



A Maryland EXCELS, Quality Level 3 School

Parent's Handbook

2020-2021

Revised August 2020

St. James' Children's School

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Covid-19 Pandemic Response

St. James' Children's School is committed to providing a healthy and safe learning environment for our families and staff. In response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the school will follow ongoing mitigation protocols and guidelines set by the State of Maryland Department of Education Childcare Recovery Plan, the Maryland State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. Current procedures are listed below and in place until further notice. Information will be updated as needed.

An additional \$50 per month Covid Health and Safety Fee will be added to each month's tuition for the 2020-21 school year for Covid related costs, to accommodate the mandated cleaning of all materials used each day.

We have also adjusted our hours for families by 30 minutes in the evening to allow time for equipment cleaning and storage.

***The school will be open to families from 7:30am-6:00pm.**

***The School Age program will be open to families 7:30am-5:00pm.**

Adjusted Staff to Child ratios

We anticipate having fewer children in each age group as we begin the school year.

Infants, Older Infants and Toddlers: 6 children/2 teachers

Twos: 8 children/2 teachers

Threes: 12 children/2 teachers

Fours and Pre-K: 13 children/2 teachers

These ratios may change as the State progresses to Phase 3 of the *Road to Recovery*.

Temperature Checks and Health Screening for Staff and Children

Current State guidelines require temperature checks and Health Screening Logs for all staff and children before entering the program.

School staff will receive one family at a time in the school lobby, ask health screening questions and perform a temperature check using a contactless thermometer. If the child is well, a class teacher or administrator will escort the child with their daily belongings to their class door. At pick up, class teachers have belongings packed and in the hallway or outside for easy pickup.

Our School Age program students will be dropped off and picked up at the "Kiss and Ride" in front of the parish hall. The parish hall has an upstairs entrance from the Church's front parking lot (look for the burgundy awning.) Please drive up or walk up with your child to the awning at the front of the parish hall. Your child may also exit the car alone and independently walk up the sidewalk to the door with

their belongings for the day. The child will ring the doorbell and a staff member will meet your child at the doorway.

Please check your child's temperature each morning before going to school. Record the daily temperature in the Tadpoles Parent app under Notes, and your answers to the required health screening questions as attached. Tadpoles is adding a new Health Log to their system for the new year, so if that is completed, all families can use that each morning. If this new tadpoles system is not ready we will email updated information about how to complete the morning health check before we open on Sept 1.

Parents must wait for the child to be cleared to enter the building before leaving!

If you have children in both the upstairs and downstairs classrooms, please drop off your older child in front of the parish hall then drive around to the school entrance to walk up and drop off younger siblings.

At pick up, families are asked to wait outside the upstairs parish hall entrance for their child. Families may either send a text via Tadpoles to inform the school that you have arrived in the parking lot or may also walk up to the awning of the parish hall (socially distanced) to pick up your child. Press the upstairs doorbell to alert staff that you have arrived. One of our staff will sign your child out for the day and will make sure they have their belongings before rejoining you to go home. If the children are already outside with their belongings, they may be picked up directly outside, when doing so please remember to keep socially distant from teachers or other parents.

Parents do not need to sign in and out, staff will do so electronically. St. James will add 2 additional temperature checks per day, for staff and children, at approximately 11 am and 3 pm., keeping daily logs of these temperature checks in the classrooms. Please NOTE: Parents/guardians must wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth while dropping off and picking up a child, either inside the lobby or outside.

Increased Physical Distancing, Masks, and No Mixing of Groups

State guidelines require teachers implement social distancing as feasible for each age group, with no mixing of classrooms or staff and parents are to drop off their children either outside or in a lobby area.

Since our staff at St. James works with very young children who are developmentally unable to maintain distance, teachers will all wear masks and sometimes face shields for everyone's protection. Children 4 and over will also be asked to wear masks in class. We have adjusted our staffing so that the staff in each class covers their own breaks and any absences.

Additional Precautions

Families are asked to provide all food in a large “Ziploc style bag/or Bento type box” easily wipeable container instead of a traditional lunch box. The child’s name should be on each bag/box, and staff will wipe them down upon receipt and place them in the refrigerator.

Older classes will arrange for individual sets of markers, glue sticks and scissors, so children can enjoy accessing items when needed without mixing.

Field trips and activities, such as Tumblebus, Soccer, etc. have been postponed until such time that it is safe for children to gather together as a group.

Responding to a positive covid-19 case.

In the event that we have a presumptive or a confirmed positive Covid-19 case, we will follow all guidance by the local health department and our State licensing specialist. **The state has provided these Covid-19 response guidelines for school and Child Care in July of 2020.**

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/decision_aid_flow_diagramv8-final_7.23.20_child_care.pdf

Please contact the school immediately and stay home if your child or an immediate family member exhibits a new cough or shortness of breath or any 2 symptoms for Covid-19! At this point, anyone in a school or child care setting with new cough/shortness of breath or any 2 symptoms of Covis-19 is required to get tested for Covid-19. If the Covid-19 test is negative, then the usual guidelines for returning after illness are followed.

Any staff, child or family member who is exposed to someone with confirmed Covid-19, should remain home and quarantine as directed by their physician or the health department. Should anyone at the school be diagnosed with Covid-19, a classroom or the school may need to close for quarantine for up to 14 days depending on the timing of a possible exposure to others at school.

These requirements may change depending on the most recent guidance from the CDC and other authorities.

Each of us must do our part to keep our entire St. James community healthy. We ask all families and staff to minimize exposure to others outside of their immediate family and their class at St. James. It is extremely important for everyone to consistently maintain best social distancing practices outside of the school, and especially avoid large gatherings or mixing with other groups or travel to areas known to have increased cases of Covid-19.

While we certainly hope that it will not be the case, there may be future instances when it will be necessary for the school to close as the result of a resurgence of COVID-19 in our area. This may include, but will not necessarily be limited to, instances when schools are required to close in

compliance with a federal, state or local government order or when the school is required or advised to close to address a confirmed or suspected outbreak amongst staff or children.

Please be advised that, in the event that St. James must close for any period of time as mandated by the State or Health Department, no refunds will be issued for those periods.

All parents are required to sign and return the Parent Handbook Covid-19 Policy Acknowledgement and Release at the end of this document.

On behalf of the staff of St. James’ Children’s School, we greatly appreciate your cooperation, patience and support during this challenging time. If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the school at 301-762-3246 or email us, preschool@stjamespotomac.org.

Astrid Crookshank, Director
St. James’ Children’s School

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St. James’ Children’s School

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

St. James’ Children’s School is committed to the belief that each child is a child of God, with his or her own unique and precious characteristics. The School provides a program which nurtures every child and encourages his or her growth in an atmosphere of love and respect.

To accomplish this goal, the school adheres to the following principles:

1. To employ a dedicated staff and create a nurturing environment which ensures individual attention to every child.
2. To present an academically challenging and developmentally appropriate program that supports each child’s individual needs and talents.

