



The Children's School  
at Stephens College

Handbook

## **The Children's School at Stephens College Handbook**

What started as an experimental nursery school in 1925 is today's Children's School at Stephens College (CSSC). The mission of this laboratory school is to provide college students opportunities for direct experiences with children, while providing children from the community with solid, research-based instruction by professors, college students and certified teachers. The school moved to its present location in 1970, the Audrey Webb Child Study Center, at 1400 Windsor Street. Throughout its history, teaching, learning, and children have been at the heart of the Stephens College laboratory school.

### **We Believe**

- Children and college students have an intrinsic desire to learn and construct knowledge by interacting upon the world.
- Children and college students should be active learners who have a variety of opportunities to try out ideas they are learning in real situations.
- Classroom teachers are active facilitators who utilize a variety of methodologies and best practices.
- Education should involve the total person, including social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development with attention to feelings, attitudes, and values.
- Acceptance and support of each individual and the encouragement of social and moral autonomy are central to The Children's School at Stephens College experience for students, families, faculty, and pre-service teachers.
- Students learn best when exposed to a variety of practices, methods, and experiences.
- Artful thinking has application beyond the classroom and supports our ability to ask critical questions, solve problems in innovative ways, and make meaning.

### **CSSC Vision Statement**

The Children's School at Stephens College is a constructivist, holistic-based, arts-integrated laboratory school community. It is comprised of children, families, faculty, and Stephens College students. Collaboration with the college and community provides the opportunity for many educational experiences.

### **Stephens College/Education - Mission/Vision/Values Statement**

**Mission:** Learn. Grow. Lead.

#### **Vision:**

Inspired by its tradition as an undergraduate women's college, Stephens College engages lifelong learners in an educational experience characterized by intellectual rigor, creative expression, and professional practice, supported by accomplished faculty, talented staff, and engaged alumnae/alumni. Graduates of Stephens College are educated in the liberal arts, informed by diverse perspectives, and committed to lives of leadership, integrity, and service.

**Values**

- Stephens College is committed to its Ten Ideals as core values that inspire and enrich our lives:
- Respect for our own dignity and the dignity of others, embodied in a sense of social justice
- Courage and persistence
- Independence, autonomy and self-sufficiency
- Support for others through the willingness to take and give criticism, acceptance and love
- Sensitivity to the uniqueness and fragility of the natural world of which we are part
- Responsibility for the consequences of our choices
- Belief in our changing selves and in our right to change
- Creativity in the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of life
- Intelligence that is informed and cultivated, critical yet tolerant
- Leadership which empowers others

**Curriculum**

The Laboratory School follows a constructivist curriculum that supports the ever-changing and developing child. This curriculum is child-initiated, providing opportunities for the children that support and enrich their development, learning, and growing independence. Curriculum development at CSSC provides the framework for planning and carrying out work with children and their families. The Laboratory School's curriculum is child-centered, interest-based, and hands-on to encourage each child's growing independence. Although planned units of studies may be used on occasion, children's interests are considered and the curriculum is adapted as needed. Each preschool room is designed with interest centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sensory, library, music & movement, and science), and children choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day. Each program includes a balance of child and teacher activities designed to actively engage children in learning throughout the day and promote their creative expression. Assessment is an integral part of curriculum planning. Monitoring and documentation of children's participation within the learning environment is on-going. Children's interests, strengths, and needs are used to shape curricular decisions.

The community plays a large part in the child's world. Community perspectives are a consideration in planning activities and curriculum. Community personnel often come to the center to share with the children. The Stephens College community is used in curriculum planning.

Curricular decisions are closely linked and shaped by the on-going assessment. Decisions are based on the fundamental concepts of developmental and culturally appropriate anti-bias practice. Theory and research in child development, family studies, early childhood, and elementary education guide the curriculum and assessment practices of CSSC programs.

