

Welcome to Anchor Primer



Getting You Up to Speed with the Anchor Family...

As one of our new families, you're going to discover many new experiences this year. This document aims to give you a heads up on the events and specific ways we do things at Anchor, helping you to feel right at home quickly and comfortably. Items are listed **alphabetically** for easy reference as the year moves along - so keep this primer handy!

Adopt-a-Trail

Our school is located just north of Campbell Creek, along which runs the Campbell Creek Trail. We use the trail at various times during the year, for physical education, athletic practice, cross country skiing, and other purposes. Anchor's Junior High students go down to the trail twice a year and pick up trash, caring for our portion of the trail. You will find a sign on the trail just west of Arctic Blvd. showing our school has adopted this part of the trail.

All Families Open House

Early in February the All Families Open House is an event for current families to visit the classrooms, especially the rooms your children will be moving up to the following year. Teachers are in attendance and student work and projects are on display. The whole family is invited to drop in during the event. Refreshments are served, and the building has a great social atmosphere. This is a wonderful event for prospective new families to attend, so we encourage you to spread the word and invite friends.

Art Fair & Ice Cream Social

Each spring we hold this social event for all families to attend. Preschool - 8th student art is displayed

throughout the school. Ice cream is served, with all the fixings, so families may create their own tasty treats, view the art, and spend time in conversation with each other.



Athletics

Sports are available nearly the entire school year for 5th-8th Graders, with 4th Graders invited to participate for certain sports. Outdoor Soccer is the first sport, with a brief Cross Country Running season held at the same time. Athletics continue with Basketball, Volleyball, Indoor Soccer, and Track, one right after the other. Athletic information is kept available on the Athletic Bulletin Board in the school lobby across from the office, next to the trophy case. This includes participation sign up forms. Students must maintain a minimum "C" average to participate. Practices occur after school, sometimes right away, other times later in the day, as noted on each schedule. We compete in a Christian athletic conference, playing both home and away games. An Athletic Fee is charged for each sport.

Auction

We keep fundraising to a minimum at ALS. Our primary fundraising activity is the school auction. Run by staff and parent volunteers, this great social event helps us fund far more than tuition alone makes possible. Auction participation helps bring parents and supporters closer together as the Anchor Family. For many years we have held the auction downtown at the Egan Center at some point in late October or early November. There are always **many** opportunities to get involved. Ask the school office to put you in touch with our auction coordinator to learn more!

Band

All 4th Graders participate in band as a regular part of our school curriculum (Beginner Band). ALS issues them an instrument for use (unless they already own one they wish to use). The only cost to families is an instrument cleaning fee. Band includes both whole group and small group instruction, and involves numerous performance events. Students are asked to practice regularly at home in order to develop their musical potential. Beyond 4th Grade students are encouraged to continue with band as an optional program, providing their own instruments at that point.

Billing Statements

Monthly billing statements are printed the first business day of each month, reflecting the

monthly tuition charge along with any incidental costs (such as hot lunch and milk purchases). These statements are available on the office counter for a couple of days for pickup and payment; those not picked up are then mailed to families. **We value when you save us the postage.** Payment is due at the beginning of each month; a late charge is assessed if payment has not been received by the 15th of the month. Many families authorize the school to charge a debit or credit card for automatic payment (*we're happy to help you rack up those Alaska Airlines Miles or other reward points, after all*); fill out the form in the school office if interested in this option.

Book Fair

The Scholastic Book Fair is held one week each year, typically in January, organized and run by school parent volunteers. Students are given time during the day to view the books. Purchases may be made in the school office. Book Fair profit is utilized for acquiring new books for the school library each year.

Bookkeepers

Nancy Sarber and Lisa Wilkinson are our school bookkeepers. Should you ever have questions related to your billing statement, a payment, or anything else financially related, Nancy and Lisa are the the best people with whom to speak. They share an office back behind the school

office, around to the right past the school office front desk.

Carnival

Our Parent Council (ALS parent group) hosts the Fall Carnival each year, just a fun evening event for ALS families, their friends, and members of the community. The building is filled with games and activities, and food is sold through the school kitchen. The Carnival has free admission; the sale of food offsets expenses. Many Parent Council activities are led by the parents of a particular class, but Carnival instead has a coordinator who organizes the event (usually a parent who has been around a few years and understands how Carnival works). Parents of **all classes** sign up to help run the games and activities.