3. To encourage young children to grow in confidence and self-esteem.
4. To awaken in young children a lively interest in learning and an appreciation of the world around them.
5. To provide an introduction to Christianity through stories, music and a simple chapel service.

PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

St. James' Children's School is a Maryland EXCELS quality rating Level 3 School, as rated by the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE.) Our school has achieved this quality rating based on nationally recognized standards and best practices that exceed state licensing requirements. St. James' Children's School is also a member of the Maryland State Child Care Association, which promotes the growth and development of professional licensed child care and learning centers in Maryland.

St. James' Children's School uses the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved curriculum standards for Infants through Pre-Kindergarten. The School follows the Teaching Strategies: Creative Curriculum and uses this instrument for the basis of daily activities. This program follows a developmentally appropriate continuum that begins with expectations for infants and toddlers and continues through expectations for kindergarten students. The Pre-Kindergarten program also incorporates concepts from Common Core State Standards and is a State accredited program.

Our programs are play based and experiential. Students are encouraged to explore, experiment, and experience developmentally appropriate activities. The content areas are literacy, math, social, emotional and physical development, as well as the arts, scientific thinking, social studies and health/nutrition. Teachers assess the strengths and needs of each child. Teacher-guided and child-selected learning centers are available for students to explore, reinforce, practice and experience new skills. The interactive learning centers provide opportunities for individualized learning styles, interest levels, and social-emotional development skills of children and reflect the interests of the children, their primary languages, and cultural backgrounds. Children are provided opportunities to interact with their peers in a developmentally appropriate environment welcoming all children of all abilities.

As part of our ongoing dedication to nurturing the whole child, St. James' Children's School has created an outdoor classroom to broaden our students' learning experiences. Our outdoor classroom extends learning beyond the classroom walls using elements of nature. Children explore the content areas while enhancing gross and fine motor development, social-emotional development, language development, and creative expression. Mastery of the skills associated with these areas is critical for healthy development, as well as future academic success. Our outdoor classroom provides an educational format that is meaningful to our students and fully embraces developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood care.

“Play” is probably the most important means of learning. There will be times during the day when children will have the opportunity to self-select activities within the learning environment (inside and outdoors). Getting along with others, decision making and problem solving skills are all necessary for becoming a successful student, adult, employee and life-long learner.

St. James' Children's School is a Christian preschool. Children in our Preschool-Four-Year Olds and Pre-Kindergarten classes attend weekly Children's Chapel services. A chapel leader shares a bible-based message with the children, leads them in prayer, and closes with a song that extends the message of the service. Children's Chapel gives the children an opportunity to participate in a basic Christian worship service at their level.

GOVERNANCE

In founding the program, the Church delegated authority for regular operations to a School Board of Trustees, which operates technically as a Committee of the Church's Vestry. The Board establishes all policies and hires the Director who is responsible for daily operation of the School. The School's Board of Trustees meets at least five times a year. Parents fill several positions on the Board and are thereby directly involved in all decisions that affect the school. Any parent who may be interested in serving on the Board should inform the Director at any time. A Nominating Committee is created by the School Board when positions are open and they will contact interested parents at that time. The School is a non-profit organization, under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) (3).

ADMISSIONS

St. James' Children's School welcomes all students. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin in administration of its education policies, admission policies or other School administered programs.

Differently-abled students and students with any special health care needs will be fully considered if it is within the resources of the school to meet those needs. If your child has an IFSP or IEP, please provide a copy to the School. This will allow us to support you and your child and to schedule with any outside services or agency your child may need.

Any important medical information that will enable the school to accurately evaluate its ability to meet the child's needs must be provided by parents to the School. Families of students with special health care needs should fill out a Health Care Plan form as well as a Medication Administration Authorization form for any medication that should be kept at school. Please see the section, "School Policies-Medications," for more information.

Admission Priorities

When a space is available in any appropriate group the priorities for admission will be:

1. Children of staff members will have priority if all other factors are equal.
2. Siblings of enrolled students will have priority if all other factors are equal.
3. Children of active members of St. James' Episcopal Church will have priority if all other factors

are equal.

4. Appropriate age, available start date, and date of application will determine order of admission, once priorities are considered.

5. The Director of the School will always have discretion in making final decisions regarding admission.

Ages for Admission

Infants will be accepted in the day care program when they are 6 weeks old or older. **Nursing infants will not be admitted until they are comfortable being fed from a bottle.** Older Infants and Toddlers will be placed as space allows and as is appropriate for the age and development of the child. For admission into the two year old Preschool class, a child should be two (2) years old by September 1. Children entering our three year old Preschool class should be three (3) by September 1st. Children entering our four year old Preschool classes should turn four (4) by September 1. Pre-Kindergartners must qualify to matriculate to Kindergarten the following June.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

A parent interested in enrolling his or her child in St. James' Children's School should make an appointment through the office to tour the facilities and meet with the Director. An enrollment application must be completed and returned to the office along with a non-refundable application fee of \$50.00. Parents will be informed by phone when a space is available. An enrollment agreement will be sent to confirm the space. A deposit of \$1,000 for full time status or part time status is required to reserve the space and is due when the agreement is signed and returned to the school. The School holds the deposit while the child is enrolled and will apply it to the last month's tuition, if 60 days written notice of withdrawal is given.

If a space is unavailable, your application will be added to the waitlist. It can be challenging to give estimates as to when we are expecting openings. Families sometimes move or have other changes in circumstance that causes unexpected openings. However, current families get priority for siblings and this can take up several spots. As a result, spots can become open much sooner or later than we anticipate. This is why we encourage families to stay in touch about your interest and flexibility. Flexibility in your enrollment start date can improve your chances of getting a spot for your child.

All of the items below must be completed and returned to the School before a child's first day of attendance:

- Signed Enrollment Contract with \$1,000 deposit
- Health Inventory (Part I-Parent)
- Health Inventory (Part II- Physician)
- Immunization Form
- Lead Testing Certificate
- Emergency Information Form
- "A Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care" acknowledgment signed
- Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Form

___ Signed Parent Handbook Written Agreement (located at the end of the Parent Handbook)

Immunization records must be kept up to date, and emergency information renewed annually.

In January, families will be required to complete a new Enrollment Form for each student, indicating their intent and commitment to remain enrolled in our program for the next school year. The completed form must be submitted no later than March 1st in order to retain a spot for your child for the coming school year.

Children are assessed for class placement into the older classes by chronological ages and in terms of their total development – social, physical and emotional. Interest level in the activities typical of each group is also taken into consideration, as is the actual availability of an open place at a particular time that matches the enrollment days of the child being moved. The classroom teacher is also consulted as to the readiness of the child. Parents will be notified and encouraged to set up a transitional conference with the new teacher.

In unusual circumstances, the school reserves the right to withhold services for any day or for any reason, when it is in the best interest of the child, the classroom or the school. .