## **Programs**

Our quality programs include a morning half-day preschool program, a full-day preschool program, and an elementary (K-5) program. All three programs offer an integration of the arts, sciences, and technology throughout the curriculum. The preschool program (ages 3-5) is designed to support the whole child, including social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. The elementary classroom is an authentic multi-age setting, where children are grouped by ability rather than age. The curriculum is child-driven and teacher-facilitated. The curriculum includes direct and indirect instruction of literacy, math, social studies, science, art, music, theatre, and dance, and is heavily cross-curricular and arts-integrated.

## **Faculty and Staff**

CSSC children are taught by experienced, certified teachers, with Stephens College education majors as assistants.

### *Classroom Teachers*

Elizabeth Watson, ABD in Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum, Director

Rachel Johnson, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, elementary

Sarah Parks, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, elementary

Peter LeMear, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, elementary

Ariel Robinson, Ph.D, Learning, Teaching and Curriculum, preschool

Taylor Midgley, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, preschool

Erin Bradley, B.S. in Elementary Education, preschool

Jennie Arnold, BFA in Musical Theater, preschool

### *Education Program Faculty*

Sean Livengood-Clouse, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Education

Sharon Schattgen, Ph.D.

Elizabeth Watson, ABD.

### *Staff*

Stacey Anderson, B.S. in English Writing and Literature, Administrative Assistant

## **College Students**

CSSC provides opportunities for college students to observe and interact with children in various ways to develop a frame of reference concerning the growth, development and behavior of children. These experiences allow students to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities, observe children's reactions to the routines of the day, study their progress, and develop skills in interacting positively with both individual children and groups.

## Policies / Procedures

### Classroom times:

A.M. Half Day Preschool	8:30-11:30
Full Day Preschool	8:30-3:30
Elementary	8:30-3:30

### Arrival/Departure Procedures

#### *Preschool Arrival/Departure*

Preschool children need to be dropped off and picked up in their classrooms. Friends and family can drop-off and pick-up their children ten minutes before and up to ten minutes after class times. If you arrive before 8:20 a.m., please wait with your child outside the classroom until school starts. Friends and families are required to sign-in and out daily and need to touch base with teachers during these times so the teachers are aware of the child's arrival/departure.

Friends and family must personally drop-off and pick-up their child in his or her classroom. Children are not allowed to enter or leave the classroom area without an adult.

#### *Elementary Arrival/Departure*

Children may be dropped off at the Ripley Street drop-off zone (yellow) between 8:20 and 8:30 a.m. Please note that no parking is allowed; abandoned vehicles will be towed. A teacher will accompany children from the drop-off zone to the Elementary classroom. Children may also be dropped off at Audrey Webb between 8:15 and 8:20 a.m. to be accompanied by staff to the library. Parking is allowed in the Audrey Webb lot and in the Lela Raney Wood visitor's lot for children dropped off after 8:30 a.m. Please accompany children dropped off after 8:30 a.m. to the Elementary classroom. Parent parking is not allowed in the library parking lot. A teacher will accompany all elementary school children from the library to the Ripley Street pick-up zone for pick-up between 3:30 and 3:40 p.m. Children not picked up by 3:40 p.m. will return to Audrey Webb for Extended Day. Parents may park in the Audrey Webb lot or the Lela Raney Wood lot to pick up children after 3:40 p.m.

***If someone other than family members or caregivers is picking up a child, they must be listed on the emergency card (as someone authorized to pick up your child) and bring a picture ID. If someone other than an authorized person will be picking up your child, you must notify the school/teachers in advance. (For the first few weeks of enrollment, family members and caregivers may be asked to show a picture ID as well. This is for the protection of your child, so please comply willingly with these requests.)***

**All children must be in car seats in compliance with Missouri Law. Children not in compliant car seats will be reported.**

### **Late Pick-up**

CSSC understands that delays can occur at any time. If you are delayed, please contact the school office (573-876-7260) and let them know the estimated time you will be picking up your child. If Extended Day is in session, your child will be sent there and you will be assessed a fee for the time utilized. If you are delayed in picking up your child from Extended Day, you will be given a written reminder of the school policy on the first occasion. On subsequent occasions, you will be assessed a \$10 charge for every thirty minutes past 5:30 p.m. If this occurs more than two times, the privilege of after school care will be revoked. If we have not been able to reach a family member and/or someone on the pick-up list by 7:00 p.m. the police will be called.

