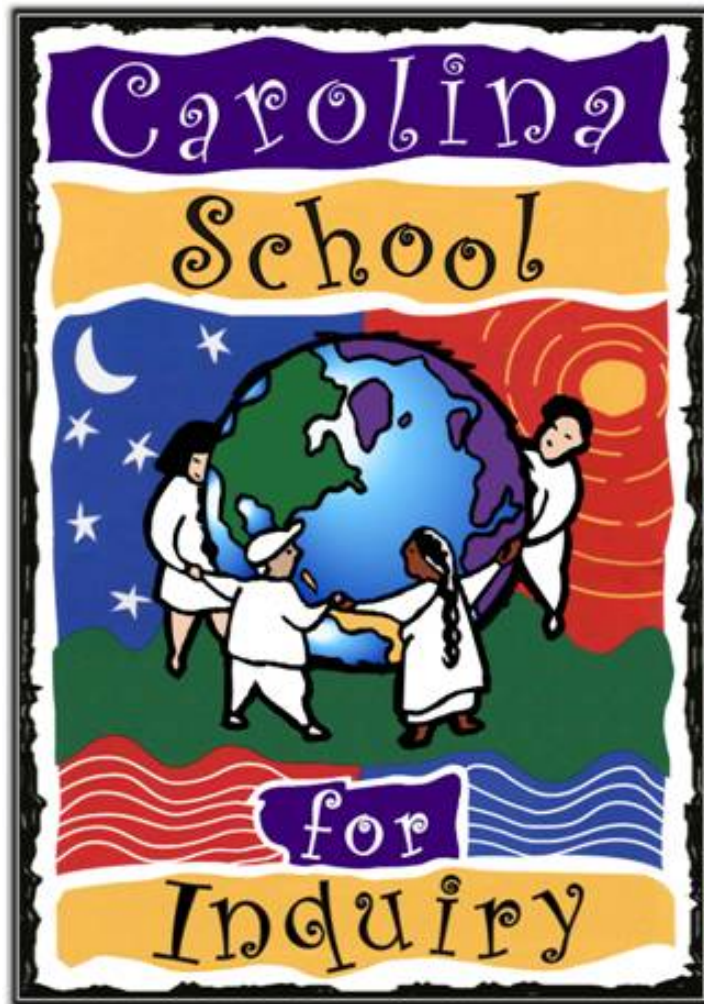


Carolina School for Inquiry
Family Handbook



CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR INQUIRY

"Where Learning Begins with Wonder"

Carolina School for Inquiry (CSI) is a K-5 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 108 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 six 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/1), Early elementary (grades 2/3) and upper elementary (grades 4/5). 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 National Charter School association and 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 once a 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 once a 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. once week. In P.E. students improve motor skills, coordination and physical fitness while learning about organized sports and games.

Spanish Education – All students have Spanish once a week. In Spanish, 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-

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

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.

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 PACT 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

Richland County Recreation Commission's AfterCare

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

Gatherings

Going Home with Another Student or with a Different Ride

Guest Procedures

Health Issues

Homebound Instruction

Home/School Communications

Library Procedures

Lunch Fees

MATs

Medication

Opening/Closing Times

PACT Testing

Research at CSI

Rights and Responsibilities

Snacks

Special Areas

Suspension/Expulsion

Tardy Policy

Transportation

Visitation

Web Pages and Pictures

Withdrawal from CSI

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

AfterCare will be provided for CSI students in collaboration with Richland County Recreation Commission. 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-5 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- 5. 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). 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.

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 Director/Lead Teacher. Serious misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- physical abuse;
- 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 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

Carolina School for Inquiry traffic may enter from Fairfield Road/Route 321. To drop off or pick up 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). Parents needing to park should use the lot in front of the cafeteria, NOT the spaces along the circular drive.

Morning Drop-Off

CSI staff members are on duty from 7:30 a.m. until 8:15 a.m. daily to welcome students in front of the school. Students are to exit from 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 8:15 a.m. must be signed in by a parent in the office and will be marked tardy.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Students will be waiting by class near the end of the circular drive shortly after the 3:00 pm 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 car 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.

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.

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 district 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.

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.

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.

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. Monday Gathering is held around 8:40 a.m. and Friday Gathering is held around 2:40 p.m.

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

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.

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.

LIBRARY PROCEDURES

The Carolina School for Inquiry library is available to all students. Each class will visit the library weekly so that students can check out and return books. Students will also 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. The media center is under construction

LUNCH FEES

Breakfast Lunch

Full Price \$0.75 \$1.35

Reduced Price \$0.30 \$0.40

MEDICATION

Richland District One discourages the use and administration of medicine at school. The district requests that you ask your doctor if your child's prescription can be taken before and after school. If not, 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 pharmacy 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 office upon arrival.

OPENING/CLOSING TIMES

School begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. Students may go into their classrooms at 7:45 a.m. Students are not permitted on campus without a parent prior to 7:30 a.m. Any student arriving between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. should bring a

book to read quietly in the open seating area adjacent to the library while waiting to enter their classroom.

PACT TESTING

All students in South Carolina, grades 3-5 participate in the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), 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 PACT are Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. The PACT 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 Below Basic on one or more sections of PACT 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. PACT 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 Director/Lead Teacher. Tentative class placements will be made by the end of June and the Board of Directors reserves the right to amend the class lists as needed. 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 classroom will work out snack plans beyond school wide plans.

EXTENDED LEARNING AREAS

Weekly classes in art, music, physical education, African dance and Spanish 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, 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 8:15 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. However, a carpooling network will be established to aid parents in transporting their children to school. Please contact the school with questions and visit the CSI website a www.carolinaschoolforinquiry.org to sign up for the 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. Families 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 director must be completed. Student records will not be released until both of these requirements are satisfied.

DREAMS FOR CSI

FUND RAISING EFFORTS

During the year, Friends of CSI (FoCSI) will begin Fund Drives 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 schoolwide activities.

CSI Investigations

Every other Monday, our weekly newsletter, the CSI Investigations is published and sent home with students. This newsletter contains information and announcements about upcoming school wide events. A calendar with important dates is also included in the newsletter.

CURRICULUM 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.

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 graders. All students attend this celebration and the fourth grade students participate in the ceremony along with the fifth graders. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the fourth grade traditionally hosts a reception for the fifth graders and their families. Graduation takes place in gathering arena. 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.

PASSING OF THE CANS

During the month of November, all classes at CSI participate in a Canned Food Drive. On the day of the Food Drive, all the food is brought to the *Gathering Place* for the Passing of the Cans. Students pass each item of food from hand to hand until it reaches the truck where the food is loaded for delivery. As always, parents and CSI families are welcome to join this important and fun event.

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.

TIMELINE OF SCHOOLWIDE ACTIVITIES

Following is a list of what typically happens at CSI in a month by month format so that families have an idea of the yearly activities. Obviously there may be changes as the year progresses. Individual class activities may vary. Therefore, it is important to read the class newsletters and the school newsletter for additional information.

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.

YEARBOOK

CSI will compile a student-produced yearbook or an anthology of student work for publication. Donations to the Fund provide the funding for this publication; thus, there may be a minimal charge to the students for the yearbook. The yearbook is distributed at school. If a student is no longer at CSI when yearbooks are distributed, the book will either be mailed or delivered to them.
