file at CSI before any prescribed medicine will be given. The permission form must include the student's name, name of the medicine, dosage, how it is to be administered including time of day, purpose of the medication, the anticipated reactions of the student to the medicine, and termination date. Medication must be in the original container and properly labeled. The parent/guardian assumes the responsibility of informing school personnel of any change in the medication routine or in the child's health status. Medication should be taken to the Health Room upon arrival.

## **OPENING/CLOSING TIMES**

School begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. Students may go into their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. **Students are not permitted on campus without a parent prior to 7:30 a.m.**

## **STATE TESTING**

All students in South Carolina, grades 3-6 participate in a South Carolina testing program designed to measure whether students meet challenging state standards for student achievement in the areas of Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. The scores that a student can receive on this state test are Not Met, Met, and Exemplary. The tests are administered in spring and results are usually sent home with the first progress report in the fall. Parents of any student scoring a Not Met on one or more sections of the test are contacted by the student's teacher for a conference where the teacher will discuss instructional strategies that they feel would be especially beneficial for the school year.

As parents review their child's scores, they should consider the scores along with all of the other information that you receive during the year concerning academic progress—progress reports, other assessment information, performance on schoolwork, and feedback from the teacher. The state testing instrument is one more important piece of information about your child's progress.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Regular, open communication between home and school is critical for student success. Conferences can be requested at any time by parents, teachers or students. Conferences with teachers should be scheduled for a time other than class time, preferably after the end of the school day.

Home/school communication is important and there are several means by which this is done:

- Weekly classroom news
- Weekly/Monthly school newsletters
- The CSI website
- E-mail
- Whole school communications must be reviewed by the Lead Teacher prior to distribution.

## **PLACEMENT POLICY**

The current and prospective teachers have input deciding on class placement for all students. All information available will be considered in making classroom placements for each child. Parents who wish to have input regarding their child's placement should discuss concerns with their child's teacher. Written requests to address specific educational needs should be provided to the Lead Teacher. Any appeals to class placement decisions must be made in writing.

## **RESEARCH AT CSI**

Research is ongoing at the Carolina School for Inquiry and contributes to instructional practice. Faculty and students collaborate with university researchers to investigate the nature of inquiry and learning. Research proposals received from individuals not employed at CSI must be approved by the Lead Teacher and must adhere to the Richland One and CSI guidelines.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Student Rights**

1. I have a right to work and play in a safe and organized environment.
2. I have a right to be happy and to be treated with kindness and respect.
3. I have the right to learn new things.
4. I have a right to be myself and express my opinions.
5. I have a right to hear and to be heard.

### **Student Responsibilities**

Our Rights and Responsibilities serve as a code for living that we all follow. Each grade level and special area class develops student responsibilities that are developmentally appropriate for achieving each of the student rights. These responsibilities function as guidelines for living and learning together. Each student has the responsibility to honor, to respect, and to uphold these guidelines. At the beginning of each year, the Rights and Responsibilities are reviewed in each class and they are sent home for parents to review. Below are a few examples from the

classroom lists that result from the student discussions about the Rights and Responsibilities.

- Listen with your eyes, ears, and heart.
- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Use good manners.
- Say you're sorry when you make a mistake—accept apologies.
- Help others to learn.
- I have a responsibility not to pick on others.
- I have a responsibility not to start arguments in the first place.
- I have a responsibility to not laugh at someone who gets a wrong answer.
- I have a responsibility to take care of what I use, and return things where I find them.

### **Parent Rights**

It is the right of parents or guardians at Carolina School for Inquiry to:

1. Visit their child's classroom at any time.
2. Be informed of the activities and learning that is occurring in their child's classroom via periodic newsletters from their child's teacher or by attending Curriculum Night meetings.
3. Be provided information and support regarding inquiry-based interdisciplinary curriculum.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians at Carolina School for Inquiry to:

1. Be involved in their child's education by contributing their time, treasure, and talents to support the Mission Statement of Carolina School for Inquiry.
2. Attend student-led conferences, academic conferences, and any other conferences requested by their child's teacher.
3. Collaborate with faculty and students in guiding students in their inquiry.
4. Communicate in a timely manner both verbally and in writing with faculty regarding their child's development as a learner.