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

All staff members meet the educational requirement of the Maryland State Department of Education and the Office of Child Care. The SJCS Director, Program Assistant and the Morning Lead Teachers of Twos, Threes, Fours and Pre-Kindergarten Classes have bachelors or graduate degrees in education or closely related fields, plus teaching experience, special training and state required coursework in Early Childhood Education. All teachers, aides and administrative staff participate in the Maryland Child Care Credentialing program, which requires extensive continuing education in child development and other areas of the early childhood field. Staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR.

REGULAR (non covid-19) STAFF/STUDENT RATIOS

Infants and Toddlers: State regulations require one staff member for every three infants and toddlers.

Preschool-Two Year Olds: State regulations require one staff member for every six two year olds, with a maximum group size of 12.

Preschool – Three Year Olds: State regulations require one staff member for every ten, three year old students, maximum group size of 20.

Preschool – Four Year Olds: State regulations require one staff member for every ten, four year olds except between 9 and 3 when higher ratios are permitted.

Pre-Kindergarten: State regulations require one staff member for each fifteen five year olds, except between 9 and 3 when higher ratios are permitted.

STAFF

Head Teachers

Our Preschool and Kindergarten classes are under the leadership of Head Teachers, who have earned a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a closely related field. They develop age appropriate daily schedules, themes and lesson plans. Head Teachers use the Creative Curriculum as a foundation for their classroom planning and add their personal experiences, research and available community resources to create imaginative and engaging activities. They work with the afternoon Lead Teacher and Assistants in their classroom to implement all aspects of the program. Head Teachers are also responsible for completing both the ASQ-3 Screening and full academic assessments of each child and conference frequently with parents regarding their child's academic and socio-emotional development.

Lead Teachers

In the Infant, Older Infant and Toddler classes, Lead Teachers have both the 90 hour Early Childhood Development courses and 45 hour Infant Toddler course or appropriate experience in early childhood education. They also have additional training appropriate to the needs of infants and toddlers in their program. The Lead Teachers work as a team with the Head Teachers to develop age appropriate schedules and lesson plans.

In the Preschool Two-, Three-, and Four-Year Old classes and the Pre-Kindergarten class, a Lead Teacher with training in Early Childhood Education is in charge of the after school program. They work as a team with the Head Teacher to create and implement lesson plans for the afternoon that complement the morning lessons in theme and development goals.

Assistants

Assistants have completed at least 6 hours of continued training in early childhood education. They help maintain supervision of the children and support the Head Teacher or Lead Teacher with instruction and classroom management.

Our Administrative and Lead Staff

MS ASTRID, DIRECTOR: Astrid Crookshank has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from University of California, additional college coursework in Early Childhood Administration and Curriculum Planning. and joined St James in September 1993. Astrid has many years' experience teaching infants to three year olds, was our Assistant Director for 22 years and has been Director since 2015. She has experience building curriculum, training and managing staff, and forming strong relationships with the children and families.

MS JENNIFER, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Jennifer Chandler is our Administrative Assistant. She has an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Montgomery College and is pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Early childhood. Jennifer has over 22 years of experience working with infants - school age children. Jennifer joined St. James in September 2001.

MS REBECCA, PROGRAM ASSISTANT: Rebecca Boker is our Program Assistant. She works part time to support the teachers with the curriculum and Maryland EXCELS standards in all classrooms. Rebecca has taught pre-k and kindergarten age children and is part of our administrative team. Rebecca has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Maryland. She has over 27 years of experience in the childcare field. Rebecca joined our staff in July 2005.

MS JEN, INFANT LEAD TEACHER: Jen Morales is a teacher in our Infant program. She has completed her Associates degree in Early Childhood and is pursuing her Bachelors in Early Childhood Education. She has 9 years of experience working with infants to preschool children. Jen joined us in July of 2017.

MS TIFFANY, OLDER INFANT LEAD TEACHER: Tiffany Greenberg is a teacher in our Older Infant program. She is currently pursuing an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Montgomery College. Tiffany has many years' experience with children Infant to Pre-K and joined us at St James in June of 2006.

MS KIM, TODDLER LEAD TEACHER: Kim Belcher is a teacher in our Toddler program. She has completed the 90 hour preschool certification and is currently pursuing an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She has 22 years of experience working with infants and toddlers and joined our team at St James in July of 1998.

MS DANA, TWOS HEAD TEACHER: Dana Stafford is a teacher in our Twos program. She has over 22 years' experience teaching children toddlers-2 years. Dana has a Bachelor's Degree in Family Studies from University of Maryland. She joined our team in September 1996.

MS RITA, THREES HEAD TEACHER: Rita Harrell is a teacher in our Threes program. Rita has a B.A. degree in History and Political Science from Virginia Union University and has taken additional coursework in curriculum and child development. Rita has many years' experience with children, infant- school age and joined St. James in August of 2017.

MS JENNY, FOURS HEAD TEACHER: Jenny Mena Zapata is a teacher in our Fours program. She has Bachelor's degrees in Psychology and Africana Studies from Lafayette College. She completed the Teach for America Program and taught first grade Spanish immersion in Missouri for three years. Jenny joined St. James' in July, 2017.

MS SONIA, PRE-K HEAD TEACHER: Sonia Schwartz is a teacher in our Pre-K classroom. She has over 29 years of experience working in the childcare field. Sonia has taught many age groups from infants to school age children and has several years working as a Preschool director. Sonia has a

Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Ryerson University (Toronto). Sonia joined our team in August of 2002.

SCHOOL YEAR

St. James' Children's School is a year round school. Our school year begins on the first Tuesday in September and ends on the last Thursday prior to Labor Day. The school year calendar can be found at the Appendix of this handbook.

SCHOOL HOURS

St. James' Children's School's hours of operation are from 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM. **Parents and children will not be admitted before 7:30 am while the staff are preparing their classrooms. The 6:30 pm closing time means that all families have left the building by 6:30pm.** Parents who enter the building before 7:30 am will be asked to remain in the lobby until 7:30 am. Parents who arrive at 6:30 pm, or are still in the hallways at 6:30 pm, will be considered late. The first time the parents are not out of the building by 6:30 pm, they will receive a reminder from the Director or the staff member in charge. If the parents are late again, a late fee of \$2.00 per minute/per child after 6:30 pm will be assessed and must be paid the next school day. Frequent lateness (more than twice a month) may result in dismissal from the program.

TUITION and FEES

Tuition

Tuition is due the first of every month and must be paid by the third school day of the month to avoid \$10 per day late fees. Tuition can be paid preferably by check, but money order or cash are also accepted. Many families prefer to have their personal bank issue and send a check every month. Tuition rates are based on state required staffing ratios for a class and on the program offered, rather than any individual child's age. A child is moved to an older group when it is appropriate for the child, considering age and maturity, and available space. Children are usually kept in the same class throughout the school year. Tuition rates change when a child moves to a class with lower rates, not on his or her birthday. Tuition increases occur each September. No refunds or adjustments will be granted for sick days, inclement weather, prolonged absences, or closings due to emergency situations or acts of God.