Chapel

Most Wednesday mornings we join together as a whole school (PS-8) for Chapel worship, about 30 minutes of praise songs, prayer, a Bible-based message, and the collection of an offering. Students bring money weekly for the offering in support of various organizations and needs we support. Each class takes turns leading Chapel services, and others are led by Principal Chandler and local Lutheran pastors.

Chess Club

2nd Grade teacher Mrs. Donna Josephson runs the Chess Club, an after school weekly activity annually run at some point in the Second Semester. Students in grades 2-8 may sign up (parent-signed permission form must be submitted) to spend an hour after school once each week playing chess, including learning how to play if they don't already know. After weeks of play, Chess Club ends with an in-house Tournament, with the winner's name engraved on a plaque kept in the school office.



Child Watch by Reservation Only

Child Watch is our before and after school care program for students in K-6. Our students may always attend Child Watch before and after school on full school days, with family accounts billed for usage at the hourly rate (see Tuition & Fee Schedule for current rate). On minimum days and non-school days, such as school breaks, Child Watch is available **by reservation only**, meaning we require families to sign up in advance through the school office if they intend to use Child Watch on those days. This allows us to staff appropriately. Be aware, if you make a reservation for use, you will be billed for that day whether or not you actually bring your child.

Choirs

Another extracurricular activity, our music teacher offers after school choirs for students one day each week for 30 minutes. Typically this includes one group for young students and another for older. Participants learn fun and challenging choral music to practice and then perform at numerous offsite venues, including area churches, assisted care centers, and community sites. The choirs also perform in our school music events. Students in Kindergarten-Eighth are welcome to participate.

Churches

ALS is operated by the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage (LSAA). Three churches belong to LSAA: Anchorage Lutheran (near downtown), Beautiful Savior Lutheran (shares our facility), and Zion Lutheran (east side, on Boniface). These churches support us through prayer, volunteering, and funding donations. Students come to know the pastors, each leading some chapels here at school. Pastor Tony Schultz comes to us from Anchorage Lutheran, and Pastor Kyle Mietzner is with Zion. Best known to our students and families is Pastor Jake Dickerhoff of Beautiful Savior Lutheran, as his office is right here in our building. Anchor looks for opportunities to partner with these area churches in ministry events and service activities. All families are welcome at worship services and events of these congregations.

Closing Ceremony

On the final half day of school we end with a Closing Ceremony. We all gather in the Multipurpose Room at 11:00, with students of each grade being recognized for their contributions and accomplishments. The ceremony concludes with the formal closing of the school year and 11:45 dismissal. Parents are encouraged to attend!



Cookie Walk

This Parent Council-sponsored event happens after the K-8 Christmas Program (another after the Preschool program). Families bake dozens of cookies which are submitted for "judging," with simple prizes awarded. All of these cookies are then available after the program in the Cookie Walk. Families make a donation to go through a delicious line gathering a unique plate of Christmas cookies to take home.

East Coast Heritage Tour

Every other year our Junior High (Grades 7 & 8) travels to the East Coast for a 10-day tour of historical and cultural sites. Many adult chaperones choose to travel on this trip as well, along with a number of staff members. Principal Chandler coordinates the trip and travels along. Abbreviated as the ECHT, this trip is a highlight experience for our students, and is such a great tour that we often have nearly as many parents choose to come with as we do students (parents also pay to travel). Destinations of recent trips have included Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Gettysburg, Baltimore, Washington,



D.C., and many sites in between. We travel in the fall of even calendar years. There is considerable expense for the trip; families begin monthly installments

eight months in advance of traveling. The school works to reduce the cost through the school auction, the profit from our hot lunch program, and funds generated through the Junior High Theatre production. Junior High families sometimes choose to participate in direct fundraising activities as well. All Junior High students are expected to travel; on the rare occasion someone will not be going, the parents need to make their own plans for their child's time outside of school.

Email

We use email as a primary tool for written communication. Using email addresses you provide to us, we send out a weekly school newsletter each Thursday, and special announcement blasts whenever appropriate. We also provide you with staff emails as a convenient way to share and request additional information.

Facebook

Anchor has an active Facebook presence, sharing information and photos regarding the many activities

taking place at our school all year long. "Like" our Facebook page today!

Facility Work Days



We periodically schedules days for families of the school and Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church to gather for addressing various cleaning, maintenance, and repair tasks around the facility. This is a great chance for parents to pick up some Families in Partnership volunteer hours. Just come ready to work - no experience necessary.