### **SNACKS**

Students in all grades eat a snack during the day. Students may bring a healthy snack from home. Individual classrooms will work out snack plans beyond school wide plans. Carolina School for Inquiry is a "peanut free" facility. Please do not send snacks containing peanut butter or peanut oil.

### **EXTENDED LEARNING AREAS**

Weekly classes in art, music, physical education, Yoga and Mandarin Chinese are offered at CSI. Students study both the specific content of the special areas as well

as the interrelationships between that content and the core curriculum. Extended Learning classes at CSI are developed in conjunction with our community partnerships. Funding of Extended Learning instruction is, in part, dependent upon CSI fundraising.

### **STUDENT TEACHING INTERNS AND PRACTICUM STUDENTS**

Through its partnership with the University of South Carolina, Columbia International University, Midlands Technical College and Benedict College, the Carolina School for Inquiry hosts student teaching interns and practicum students in our school. Students enjoy getting to know the interns and they provide our students an opportunity to broaden and diversify their learning as they work along-side-of other teachers.

### **SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

Parents are a vital part of a student's behavior and are encouraged to have a conference with the teacher to address behavior issues as they arise. However, if a student's behavior is continuously distributive, or if any student exhibits an extreme behavior or one that is harmful to another child, a suspension may be warranted. Suspensions may include in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. The particulars of an in-school suspension are decided upon by the Lead Teacher in consultation with the teacher and, oftentimes, the student. Parents are notified through a phone call or as appropriate for the particular situation.

In the case of an out-of-school suspension, a parent will be notified immediately by the Lead Teacher or by her designee. A parent is required to come directly to school to pick up the child. Children who have been suspended are not allowed to participate in any school activities during the time of their suspension. Whenever possible, the student is expected to make up missed academic work. Expulsion from school for more than 10 days may be imposed only by the Richland One District Hearing Officer and usually is recommended only when a student willfully violates one of the serious offenses listed in the Richland One Discipline Code. An impartial hearing will be held within 10 days of the Lead Teacher's recommendation, the results of which may be appealed to the school board. Parents have a right to look at any evidence the school has prior to the hearing and to be represented by an attorney.

### **TARDY POLICY**

After 8:01 a.m., students will be marked tardy. Parents should make every effort to have their children at CSI no later than 7:55 each morning. Morning transitions can often be a concern for some students. Establishing a regular routine that ensures

prompt arrival at school each morning helps students be prepared to be responsible members of their classroom learning community. A parent conference may be requested in the case of excessive tardies.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Because CSI enrolls students from across the district, no bus transportation will be provided. Families who live near each other are encouraged to carpool. Please contact the school with questions or to express interest in a carpooling program. No student will be denied access to CSI because of transportation issues.

### **VISITATION**

CSI families are encouraged to visit and participate in campus activities on a regular basis. Family members are not considered “Visitors” but still must follow the sign-in procedures discussed in Guest Procedures. Because CSI is employing innovative instructional practices, visitations are held for interested educators and pre-service teachers. CSI visitors are required to register in advance with the office. Visitors are only permitted on campus during designated visitor days. A typical visitation day includes an orientation, a tour of campus, classroom visitations, and a debriefing session with a CSI faculty member. Two visitation days are specifically designated for parents who are interested in applying to CSI for the upcoming school year. Pre-registration for these times is not required. Dates for visitation are publicized on the CSI web site. Dates are also available by calling the main office at CSI.

### **WEB PAGES AND PICTURES**

The Carolina School for Inquiry maintains a web site that is managed by our Technology Specialist. The site contains information about the school, important dates for upcoming events, faculty information, and class web pages. Student work and pictures often appear on a class web page. It is the policy of our school that a parent permission form is sent home at the beginning of each year requesting approval for inclusion of pictures and work on the web site. It is also CSI policy that at no time will a child’s first and last name be used in conjunction with their photograph.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM CSI**

If a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw a student from CSI regardless of reason, a CSI Withdrawal Form must be completed and signed. Additionally, an exit conference with the Lead Teacher must be completed. Student records will not be released until both of these requirements are satisfied.