### **Parking**

The parking lot at the Audrey Webb Child Study Center is for family use. Please be respectful of others when you are coming and going. If the lot is full, legal street parking may be available on nearby connecting streets. If you are doing a quick drop-off or pick-up, you may park on the east side of Melbourne Avenue with your flashers on. We do ask you to find a legal spot if you plan to stay longer than five minutes.

### **Payment**

#### *Tuition*

Tuition is paid monthly, September – May. Tuition is billed by the Stephens College Accounting/Finance office the first of each month and payment is due by the last day of each month. Your check should be made payable to **Stephens College** and mailed to **Stephens College Accounting/Finance Office, Box 2006, Columbia, MO 65215**. Families will also be required to sign a tuition agreement form yearly stating the agreed-to monthly tuition payment.

#### *Meals and Snacks*

CSSC provides snacks for preschool and for afternoon extended day. Please be sure that you have informed the school of any food allergies.

#### *Food Allergies*

Please supply detailed information on the Family Food Allergy Health History Form in the enrollment packet about any allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. Teachers need to be informed at the beginning of the year of any foods a child may not eat. In addition, an Emergency Action Plan will need to be in place. Information supplied on Family Food Allergy Health History Form will be kept confidential in the school office.

#### *Lunch*

Children enrolled in CSSC have the option of bringing a lunch or purchasing a sack lunch for \$3.15. Families are billed for lunch at the end of each month by Stephens College and checks should be made payable to **Stephens College** and returned to **Stephens College Accounting Office, Box 2022, Columbia, MO 65215**.

### ***Extended Day Program***

Extended Day is available from 7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. for \$4.00/hr, Monday – Friday. You also have the option of being billed monthly at a 15% discount. Those options will be placed on the tuition agreement form to be signed at the beginning of each school year. Families are billed at the end of each month by Stephens College, and checks should be made payable to ***Stephens College*** and returned to ***Stephens College Accounting Office, Box 2022, Columbia, MO 65215.***

### **Withdrawal**

If you decide to withdraw your child from The Children’s School at Stephens College, please inform your child’s teachers and the school office. You will be responsible for paying the full month’s tuition.

### **Severe Weather/Winter Conditions**

CSSC will close for inclement winter weather. If road conditions warrant cancellations for CSSC due to inclement winter weather, announcements of school closings will be on the following TV stations: KOMU-TV, Channel 8; and ABC-17, Channel 17. In addition, we will email parents if school is closed.

### **Emergency Situations and Drills**

Students will participate in scheduled fire, tornado, and active shooter drills throughout the school year. All staff members and students are given information about safety procedures appropriate for such situations. In the event of an actual emergency, family members will be notified through email and are encouraged to opt into Stephens College Emergency System.

#### *Fire*

**Audrey Webb:** The building is equipped with a central fire alarm system located in the basement of Audrey Webb. Stephens Security and the Columbia Fire Department will respond when the fire alarm is activated. There are fire extinguishers and smoke detectors throughout the building and in each classroom. If we are instructed to evacuate the premises, teachers will escort students to their assigned meeting place by the back fence on the school playground.

**Penthouse:** Hugh Stephens Resource Library has a central fire alarm system. The control panel for the system is located on the north side of the basement of the library. Stephens Security and the Columbia Fire Department will respond when the fire alarm is activated. There are fire extinguishers and smoke detectors throughout the building and in each classroom. If we are instructed to evacuate the premises, teachers will escort students to their assigned meeting place directly west of the front of Walter Hall.

#### *Tornado*

**Audrey Webb:** Teachers and Students will be notified of severe weather by their floor monitors. When notified of a Tornado Warning, teachers and students will seek shelter in the basement located in room 119.