Fall Drama Production

Our Fall Play is intended to give students an experience with the fun of drama, as well as all of the valuable life lessons that such experiences bring along. Auditions are open to all K-8 students, with a limited number of roles available. No students are guaranteed a role in the play; taking a risk is one of the lessons this drama experience teaches. Students must have a minimum "C" average to participate, as this is an extracurricular activity. Rehearsals take place after school over about six weeks mid-way through the First Semester. Recent productions have included "The Spell of Sleeping Beauty," "The Princess With No Name," and "The Bremen Town



Musicians." The fall production is presented in two performances, a Friday evening followed by a Saturday matinee. To attend, audience members purchase tickets through the school office; ticket sales cover the cost of the drama production. Many volunteer opportunities exist in the drama program; watch for details on how you may become involved.

FastDirect

We use the FastDirect Online Student Information System as another means of sharing information with families. This is also the software system we use for a variety of regular tasks at school: tracking attendance and tardiness, hot lunch/milk orders, student grades and publishing report cards, just to name a few. Parents are issued a secure ScreenName and Password to access FastDirect. Once logged in, you'll have 24/7 access to student academic progress (starting at 1st Grade), the ability to send secure messages to teachers, and access to additional information. We encourage families to log onto FastDirect at least once per week.

Field Trips

All classes go on a variety of field trips, as tie in appropriately to the curriculum at their levels. Sometimes transportation is provided by bus; other times we ask for parent drivers. Most field trips are covered through the tuition you already pay, but the occasional trip is more expensive and requires an additional charge, which will be shared on the permission form and charged to your family's account. Permission forms must be signed and returned in order for students to travel off campus for field trips.

FIP Hours

Families in Partnership (FIP) is the volunteer program operated by

our school to secure the involvement of parents in the activities of our program. All families are obligated to contribute 20 hours of service over the course of the year. Volunteer needs are regularly publicized through school and classroom newsletters. Whenever you participate in volunteer hours, be sure to stop in the school office and record the event, date, and hours served in the FIP Book, kept on the front office counter.

Graduation/ Promotion

Our 8th Grade Graduation/ Kindergarten Promotion Service is held one evening the last week of the school year. All school families are invited to attend. Many students of various grade levels will be participating musically at the event honoring these milestones for our 8th Graders and Kindergartners. Photo opportunities will abound. A reception follows, hosted by our Parent Council.

Junior High Theatre

Each year our 7th & 8th Graders present a theatrical production, with each of them fully participating on stage. This is an integral part of our Junior High Curriculum, with most practices taking place during the school day. Mr. Sawyer, uses his theatrical background to work with our students to create this production, with aspects of the drama wrapped into other subject areas. The

Junior High teachers continue to work with students in all curriculum areas while Mr. Sawyer runs daytime practices. Students are typically asked to attend a few Saturday rehearsals, and opportunity is given for parents to be involved as volunteers helping create set, props, and costumes. The end result is an amazing annual production that brings out incredible growth in our students, a fantastic experience for them and delightful entertainment for all. We typically provide two evening performances, and then a Saturday matinee performance. Tickets for the show are sold through the school office, with profits supporting the East Coast Heritage Tour for our Junior High students.

LSSA Day of Blessing

Each year Anchor partners with Lutheran Social Services of Alaska in preparing and distributing Thanksgiving food baskets as part of the community-wide Day of Blessing. Our school conducts a food drive, gathering items LSSA assigns to us such as cans of green beans or corn, and on the actual day our Junior High students and staff members spend the day at Central Lutheran Church putting food into baskets for distribution. That distribution of food begins late in the afternoon; many of our students and staff members stay to participate in this aspect of the event as well.

Meet Your Desk Day

The Sunday before the first day of school we hold our Meet Your Desk Day event. All classrooms are ready for the first day as families stop in to visit. Students are able to see where they will be sitting to start the year, while reconnecting with friends, excited for the start of another year. **Students bring all of their school supplies on this day**, so that we are already settled in and set to begin on the first day of school.



Music Productions

We have multiple musical performances each year. We have a major performance just before Christmas and another one in mid-spring, and these two alternate formats. If the Christmas performance is a concert, then the spring production is a program with acting and songs, and vice versa. Programs/musicals include only the K-6 students, while concerts include all K-8, as this will include K-6 music class songs as well as pieces prepared by the after school choirs, the 4-8 Band, and the Junior High Handbell Choir. Practices for Christmas and the Spring productions take place during the school day.