## **DREAMS FOR CSI**

### **FUND RAISING EFFORTS**

Throughout the year, Friends of CSI (FoCSI) will begin a Fund Drive to address the needs of CSI. All contributions are collected to support educational needs and other student activities not funded by the state or by the school district. The Fund Drive will support classroom and teaching materials, student yearbooks, author visits, student scholarships, school celebrations, teacher training, and other activities. Reports of the progress of the Fund Drive are periodically featured in the school newsletter. While it is preferable that donations to the Fund Drive be committed during the Fund Drive, they are accepted at any time during the school year. A listing of companies which match individual donations is also available in the CSI office. Additional strategies that CSI employs to raise funds are discussed in the "Fundraising" section.

### **AUTHOR VISITS**

CSI plans to host a visit each year by a professional author or artist. The visiting author spends a day on campus providing presentations and workshops to students. Every effort is made to make the author's books available for sale and autographing at the end of the day so that parents may attend the autographing session if they wish. Profits from book sales support future author visits and other Parent Teacher Partnership activities.

### **BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER PARTIES**

CSI's guide to parties helps to ensure that birthday and other celebrations remain fun and do not inadvertently result in hurt feelings. With this in mind, parents are required to send party invitations directly to individual children's homes, rather than distributing them in school. We do make an exception to this policy when the entire class is invited. The office staff is happy to help you obtain addresses or phone numbers not published in the directory.

### **BOOK FAIRS**

Twice a year the CSI hosts a Book Fair on campus. A browsing time is scheduled for each class during the first day. A complete listing of the books is sent home just prior, or on the first day, of the Fair. To make the Book Fair convenient for everyone, hours include morning as well as after school times. Proceeds from book sales support school wide activities.

### **INVESTIGATIONS**

The CSI newsletter, Investigations, is published and sent home with students monthly. This newsletter contains information and announcements about upcoming

school-wide events. A calendar with important dates is also to be included in the newsletter.

### **CURRICULUM EXPLORATION NIGHTS**

Periodically, CSI will hold a Curriculum Night. These evenings are important to understanding the inquiry curriculum, provide parents with knowledge and experience about classroom strategies, and allow students an opportunity to showcase their learning. Curriculum Nights usually take place in classrooms and often give families a demonstration of a specific aspect of CSI curriculum.

Students are encouraged to come with their families. Students and younger siblings must remain in the classrooms with their families during the evening since child supervision is not available. We appreciate your support of your children and their learning.

### **FIELD STUDIES**

CSI students are fortunate to engage in many field studies. Field studies are selected by the teachers and the students to complement aspects of the curriculum or of student inquiry. Some classes will have the opportunity to attend an overnight field studies. This trip is scheduled at least six months in advance and parents receive information regarding the trip and fee payment several months prior to the trip. For any overnight trip, there is also a special parent meeting and question and answer session that parents are encouraged to attend. To begin the year, the entire school participates in a common field study. This trip encourages community across the grade levels and helps new students feel comfortable at the CSI. Field studies are a regular part of the curriculum at CSI. Because of this, we do not allow students to bring electronic games or other similar devices on the study. Most field trips incur a minimal cost. Every effort is made to keep costs low. If for any reason, a family has difficulty with a field study expense, you are encouraged to speak privately with your child's teacher or with the CSI Lead Teacher.

CSI will conduct a background check on all field study chaperones prior to each trip. Associated expenses will be paid by the school.

### **FUNDRAISING**

While the main source of revenue for raising additional funds is CSI's Fund Drive, we will supplement our Annual Fund with fundraising activities that do not involve door-to-door product sales. Below is a list of activities in which we participate throughout the year. Participation in fundraising activities is voluntary.

Questions about any of these activities may be directed to the president of FoCSI or the Lead Teacher.

*Box Tops for Education* --Families collect and bring in "Box Tops" from specially marked General Mills products. These are usually sent to the company twice each year. The primary classes often sort and count the box tops during math workshop to prepare for shipment. Notification of collection deadlines are published in the school newsletter.