Penthouse: Teachers and students will be notified of severe weather by their floor monitors. When notified of a Tornado Warning, teachers and students will seek shelter in the basement of Hugh Stephens Resource Library.

### *Active Shooter*

The teachers at the Children's School attend Active Shooter training. This training is conducted through Stephens College Security. Families will be notified how and when CSSC will conduct active shooter drills.

### **Visitors**

Visitors are welcome to observe our programs. When coming to observe preschool, please sign-in at the Audrey Webb front office. When coming to observe elementary, please go to the main entrance located on the west side of the Hugh Stephens Library and ring the buzzer to be let into the elementary classroom.

### **Clothing**

We will be going outside every day, weather permitting, so please dress your child accordingly. Children at CSSC will be playing, exploring, and getting dirty, so please dress your child in comfortable, durable clothing. Preschool children are asked to bring a change of clothes to keep at school. Elementary children need to bring an extra pair of shoes for the playground and may bring a change of clothes.

### **Items from Home**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home unless requested by the teachers (show-and-tell or share days, for example). Full-day preschoolers are permitted to bring a blanket and nap buddy for afternoon rest time. We encourage children to bring books to share that pertain to classroom studies, but please be sure these are clearly labeled.

### **Rest Period**

Children in the full-day preschool program will have a rest period in the afternoon. The school provides cots for those who nap, but will need a small sleeping bag that will have to go home at the end of every week to be washed and returned on Monday. Sleeping bags must be able to fit inside students cubbies.

### **Birthdays and Special Occasions**

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please talk with the teachers to schedule the best time. We do not allow food to be brought in to the classroom for birthday celebrations.

### **Field Trips**

The majority of our field trips will be within walking distance of the school. We visit campus locations such as the stables, the library, and the post office. We also take regular walks to Lion-Stephens Park. We will keep you informed of any upcoming field trips and always welcome family volunteers. If we leave campus all students are required to have an additional permission form.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost items are either turned in to the office or with your child's teacher. There is a lost and found located outside of the two middle preschool rooms in Audrey Webb.

**Children with Special Needs**

Our school welcomes children with a variety of gifts and needs. We know that children with diagnosed special needs deserve the best in quality education, but are aware we are not equipped to meet all of these needs. Children must be toilet trained and independent in the bathroom before they attend. All written material about the child must be shared with the teachers and director so the school can make informed decisions concerning acceptance and may properly plan for each child.

The classroom teachers will conference with the family to set up an educational plan to be used. If the parents do not comply with the plan or, if after a reasonable trial, the school feels unable to meet the needs of the child, the school will recommend the child be withdrawn. The director, the teachers, and parents will determine whether a child needs an aide. The hiring of an aide will be done by the director, but the salary of the aide will be the parents responsibility. There are children who have undiagnosed special needs. Any time after a child has enrolled in our program, the teachers have the right to:

- Conference with the family
- Recommend evaluations
- Create an educational plan.

After a full evaluation, the family must agree to follow the recommendations of the evaluation team and agree to follow the educational plan. If the family does not comply or, if after reasonable trial, the school feels unable to meet the needs of the child, the school can require that the child be withdrawn from the school.

**Discipline Policy**

The Children's School at Stephens College believes that classroom management should be a collaborative effort with the families, children, and teachers. Our primary focus is to support the academic, socioemotional development of every student. We seek to promote a love of learning, a sense of responsibility, and respect for others. We support children in making positive behavior choices to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all.

CSSC utilizes positive reinforcement, redirection, and clear expectations to help children be successful in the classroom. If a child does not meet behavior expectations, he/she is given verbal instruction and redirection to remind him/her of expectations. If this is not successful, the child will be instructed to take a break from the current activity (e.g., sitting in a calm, safe space within the teacher's sight). After a short period of time, the teacher and child will discuss the incident, the expected behavior, and ways to respond differently in the future. The teacher will then help the child re-enter the classroom activity. If the inappropriate behavior continues, an incident report may be filled out and shared with the family/parent.