Covid-19 PPE and Sanitation Fee

St. James is committed to providing the safest possible environment for our children and teachers during the current pandemic crisis. We are providing Clear Masks, face shields, and smocks for teachers to use at school, and extra hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies. To support these additional measures St James

will charge an additional \$50 per month for the 2020-21 school year. The fee may be removed at any time if circumstances allow.

Fees and Deposits

A \$50 application fee is collected with the initial application for enrollment. This fee is collected one time per family and will cover any additional children for as many years as the child(ren) can attend any class at St. James' Children's School. A \$1,000 non-refundable deposit is collected to guarantee a space once offered. The deposit will be applied as credit towards the last month of attendance if 60 days' notice is given for withdrawal. If sufficient withdrawal notice is not given the deposit will be forfeited and the family must pay the complete final month's tuition.

DAILY ROUTINES

Attendance

Drop off and pick up procedures are currently amended in our Covid-19 Pandemic response

Parents (or other designated person) are required to escort their children in and out of each child's classroom. The parent sign in/out sheet is our attendance record and a safety check for numbers of children present. Parents should enter the classroom with their child, sign them in and make sure a staff member is aware of their arrival. Children should not enter the classroom alone, or be left in the hallway without direct parent supervision. For health reasons children should wash their hands each morning upon arrival, and every afternoon before departure.

Children may arrive at any time and should always be brought to class by a parent or other designated adult. When dropping off more than one child, please be sensitive to any disruption that the other child might cause. It is recommended that the older child be dropped off first to reduce the traffic in and out of the Infant and Toddler rooms. If your child is going to be absent or late, please call to inform the office as early as possible.

During drop off and pick up time, children must never be left alone by the parent in the hallway, classroom, car or outside. Maryland Family Law states that leaving a child unattended could be considered child neglect. The law also states that it is a crime to leave a child younger than 8 years old unattended, locked or confined in a car without proper supervision. This is punishable by fines or imprisonment. Should a staff member observe a child left unattended, they will inform the office immediately and someone will remain with the child until the parent is located. Child Care employees are required to report an incident of abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.

Supplies

Clothing—Children should be dressed in sturdy play clothes and shoes that are appropriate for outside play and messy art projects. Please be sure to send in protective clothing for both hot and cold days such as hats, coats, and mittens for winter and sunscreen and protective hats for summer. In the winter, Twos through Pre-Kindergarten should keep snow boots at school to wear outside. Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children go outside daily unless the temperature/wind chill is below freezing or if the Air Quality is Code Red in the summer. All children need at least one full set of extra clothes at school. Infants, toddlers and those learning to use the toilet should have two or three changes of clothes.

Diapers & Bedding

Diapers and wipes are provided by the parents and are stored in the child's classroom. Diaper cream or ointment can be left at the school with the proper medication administration form completed and with detailed instructions provided by the parent. Nap or rest-time crib or cot bottom sheets are provided by the school and washed regularly. Infants may nap using a "sleep sack" only. Toddlers, Twos and Threes may have a light blanket from home for nap or rest time.

It is the parent's responsibility to label all items brought to the school, including food containers, lunch boxes, clothing and blankets. A lost and found box is maintained in each classroom, but the school cannot be responsible for lost items that are not labeled.

NUTRITION

St. James' Children's School cares about our children's nutritional needs. We ask families to provide a well-balanced, nutritious lunch for their child each day. The USDA provides us with guidance on providing balanced lunches for young children. Ideally, lunches for two-year-olds should include 1 ounce of meat or other protein-based food, ½ ounce of bread or other healthy carbohydrates, and ½ cup of vegetables and/or fruit, in addition to a healthy beverage. Lunches for three-, four- and five-year-olds should include 1 ½ ounces of meat or other plant-based food, ½ ounce of bread or other healthy carbohydrates, and 1 cup of vegetables and/or fruit, in addition to a healthy beverage.

In accordance with Child Care regulations, the School keeps a supply of nutritious foods on hand to supplement lunches, if needed. Parents will be contacted prior to offering additional items to a child's lunch.

Lunches will be placed in the refrigerator in your child's classroom. Please clearly label your child's lunch bag on the outside. Since lunch bags are directly in the refrigerator, we ask that parents choose the smallest one possible that fits all the necessary items. Plastic food storage containers are strongly encouraged, as broken glass is a safety concern. Please be aware that sometimes lunch bags will need to be placed on their side to make them all fit, so we suggest spill or leak proof cups to keep the lunch bags clean.

Infants and Toddlers

Parents of infants (6 weeks to 18 months) must supply all of their child's food for each day. It is requested also that a supply of extra formula/breast milk and non-perishable food be left in the classroom. **Nursing infants must be comfortable being fed from a bottle.** Parents of toddlers (children approximately 18 to 24 months) will be asked to provide your child's lunch in a lunch box. All lunches will be refrigerated in the room. The school provides morning and afternoon snacks for toddlers.

Breastfeeding is encouraged and welcome in any of our younger classes. Our staff is trained to support the process, supply resources and provide a convenient, confidential and cozy spot to breast feed on site. SJCS infant care staff have completed the state regulated Breast Feeding training as a licensing requirement. The infant room has a rocking chair available for mothers to breastfeed in the classroom if they wish, or the staff room is usually available for private breastfeeding or pumping. Additional private space is available in conference rooms upstairs if needed.

CHOKING HAZARDS

The following foods can be choking hazards for children under the age of 3. Please see the guidelines below for the proper way to prepare these foods if you'd like to send them for your child's lunch.

Raw Veggies: Vegetables such carrots, celery, and broccoli should be soft-cooked then diced, shredded or cut into small pieces.

Meats & Cheese: Please make sure to cut all meats and cheese into bite sized pieces for example hot dogs should be cut lengthwise and then in half (4 pieces).

Fruit: Grapes, strawberries, blueberries and any other fruits should be cut into small, easy to eat pieces.

Nuts and Seeds: Please remove all seeds from fruits such as watermelon, peaches, plums, and cherries. PLEASE DO NOT send any foods with nuts or seeds or any muffins or bread with nuts or seeds baked into them.

Hard or Crunchy Food: Nuts, popcorn, and raisins are all choking hazards and should not be sent to school.

Sticky Food: Gummy candies such as fruit snacks, dried fruit, marshmallows (and chewing gum) are choking hazards and should not be sent to school.

Nut Butter: Please make sure when sending nut butters to spread a thin amount on the bread to make it easier for your child to chew.

Additional choking hazards include: *coins, buttons, toys with small parts, toys that fit entirely in a child's mouth, small balls, marbles, balloons, small hair bows, barrettes, rubberbands, pen or marker caps, small button-type batteries, refrigerator magnets and pieces of dog food.*

Twos through Pre-Kindergarten

Children in Twos through Pre-Kindergarten need to pack a lunch with milk or other beverage. Fours and Pre-Kindergarten families are asked to provide a lunch that does not need heating, as we encourage the children to be as independent as possible at lunch time. The school provides morning and afternoon snacks for all Twos, Threes, Fours and Pre-Kindergarten children. **You must inform the office and your child's teachers of any food allergies or food restrictions your child may have.**

School Age Program

Children in our temporary School Age program should pack lunch and snacks and any drinks needed for the day. Any items that need to be refrigerated should be packed separately in a ziploc or single wipeable container.