The performances are free, with a free-will offering collected in support our music department. The last big music production of the year is the Spring Concert, which features pieces just by our performance groups: the Band, extracurricular Choirs, and Junior High Handbell Choir. This event begins with a “bring your own” dinner gathering, where families bring their meals and sit together enjoying the company of other Anchor families, all at tables and chairs in the Multipurpose Room. No food is provided, just fellowship together. The concert begins as we finish

eating, a great evening together for the Anchor family. Watch for this on the school calendar, and plan to join us!

National Lutheran Schools Week

The 2,400+ Schools of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) celebrate God’s gift of Lutheran Schools on the last full week of January, referred to as NLSW for short. At Anchor, we fill the week with special activities, dress up days, and other events. The look of NLSW changes each year, but we are always focused on celebrating our thankfulness that God has provided for the existence of schools like Anchor Lutheran through a Christian school system that dates back to the 1840’s and continues strong today. We celebrate NLSW the last full week of January.



Northwest District Teachers’ Conference

K-8 is out of session over three days each fall as our teachers travel to the annual fall conference of Lutheran educators from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Montana. This is a time for teachers to gain new ideas and stay current on today’s educational trends. Child Watch is available by reservation only on these staff training days.

Parent Classroom Information Night

Join us for this event at the beginning of each school year, starting with a dinner sponsored by the Parent Council (served by the Junior High parents). After this social meal and opening information from Principal Chandler, the teachers present brief programs in their classrooms, sharing with parents information and procedures, and answering questions. Teachers offer the presentation twice to accommodate those with multiple children.

Parent Council

Anchor's parent/teacher group is known as Parent Council. Its purpose is to empower well-informed parents for service in volunteer leadership and support roles for the benefit of the children, families, and staff of ALS. Parent Council organizes the efforts of parents to operate many of the "family-building" events of our school year. Meetings will be held periodically for organizational and informational purposes, helping parents to connect with each other and to match their gifts with volunteer opportunities.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice each year for K-8. The first is just after the First Quarter, and we ask all families to schedule a time through our school office to attend a conference for each child. Midway through the Third Quarter we hold Optional Conferences, scheduled by request of the teacher or parent. This second conference is only scheduled if either the teacher or parent feel it is needed. For each of these conferences we dismiss at 11:45 one day, holding conferences throughout that afternoon and evening, and then we have no school the following day, holding more conferences all morning and into the noon hour. Child Watch is available by reservation only both of these days.

Picnic

On the last full day of the school year we enjoy the School Picnic. Games and activities are planned for most of the day, including water fun if the weather cooperates. A hot dog picnic lunch is provided. **Parent volunteers** prepare and serve the lunch, as well as assist the staff with supervision on this fun day.

Picture Days

Alaska's Focus Photography (formerly TSS Photography) comes onto our campus to take student photos twice each year, taking both individual and class photos. The second visit is for photo retakes, as well as to catch anyone missed the first time. You will be provided with order forms, a great opportunity for child portraits, but you are under no obligation to purchase. We utilize the individual photos for our annual school yearbook.

Read 'n Write Rondy

Over a four-week period of winter (typically February) we participate in this fun event intended to encourage and cultivate a joy for reading and writing in our students. Each student is encouraged to make a reading goal, with some sort of fun incentive offered to help motivate them to achieve it. We also participate in special activities during these weeks, such as "Stop, Drop, and Read" periods spontaneously occurring during the day, special times and themes

for creative writing, and opportunities to share their writing with the school.

Re-enrollment

Enrollment for the next school year opens February 1. Re-enrollment is simple. We send home paperwork in late January which includes a Financial Agreement that needs to be completed and returned. At that point the Registration Fee for the following year is to be paid or charged to your account. Special Registration Fee discounts are offered as incentives for February re-enrollments only. Students may be re-enrolled only if the family's financial account is in good standing (no outstanding balance) and re-enrollment has not been restricted due to disciplinary situations.



Report Cards

For students in 1st - 8th Grades, report cards are published at the end of each quarter electronically via our FastDirect Student Information System. No paper copy is provided (although you certainly may print one out at home if you wish). Kindergarten grades are not recorded on FastDirect; the Kindergarten report card each quarter is emailed to you directly from the teacher. A final “official” signed report card for each student is mailed home at the end of the school year, shortly after we dismiss for the summer.