*Cards from Local Stores*--Local stores often donate a small portion of sales to the school. Any cards that are used for check out scanning are distributed. Kroger and Publix--Scan a card at check out with pre-coded ID no. for CSI. Recycling--Empty printer and toner cartridges and old cell phones are collected in the office for reimbursement from an educational corporation. Families may want to consider collecting these items from relatives or from their work places. Items may be turned into the office. We have a contact that will refill these cartridges at a more reduced rate.

Book Fairs--Fairs are held twice each year. Often families use this opportunity to purchase books for the classroom in honor of a student's birthday or as a holiday gift. This helps to build classroom libraries and the school receives books based on the amount that we purchase as a school. Teachers usually register a "Wish List" at the check out table.

## **GRADUATION**

At the close of the school year, CSI hosts a special celebration for its fifth/sixth graders. All students attend this celebration and the junior students participate in the ceremony along with the fifth graders. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the junior class traditionally hosts a reception for the fifth/sixth graders and their families. Graduation takes place in gathering area. All families are welcome to attend.

## **GRANDPARENT'S DAY**

CSI is pleased to welcome grandparents and other special friends and relatives on this special day. Through the school's newsletter, families are invited to submit addresses to the main office for invitations to this event. Visitors are invited to an informal reception with an overview of CSI and then invited into classrooms. We close the visit with a school wide Gathering.

## **INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING**

Students engage in inquiry when they are invited to pose and investigate questions or issues they find compelling. Through this investigative process, broad themes, concepts, or topics of study emerge with all participants in the classroom functioning as teachers and learners. Teachers align this process with the skills, standards, and

goals appropriate for the age level of the students. Students are encouraged to explore, think, ask questions, and solve problems through the perspectives of mathematicians, scientists, historians, artists, musicians, readers, and writers. The application of these multiple perspectives broadens student knowledge and fosters an appreciation of the disciplines. This effective approach supports and challenges students and provides them with opportunities to develop ownership in their learning. Additionally, strong community bonds are built between students, teachers, and parents of CSI families.

### **OPENING AND CLOSING PICNIC**

One of the great joys at CSI is our family picnics. We begin and close each year with a family picnic. The Opening Picnic is a time for new families to be welcomed to our community and for old families to reunite. The Closing Picnic honors the graduating fifth graders and features songs and well-wishes from each of the classes.

### **PARENT RESOURCE LIBRARY**

Books and information are available to the parents about the inquiry philosophy and a variety of topics related to education. These are located in the small room off from the media center. Parents may take out materials by signing them out and are asked to return the materials within a two week time period.

### **Friends of CSI (FoCSI)**

All families are invited to become members of the Friends of CSI (FoCSI) business provided during the first 20-25 minutes of Curriculum Nights by members of the Friends of CSI (FoCSI) Boards. All families are welcome to participate as committee members, committee chairs, or officers. The Friends of CSI (FoCSI) Board is comprised of the officers. If you are interested in serving on a committee, you may contact the school's office directly or indicate your preference on the Volunteer Form distributed to all families during the first weeks of school. Grandparents are also invited to volunteer!

### **SCHOOL PICTURES**

Twice each year a photographer comes to CSI to take student pictures. Parents receive information concerning dates and payments for these pictures in advance. In the spring, class pictures are also taken during the photo sessions and are available for purchase. Dates for pictures are always listed in the monthly calendar.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK**

The Thought for the Week is presented each week by the class in charge of Gathering for that week. Thoughts are developed by the students and generally

grow out of curriculum content, social issues related to learning, or to world issues. These Thoughts serve as invitations to the rest of the school and provide a weekly focus for sharing learning across the grade levels.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

**“Many hands make light work.”**

There are many, many opportunities for becoming involved with your child’s education at CSI. We welcome all forms of volunteering, from providing refreshments for a class party to providing adult edits during a class Writer’s Workshop, from eating lunch with a class to helping print out pictures from disc on your home computer. CSI highly encourages all families to be involved. We feel strongly that we are a community and that we all benefit from supporting each other!

If you come to volunteer during the school day, remember to sign in at the office and to log in your time. We would also appreciate knowing any off-campus volunteer time. Volunteer hours are reported to the school district office at the end of each school year.

CSI will conduct a background check on all volunteers. Associated expenses will be paid by the school.