If inappropriate behaviors persist, the family will be asked to meet with the teaching staff. Together, we will evaluate the situation, discuss possible strategies, develop an action plan, and establish a timeline for success.

Additional conferences may be held to evaluate progress and make revisions to the plan. If the behavior does not improve, it may be necessary to withdraw the child from the program.

**Please note: Careful consideration is given to individual situations. Suspensions and expulsions will be considered when behavior is disruptive and detrimental to the operation of the school.**

## **Health Policies**

The Department of Health has established certain requirements and guidelines regarding children's health in an educational setting. These requirements are meant to protect all of the children in the program. Therefore, we ask for your cooperation in complying with these rules.

### **Immunization**

Immunizations are essential for the protection of children and ARE REQUIRED BY MISSOURI LAW FOR STUDENTS TO BE ENROLLED IN AND ATTEND SCHOOL. (MO State Law 19 CSR 20-28.010; sections 167.181, 192.006.1, and 210.003)

Family members or guardians of each child must furnish the school with satisfactory evidence of immunization in the form of a statement, certificate, or record from a physician or other health facility or a statement of medical or religious exemption from immunizations against diseases. The school should be informed of immunizations a child receives after enrollment in order to maintain current and accurate information on the child's health record as required by state law.

### **Communicable Diseases**

If your child is exposed to or contracts a communicable disease, please report this information to the school. We are required to notify all families when a child contracts a communicable disease, such as flu, chicken pox, measles, conjunctivitis (pink eye), impetigo, head lice, etc. (Your child's name will be kept confidential.)

When your child is well, you will need to provide written verification from your child's physician stating that the condition is no longer contagious and that it is safe for your child to attend school.

### **Illnesses**

For the health and safety of everyone, children who are ill may not attend The Children's School at Stephens College. If your child becomes ill while in attendance at CSSC, you will be notified to pick up your child. Please list the name and phone number of two or more adults who can pick up and care for your child if we are unable to contact you. This information should be placed on the emergency information sheet stored in our front office. Please keep this information current.

If you know your child will be absent due to illness, please notify Stacey Anderson in the Audrey Webb office at 876-7260.

We are committed to safeguarding the health of all children attending so please follow these guidelines when deciding if your child is well enough to attend:

<b>Symptom/illness</b>	<b>Keep child home until...</b>
Fever (100 or above)	Fever registers below 100 without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours
Runny nose with discoloration of mucus	Mucus/discharge is of normal color
Rash/ringworm	Physician determines the cause and recommends when the child can return to school
Red, watery, or irritated eyes/Pink eye	Physician determines the cause and recommends when the child can return to school
Vomiting or diarrhea	Child is free of vomiting and diarrhea for at least 24 hours and able to participate in normal daily activities
Draining sore	Physician determines the cause and recommends when the child can return to school
Head lice	No nits or lice are present (We will perform a check before child re-enters the classroom)

Children who are being treated with antibiotics for any illness must complete a full 24 hours of treatment before returning to school. This means if we send your child home at 11:00 am but the child does not receive his/her first dose of antibiotics until 3:00 pm, he/she cannot return to school the next morning.

### **Medication (Prescription and Non-prescription)**

The Children's School at Stephens College does not have a registered nurse on staff and therefore cannot administer any medication not prescribed by a physician. All prescription medication must remain in its original container and be registered with the administrative assistant in the school office where it will be stored. A separate form is needed for each medication; forms are available from the Director. It is the family member /guardian's responsibility to retrieve the medication at the end of the day.

### **Accidents or Injuries**

CSSC makes every effort to ensure the safety of all children. If an accident occurs, the teachers will notify parents, either at pick-up or immediately by phone. The teachers will fill out an accident report form, sending one copy home with the family and keeping a copy at school. For minor injuries such as scrapes, scratches, and bruises, the appropriate first aid will be applied. This aid includes cleaning injuries that break the skin and applying a cold compress to bumps and bruises.