Seward SeaLife Center Trip

Each year some of our younger students partner up with some of our older students for an overnight field trip to the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward. The students along with the teachers and a few adult chaperones travel by charter bus, enjoying an educational program and spending the night in the Center. It is another highlight event for Anchor. This experience is for our 1st Graders and typically 5th or 6th Graders.

Ski Club

When we get past the darkest days of winter and the temperatures start to warm up, but there is still plenty of snow, we know it’s time for Ski Club! Students



from all grade levels, and their parents, are invited to bring cross country ski gear and go out on the Campbell Creek Trail with some of our teachers right after school once a week,

typically beginning in February and running into March. There is no cost for this activity other than acquiring your own ski equipment.

Sleds

Students enjoy our sledding hill all winter long, at least once we have sufficient snowfall. We have a few old plastic sleds here at school, but many students

enjoy bringing their own sleds to use and share. We do need to emphasize that sharing part; students are not to bring sleds which they are not comfortable sharing with other students. If a sled is brought, it is to be set outside against the building on the playground side, just around the corner from our parking lot. Please understand we cannot be responsible for sled theft. We



have no history of sleds “walking off”, but the potential exists, as the sleds obviously aren’t supervised as they sit alone out in the cold. We recommend they be taken home again each night.

Spelling & Geography Bees

The Geography Bee takes place during each January. Competitors from 4th-8th Grade will have already earned their way into the Bee through class activities, and compete to become school champion and earn the right to represent Anchor at the State level National Geographic School Geography Bee in downtown Anchorage later in the year. The School Spelling Bee involves students from Grades 3-8 competing to become school champion, and then move onto the City Spelling Bee also held later in the school year. Our spelling bee is held a few weeks after the geography bee. Students earn the right to compete at the school level through excellent spelling in the classrooms. Parents and other guests are always invited to join us for each of these Bee events.

School Spirit Days

We have many of these over the course of the school year, roughly once a month, although we have extra



days during National Lutheran Schools Week in January. Students will be encouraged to dress up by unique themes to show their school spirit on these days.

Standardized Testing

We are now using MAP Testing to help track our students growth and progress. This test is given to our students multiple times throughout the year. These tests are given via the iPad. We administer standardized assessment to our 2nd-8th Grade students. We give the children plenty of time to complete the tests. We ask for help from parents, in that it is vital that students follow normal routines and eating patterns if the tests are going to accurately reflect student learning. We also rely on parents to avoid unnecessary absences during testing; testing dates are published. If your child misses a test or requires an excessive amount of time to complete the test, we may need to have him or her stay after school. Results from the testing help us make curriculum choices as we move from year to year, as well as to identify possible learning challenges. Results of the annual testing are mailed home during the summer.



Summer Program

Anchor runs a very popular summer care program for students in Preschool - Grade 6, operating most of the summer. This program is packed with activities, water fun days, bicycling, and field trips. If you would like such activities for your children, and particularly if you need summer care, we encourage you to sign up early! Summer sign up typically is available by early April.



Thanksgiving Lunch

The Parent Council arranges for the preparation and serving of a wonderful Thanksgiving lunch for our

students, staff, and a few guests each year, the Thursday before Thanksgiving. This involves volunteers already the day prior working on food preparation, and then plenty of servers. Extra volunteers are always welcome.



VIP Lunches

Periodically each year we host VIP Lunch Days, when parents and other important adults in our children's lives are the VIPs invited

to lunch with us. Students gather in the Multipurpose Room to eat lunch together, the students sitting with their guests. Guests report directly to the Multipurpose Room upon arrival at or just before noon, and the children find them as they come for lunch at noon. We always host these on one of our pizza hot lunch days, with family pizza order forms sent out in advance so that our guests may choose to order as well. People are welcome to bring their own lunches instead. Eating is fun and social for about 25 minutes, after which we have a short program, entertainment, or announcements. All is done within 35 minutes. We hope you will join us for our VIP Lunches this year.

Yearbook

We take many, many photos over the course of a school year, doing our best to capture the memories of the events of each busy year. These photographs are used to create a yearbook that is completed and published over the summer, given to every child in K-8 the following fall. We even make a point to track down our 8th Grade graduates and those who move out of state to get them their yearbooks. There is no additional cost for the yearbook, a keepsake to enjoy just for being part of our Anchor family.