Naps/Rest Time

Licensing requires that all children 4 and under be provided a regularly scheduled nap or rest time appropriate to the age, needs and activity level of the individual child. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should remain resting varies by child. It is not our policy to keep children awake or to awaken them early from naps. Children will be provided appropriate quiet activities if unable to rest. Please check classroom welcome packets for detailed rest time procedures for each class.

Physical Fitness & Outdoor Play

Experience in the field and child development research alike are showing that all children need and benefit from more time outdoors; it is critical for their health, self-concept, and future school success. Children in Older Infants through Pre-Kindergarten will go outside at least twice a day, weather permitting. Children are encouraged to run, climb and engage in other activities that promote physical fitness and gross-motor development during this time. Youngest infants will be taken out in strollers as often as possible in mild weather.

Children should have proper protective clothing here at school to allow for plenty of play outside. We will ask for warm hats, coats and gloves in the winter and sun hats and sunscreen in the summer. Children should arrive at school with sunscreen already applied for morning outdoor play; staff will use the child's own sunscreen to reapply for afternoon play. Parents need to sign permission form each year for daily sunscreen and insect repellent application by staff, and provide a new bottle at that time.

Exploring and playing in an outdoor setting can be messy and may involve dirt and mud. Occasionally, a child may get a few bumps, minor scrapes or bruises. If your child comes home with ground-in dirt on their clothes and a small scratch or two on their body, that means that he or she had a fantastic outdoor learning experience! Parents are encouraged to send their children to school in appropriate play clothes.

On inclement days, indoor gross-motor activities substitute for playground time. Indoor activities include parachute activities, beanbag, music with specific activity instruction and games.

Toileting Guidelines

SJCS adheres to Montgomery County Health Department guidelines for diapering. Children in the Fours and Pre-Kindergarten class need to be toilet trained (unless they have an ADA identified disability.)

A child is considered trained when he/she independently, successfully and consistently toilets, cleans and dresses themselves. For success, elastic waist pants are strongly recommended.

The Twos and Threes classrooms are designed to assist children and families with “potty” training and parents must be consistent at home with the training. Accidents are part of the toileting process for all young children. Please send spare clothing to school as soon as possible so that children can change after an accident.

Permission to Photograph, Video or Audio Record

Throughout the school year, SJCS staff will take pictures and/or video of the children during special activities or events. They will send them to parents by email, post them outside the classrooms, or use them for family gifts. We may also use children’s pictures in the church monthly newsletter, school or church website or post them on the school Facebook page. Occasionally we may use your child’s photograph, video image or voice for educational and informational purposes with or without identification by name.

If you do not wish to have your child appear in a video or photograph or have his/her voice recorded, please notify the school of your preference by checking the appropriate box located on the last page of the Family Handbook. This exclusion does not apply to video from the school security cameras. Please see the section, “Security,” for more information. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their child being photographed, video or audio recorded, unless written notification is received.

Toys and Valuables from Home

Unless it is a designated sharing day, please send your younger child to school with only a naptime snuggly. Personal items can be disruptive to classroom activities and may be unsafe. SJCS cannot assume responsibility for the replacement of items that are lost, stolen or broken.

Pets

For safety reasons, pets are not permitted on school property or at school functions unless authorized in advance by the Director.

Outside Employment of School Staff

Outside employment of school staff for current families is not permitted, which could include babysitting, child transportation, house cleaning, etc. Current school staff may not babysit or transport

children of current families, unless a prior work/employment relationship existed before the parents enrolled their child.

Please do not jeopardize an employee's position by requesting such services.

Parent Involvement and Communication

Parents are welcome to visit at any time*. Some classes have special parent activities that give you an opportunity to share in your child's day. If you wish to bring other relatives or friends, please inform the teacher before your arrival and check in at the office upon arrival. Teachers post the need for volunteers for special activities on their bulletin boards or send sign ups by email.

***Visits and volunteers during the school day will be suspended as part of our Covid-19 Pandemic Response.**

Each classroom is assigned its own Gmail account. Parents can use these email addresses to contact their classroom teachers for regular, non-urgent messages. Emails are generally checked mid-day and teachers will respond to your email as quickly as possible. If a parent needs to contact a classroom immediately regarding an urgent matter, please call the office. Staff are instructed to only use school landline phones, school email and Tadpoles to communicate classroom information or school business with parents.

St. James' Children's School uses the "Tadpoles" system for administrative and communication purposes. Teachers use Tadpoles to provide parents information regarding classroom scheduling, lesson plans and Daily Reports about each child's day. For Infants and Toddlers, daily routines will also be included. Teachers can use Tadpoles to send parents notes, photos and additional classroom information. Tadpoles is also used to send Emergency Alerts to all families, when needed. Any replies to Tadpoles messages are sent to the main school email, not to the classroom Gmail accounts. Families may download the Tadpoles app at www.Tadpoles.com.

Each classroom teacher will hold family conferences at least two times each school year. Your child's Developmental Screening will be shared and discussed with the family at this time. We will also hold informal conferences at the family's or teacher's request. Families will be informed about conference scheduling verbally, via written notice and/or email.

Information about daily schedules, lesson plans and calendar of class events is located on the hallway bulletin board outside of your child's classroom. Additional classroom info can be found posted on the Parent Board located inside your child's classroom. Flyers, handouts and notes from the teacher will be placed in your "Parent Mailbox," located in the hallway outside of your child's room.

If you have a question or a concern about your child's day or have forgotten to discuss important information, please call the office at any time. Please understand that daily calls "just to see how my child is doing" would be too time consuming to receive from every parent. Please limit these "checking-in" calls to days when your child may be acting differently such as after returning from a vacation or

during a transition to a new room. When possible, we will put you directly through to the teacher or have the teacher return your call as soon as possible. You may also contact your child's teacher via school or classroom email. Be assured that the staff will call or email you if they have any concerns or questions during the day.

During pick-up time, please understand that the staff will assume you are in charge of your child once you arrive into the classroom and your child has seen you. If picking up on the playground, please make sure to speak to a teacher before taking your child. If you stay a few minutes with your child on the playground, please realize that we assume you are supervising your child, as the teachers will be supervising other children. Staying longer than a few minutes at drop off or pick up can be confusing for the children. If you need a few extra minutes to speak with the teacher at pick up or drop off, let the office know so we can cover the staff member.

Email Distribution

The school maintains an electronic record of all family emails and, upon request, will share this information with current enrolled families for birthday parties or event planning. If you do not wish your information to be shared, please indicate your preference on the Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form to be returned to the school office. We request that family email information be used for school or child related activities only.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

MOST of the following activities may be suspended or adjusted during the 2020-21 school year.