For serious incidents, CSSC will call 911 and you immediately. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital if parents/guardians have not yet arrived. We will make every effort to ensure your child's comfort and safety until you arrive at the hospital. Please be sure that the office has updated information for you and your emergency contacts. These same guidelines are applied when off campus.

### **Child Abuse Policies**

As professionals in contact with children and their families, we at the CSSC are required by law to help the DFS become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is the policy of the CSSC staff and faculty to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DFS immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours the same information as reported by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff and faculty during the investigation of the reported incident. The phone number to report is: 1-800-392-3728 and the website is: <https://apps.dss.mo.gov/OnlineCanReporting/default.aspx>.

### **Family Involvement**

CSSC encourages all families to become actively involved in their child's education. We believe that a strong home-school relationship is an integral part of a child's education. You are always welcome to visit and observe your child in the classroom. We encourage you to share any special talents, skills, or interests that the children would enjoy learning and experiencing. Please talk to your child's teachers about ways you can participate.

### **Process for Orienting Families to the Program**

Before the school year begins, each family will receive mailings through the summer. An orientation open house for new and current families will be offered the week before school begins. Your family will come to the school, meet the teachers, see the classroom, and participate in an orientation meeting to help in becoming acclimated with some of the daily procedures of elementary and preschool. During this time, the family will have the opportunity to ask questions about the program with the teachers and director.

### **Family Communication**

We encourage families to ask questions and share concerns with your child's teachers. We feel that a positive relationship based on open communication is a vital component of your child's feelings of happiness and security at school.

We communicate with families on a daily basis at drop-off and pick-up and on a weekly basis through class newsletters and/or blogs. In addition, teachers will send emails or notes home periodically with updates on your child. Two formal conferences with your child's teachers are scheduled for the year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The conferences are your opportunity to find out how your child is progressing and to discuss any questions you may have. Of course, you are welcome to schedule a conference with your child's teachers at any time throughout the school year if you feel it is necessary.

### **Family Organization**

The family association at CSSC works on fundraising, helps coordinate volunteers, and schedules Teacher Appreciation events. Family members are welcome to join at any time. Please talk with the teachers for more information.

### **Parents Access to Child's File**

#### *Assessment*

Child assessment is a vital and necessary component of all high-quality early childhood and elementary programs. Assessment is important to understand and support children's development. Each classroom completes authentic assessments that encompass all areas of development. Assessment is also essential to document and evaluate how effectively programs are meeting young children's educational needs and to inform program improvement.

#### *Assessment Results*

The information gained during all assessments will be used to develop curriculum, parent education, and evidence for referral.

Teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process to use in planning a curriculum that best meets the needs of all children. If there is an indication of a developmental delay, the teachers will use the information gathered for referral for further diagnostic screenings and assessments.

#### *Confidentiality*

All information gathered about a child is kept confidential. Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel.

- Information obtained and collected by the program will be shared with other staff only on a "need to know" basis.
- Practicum students are not included in discussions of children and assessment/screening results unless the information is relevant to the practicum experience.
- Parents and guardians may ask to view screening and assessment results by asking the classroom teacher or the director.
- All information compiled during assessments will be used to promote the healthy developmental growth of the child. As appropriate, the classroom teacher, the parents, and other essential personnel will be involved in making goals for the child or a referral in cases of developmental delays.
- No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian.

#### *Child Portfolios*

Tools may include checklists, social inventory, anecdotal records, self-reflections, evaluations, samples of work, drawings, paintings, writings, stories and photographs, etc.

**\*\*Parents are welcome to view their child's portfolio at any time.**

### **Parent Grievance**

A parent who has a grievance or complaint about some aspect of the program should first try to settle the grievance directly with the teacher. If the conflict is not resolved, the

grievance should be discussed with the Director of the Lab School. In the event that the conflict remains unresolved, the parties concerned may have the issue discussed with the Dean of Creative and Performing Arts.