Music Education

Weekly Music Education is provided by a specialist with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. Group music and movement time is offered weekly to all children in the Older Infant, Toddler, Twos, Threes, Fours and Pre-Kindergarten classes. Through the use of a variety of instruments and singing, children will explore tempo, pace, pitch, beat and rhythm. Older children will also learn about melody and accompaniment. All the music classes perform a Christmas show for parents in December and a school-wide musical performance in the spring. This group time fosters a sense of community within the school. Music is also incorporated into the daily activities in every classroom, during which the children can sing songs, play assorted instruments and learn finger plays relating to classroom topics.

Art Education

Art Education is provided by a specialist with a Master's Degree in Art Education and an Early Childhood certificate. She teaches weekly to our Twos and Preschool-Threes classes and twice per week for our Preschool-Fours and Pre-Kindergarten classes. All of the art classes participate in an Art Show in the spring with the Spring Musical.

Spanish Education

Our Spanish program introduces our Twos through Pre-Kindergarten students to the Spanish language through hands-on activities, games, books and songs. Children learn numbers, colors, greetings, phrases and vocabulary related to the seasons, foods, days of the week and more. Throughout the year, students learn about other cultures and apply their knowledge of Spanish in other areas of the curriculum. Students perform Spanish songs at the Christmas Show in December. and at the Spring Musical.

Kid Fit Physical Education

Weekly Physical Education classes by Kid Fit are offered to all children in Twos through Pre-Kindergarten. Classes are held indoors during the fall and winter months.

Extra Enrichment Options

Throughout the year, we may invite professional instructors to teach special classes such as karate, Tumblebus or soccer during the school day (usually in the afternoons). There are fees for these additional programs. We will inform you of the fees and when the classes are scheduled. All extra-curricular activities are considered a contractual agreement between parents and the independent outside company. Any questions or concerns regarding any program or fees should be directed to the company. Children not attending these extracurricular activities will have regular activities in the classroom or outside. Lists of enrolled children are distributed to classes and an attendance checklist is used by the staff member accompanying the children to the class.

Holidays and Special Days

Children and staff have fun observing special holidays. On occasions such as Thanksgiving, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day, families will be invited to the classrooms for meals or events. When celebrating your child's birthday, we welcome family members to visit the school with food or small treats to share.

Please plan birthday party events with your child's teacher in advance and ask about any food allergies in the classroom. Birthday treats must be safe for all children in the class.

Field Trips

Fours and Pre-Kindergartners enjoy occasional field trips to a farm, water park or a dramatic performance. Because of the ages of our children, we will ask for parent volunteers to ensure the safety of the children. For all trips, a bus will be used and a fee charged. Please remember to sign and return all permission slips for your child so he or she can participate. We have numerous "in school" field trips and community visitors who will go into the classroom, as well as special theme days that may include picnics or water play.

Fund Raising

Our annual fundraising event in the spring fall is a very special occasion for children and parents. Dinner is available for parents upstairs in the parish hall and childcare is available in all classrooms.

Parent participation is vital to making this event a success and we ask every family to participate in some way. More information is available from room parents, in the office or posted in the lobby. Scholastic

Books fairs are held twice a year in the school lobby. We take the entire commission in books to keep all the classrooms well stocked in new, age appropriate books.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Policy on Health and Exclusion of Sick Children (Non Covid-19)

The state provided these Covid-19 response guidelines for school and Child Care in July of 2020.
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/decision_aid_flow_diagramv8-final_7.23.20_child_care.pdf

Children should come to school physically ready to participate in all areas of the curriculum, including outdoor play. **If a child has trouble eating, sleeping, participating in class, or cannot play outside, he or she must remain at home.** A child who is feverish, queasy, or experiencing heavy nasal discharge or other signs of illness should stay home to rest and recover.

If your child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified and asked to pick up their child ***within 90 minutes***. Please respect the health of the other children and staff and do not medicate your child before school if he or she feels “slightly warm” or seems “unusually fussy.” Children are highly contagious as the symptoms develop and an illness will spread quickly if sick children are sent to school.

Regardless of other symptoms, **the child must be fever-free for 24 hours, without medication and must not have vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours, in order to attend school.** This means that he or she remains home for 24 hours after the child is “completely well.” When a child is sent home with symptoms of fever, vomiting/diarrhea, severe colds, etc. our staff are instructed not to readmit the child the very next morning since 24 hours of wellness could not have occurred.

If a child has been prescribed an antibiotic, the child must have the antibiotic in his/her system for a full 24 hours before attending. This includes ophthalmic antibiotics for conjunctivitis (pinkeye). We understand that most children will experience a few colds each year. We will do our best to enforce proper hygiene in the classroom to halt the spread of colds. If a child has trouble eating, sleeping, participating in class, or cannot play outside, he or she must remain at home.

The School follows the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Guidelines regarding school attendance. The following is quoted from their fact sheet: **“When to Keep Your Child Home from School”**:

When your child is sick, keep him/her home from school. This not only benefits your child but other children and staff in the classroom at school.

Some important signs of illness are:

1. A temperature of 100 degrees or more
2. Nausea or vomiting
3. Stomachache
4. Diarrhea
5. Pale or flushed face
6. Headache
7. Cough
8. Earache
9. Thick discharge from nose
10. Sore throat
11. Rash or infection of the skin
12. Red or pink eyes
13. Loss of appetite
14. Loss of energy or decrease in activity

MEDICATION: Medication will be administered within the guidelines of Maryland law (COMAR 13A.16.11), according to the policies outlined below:

A. Medication Administration

1. Medication, **whether prescription or non-prescription**, may not be administered to a child in care unless:

(a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed and dated Medication Authorization form, provided by the office, that is received at the School before the medication is administered; **and**

(b) A licensed health care practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and dose, and has completed, signed and dated the same Medication Authorization form.

1. A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home.

2. Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instructions, whichever are more recent.

3. If the medication is by prescription, it is labeled by the pharmacy or physician with:

- (a) The child's name;
- (b) The date of the prescription;
- (c) The name of the medication;
- (d) The medication dosage;
- (e) The administration schedule;
- (f) The medication route;
- (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food";
- (h) The duration of the prescription; and
- (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable.

A. Topical Applications: A diaper rash product, sunscreen and insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner, but parental permission must be documented.

B. Recording Requirements

- (1) Each administration of a prescription or non-prescription medication to a child shall be noted in the child's record.
- (2) Application of diaper rash products, sunscreen, insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be recorded in the child's record. Lip balm must be non-medicated and contain no additives, flavorings, dyes, etc. Blistex, Chapstick, Carmex original lip balm are approved examples.

A. Medication Storage

- (1) Each medication shall be:
 - (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage and the expiration date;
 - (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy or the prescribing physician; and
 - (c) Returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation
- (1) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each employee designated to administer medication.

Head Lice

Head lice are a very common childhood issue and best managed with prevention and vigilance. Head lice are not a sign of dirty house or bad parenting; it is a sign of having good friends at school where side by side play can occur. Please inform us right away if an older sibling's class has head lice, since most cases of head lice here at St. James begin with an older sibling from another school. Any child who has head lice needs to be picked up as soon as possible and be treated before returning to school. Since it is very difficult to tell if an egg is dead or alive, the child's head should be nit-free regardless of treatments used in order to return to class. We will check all classmates and continue head checks for several weeks to help minimize the impact on the families. Information on treating children and the home is available in the school office.

Allergies and Asthma

St. James' Children's School recognizes that food allergies, in some instances, may be severe and occasionally life threatening. The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy wheat, fish and shellfish. We will attempt to avoid serving foods containing peanut or tree nut products at snack but cannot guarantee products with nuts or other allergens or products made in facilities that process these allergens will never be present. Parents of children with documented and severe food allergies or multiple food allergies may be required to provide snacks for their children.

Parents and the health care provider must sign and provide written protocols for all students with food allergies/sensitivities. These conditions should be documented on the Medical Condition Form, found on the back of the Emergency Form and on the Physician's Health Inventory (within the last 6 months.)

Parents of students with life-threatening or extensive allergies must provide St. James' Children's School with emergency medication and the Medication Administration Authorization form signed by the parent and by the child's health care provider, to be kept at school. It is the parent's responsibility to meet with and instruct staff on the proper administration of epinephrine, nebulizers and health plans prior to the first day of attendance. Information pertaining to a student's allergies will be shared with all staff that may have contact with the child. Your child's picture, name and list of allergies and medications will be posted in the classroom and any other area that administration feels necessary to ensure the safety of your child in regards to his/her food or environmental allergies.

LENGTH OF TIME THAT COMMON CHILDHOOD DISEASES ARE CONTAGIOUS

We follow the following guidelines from the Child Care Administration for exclusion from care. If a child has been sent home with any symptoms of these diseases and is then cleared by a pediatrician, we will require a doctor's note to allow the child back to school sooner than these times. **Otherwise, these exclusion periods will hold:**

- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease - Contagious until fever free for 24 hours and blisters (Coxsackie) have dried/crusted over**
- Impetigo - Contagious until after 24 hours on antibiotics**
- Roseola - Contagious from onset of rash until fever is gone for 24 hours**
- Scarlet Fever - Contagious until after 48 hours on antibiotics**
- Bronchiolitis - Contagious for up to 7 days after onset of cough**
- Croup - Contagious from onset of cough until fever is gone for 24 hours**
- Strep Throat - Contagious from onset of symptoms until after 48 hours on antibiotics**
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) - Contagious until after 24 hours on antibiotics (some types are contagious for a longer period of time)**

Child Guidance

St. James' Children's School provides a safe, nurturing environment where children can develop a positive self-concept and learn respect and kindness for others. We believe that the goal of discipline in our program is to teach children self-control by using clear and consistent limits. An essential component of our approach involves teaching children appropriate expression of their feelings.

As in all aspects of our program, we approach child guidance from a child development perspective. Techniques such as distraction and redirection are used with the youngest children that we serve-infants, toddlers and two year olds. As children progress, we add to these approaches and use more language as we label children's feelings and help them learn to express these feelings in words. Discussion and implementation of the logical consequences of inappropriate behavior are incorporated as children's cognitive abilities reach this level of understanding. For example, a four year old can usually understand that a thrown block can hurt someone else and that he/she would need to play in another area. A toddler or young two year old will not have such understanding and would be more effectively distracted or directed after throwing a block.

In all cases, child guidance is handled on an individual basis. Group punishment is not used, and guidance techniques involve respect, trust, honesty and caring for others. Reinforcement of positive behavior and prevention of negative behavior is the basic approach in our program. We encourage parents to reinforce expectations of this program at home.

If challenging behavior persists, parents will be contacted for a conference and a behavior modification plan developed and signed by parents and staff. If the behavior is not corrected by the managed efforts of the staff and parents, another conference will be scheduled to determine the next steps, which may include outside consultation. Should the behavior continue in such a manner that is harmful to the well-being of the child or other children, the school reserves the right to discontinue enrollment for the child.

Since our intent is to provide children with appropriate behavior models and alternatives to violence, we do not use punishment in our school. Corporal punishment, verbal abuse such as threats or sarcasm, requiring a child to be silent or still for a long period of time, isolation, causing a child any kind of physical discomfort, or using food as reward or punishment, are not practiced in our school.

Biting is a common developmental behavior for very young children. Children bite for variety of reasons, including frustration, being overtired and a lack of verbal ability in times of conflict. The staff use a variety of approaches to help a child stop biting, including redirection, verbal prompts and shadowing at times of transition. If biting persists to such a degree that the safety of other children is at risk, the child who is biting may be removed from enrollment at the discretion of the Director until this phase of development has passed.

Safety

To ensure the safety of children, families and staff, all exterior doors and the door to the stairwell are to remain locked at all times. Each family will be assigned a unique code to access the main entrance, hallway entrance and stairway during school hours. Codes should not be shared with children, other families or staff.

Doors should be closed after children enter or exit the building. Holding the door open for the person following you may feel polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Please be mindful of the people entering behind you.

The school has video cameras installed inside and outside the building to provide additional security during the school days. Outside cameras are focused on the parking lot, playground and all sides to monitor the building exits and access. Inside the school the cameras are located in the lobby, hallway and one in each classroom. There are no cameras in or near bathroom entrances, or directly over changing areas. The cameras record whenever motion is detected and recordings are saved for 30 days.

The School Director, Church Rector or Warden will manage and supervise the access to, or review of any recordings. Recordings may be periodically reviewed with school teachers for internal or educational purposes. Other school staff or church members may be included in a review as deemed necessary to the situation. Recordings of children are not shared or released in any way to outside parties without parental permission.

The school provides on-site First Aid and CPR/AED training for the staff and there is an AED in the school lobby. A list of current trained staff is posted in the office and in each classroom. In the event of an injury or other emergency, the parent will be notified immediately. A properly trained staff member will tend to the child's needs and remain with him or her until a parent or other designated person arrives. In an acute emergency, Emergency Medical Services will be contacted in addition to providing appropriate First Aid or CPR treatment. Parents will be notified immediately. If emergency professionals are called, a familiar adult will remain with the child until the parent arrives. **Please be sure that the school always has a way to reach a parent or the designated emergency contact person. If one or both parents are unreachable during the day, be certain the staff is informed with any alternate contact information and/or a temporary phone number.**

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms, ammunition and/or weapons are strictly prohibited inside the school for any reason. Violation of this policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Under Family Law Articles, Title 5, and Subtitle 7, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Under this law, the employees of St. James' Children's School are considered mandated reporters. The employees of school are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at St. James' Children's School take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands
- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)

- ◆ Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

All staff members are required to undergo FBI and State criminal background checks when hired, and to attend a child abuse and sexual harassment workshop required by the Episcopal Church. Parents are welcome and encouraged to observe classrooms and staff anytime and should report concerns to the Director. Any staff member who thinks that a child has been abused or neglected is required to make a report in the form and manner provided for in Family Law Articles, Title 5, and Subtitle 7.

Policy on Communicating and Parent Concerns

Parents' concerns about curriculum, classroom procedures, or staff should be addressed through appropriate channels, in order to ensure they are dealt with efficiently and with the most positive outcome for children. The steps listed below indicate the appropriate order in which a parent might communicate concerns. Complete resolution of issues at the earliest stage possible is the goal of the process.

1. Speak privately with the appropriate Lead Teacher or Teacher in charge of the class.
2. Speak privately with either the Director or put the concern in writing, addressed to the Director.
3. Parents or the Director may request a meeting with the staff, Director, Chair of the Board of Trustees, and/or the Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church.
4. Put the concern in writing, addressed to the Board of Trustees and/ or to the Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church at 11815 Seven Locks Rd, Potomac, MD 20854.

At each level, an appropriate length of time for investigation and consideration must be allowed before a response is expected. In the case of classroom procedures, observation is usually the first step in any investigation. Additional supervisory or support staff determined to be necessary will be provided as quickly as possible, with the least possible disruption of children's routines. In all cases, confidentiality and privacy of children, parents, and staff will be protected to the greatest extent possible.

Confidentiality

Within St. James' Children's School, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with staff who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as we strive to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with the school.

Outside of St. James' Children's School, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of our school, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of the school are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Developmental Screening Policy

The Maryland State Department of Education is developing a new State regulation for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. All children up to kindergarten entry attending regulated childcare and early childhood educational programs should have a developmental screening conducted. The state has also designated which screening tools can be used and St. James' Children's School will be using the ASQ-3 –the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition. Children under 3 years old will be screened twice a year and children between 3 and 6 years old will be screened once per year.

The ASQ-3 is a brief questionnaire completed by the parent, caregiver or classroom teacher to quickly identify a child's progress through foundational early childhood developmental milestones. Once the questionnaire is completed, it will be scored by their child's teacher. Results will be shared with the family to determine if the child is on track or if he or she would benefit from further evaluations. Parents should consider this process as part of the required documentation for children in a licensed child care program in the State.

Screen Time Policy

All of our classrooms are equipped with an iPad for teacher use, specifically for classroom music, pictures and emails to parents. Some interactive and educational programs may be used in our Pre-Kindergarten classroom as part of a lesson and preschool classes enjoy music and movement, storytelling and exercise programs. Passive screen time is limited to 30 minutes per week of educational, age appropriate and topic related material for children over 2. No passive screen time is permitted for children under 2 years old or for any age during a meal or snack.

Availability of Asbestos Management Plan:

In October 1986 Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to have inspections. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. You can review

this plan by contacting the School Office. Our management plan consists of information from the building architect plus a spring 2010 comprehensive study conducted by EnviroTech Services, Inc. indicating that no asbestos containing building materials (ACBM) were identified in our school.

General School Year Calendar

St. James' Children's School is closed on the holidays listed below. The school is also closed the last Friday prior to Labor Day (or the day before the school year), the first Friday in May, and the week between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. We do not have any half days.

Last day before new school year- VARIES-CLOSED for classroom set up
Labor Day – CLOSED
Veteran's Day – CLOSED
Thanksgiving Holiday- Thursday and Friday– CLOSED
Christmas Eve to New Year's WEEK – CLOSED
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – CLOSED
Presidents' Day – CLOSED
Good Friday – CLOSED
First Friday in May -CLOSED for MSCCA Conference
Memorial Day – CLOSED
Independence Day - CLOSED

Weather Related Closures

When inclement weather is expected, you must find out what Montgomery County Public Schools are doing. Even if you hear an announcement at night, please listen again in the morning and throughout the day.

IF:

Montgomery Co. Public Schools has a **2 hour delay**

Montgomery Co. Public Schools are **CLOSED**

St. James will:

Open 2 hours late at 9:30 am

**Open 2 hours late at 9:30, OR
Open later mid-morning OR
BE CLOSED ****

****If the weather or snow and ice levels are severe enough St. James' may be closed all day or open very late, such as 11:00 am or 12:00 noon. A Tadpoles Emergency Alert will be sent to all parents with the school decision by 7am and our school's phone message machine will also have updated closure information. In the event of a late opening, the 6:30 closing time will still be strictly adhered to.**

If the weather worsens during the school day, we may decide on an early dismissal and will send parents a Tadpoles Emergency Alert with at least a two hour notice. If we must close early it is absolutely necessary that the parents or their designated alternates arrive on time, to avoid placing their families and our staff at risk. Since travel in this area during snow takes much longer than expected, parents should leave work as soon as you receive the notice from school. Please keep in mind that a 30 minute trip can easily take 2 hours in the snow!

In general, we will be closed during the actual storm period. We will attempt to open as soon as is safe once a storm has passed. We understand that MCPS may remain closed for additional days after a particularly heavy snowstorm to clear school parking lots. During these "clean up days" we will generally open at 9:30am.

Parents have an obligation to keep emergency information up to date on how they can be reached IMMEDIATELY. This requires a back-up plan in case the parent is not available.

Appendix Items

- A. School Board Member
- B Classroom Email Addresses
- C. “A Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care” (online)
- D. Emergency Form (online)
- E. Immunization Form (online)
- F. Medication Form (online)
- G. Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Form (online)
- H. Parent’s Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Please visit our website at (www.stjameschildrenschool.com) for the above forms and additional information and photos!

Appendix A:
St. James’ Children’s School

School Board of Trustees - September 2020

Chris Ragheb, Chair, Parishioner

Philippus Willems, Treasurer, Parishioner

Leena Baran, Secretary, School Parent

Rev. Meredith Heffner, Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden of Church

Astrid Crookshank, School Director

Sonia Schwartz, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

Tina Basalla, School Parent

Janet McDermott, School Parent

Holly Mulderig, Parishioner

Ronna Halbewachs, Parishioner

Kenny Kong, School Parent

Amy Ruther, School Parent

Appendix B **St. James' Children's School** **Classroom Email Addresses**

Infants Room: infants@stjamespotomac.org

Older Infants Room: olderinfants@stjamespotomac.org

Toddlers Room: Toddlers@stjamespotomac.org

Twos Room: twos@stjamespotomac.org

Threes Room: threes@stjamespotomac.org

Fours Room: fours@stjamespotomac.org

Pre-Kindergarten Room: Fives@stjamespotomac.org

School Age program Schoolage@stjamespotomac.org

Appendix H
St. James' Children's School Parent Handbook
Acknowledgment Form
2020-2021

The 2020-2021 Parent Handbook describes important information about St. James' Children's School. Please contact the Director with any questions or concerns regarding the information within the handbook.

After reviewing the St. James' Children's School Parent Handbook, **please sign and return this form to the Office.**

By signing this form, I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the St. James' Children's School Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the school policies. We also give permission for School staff to take and use photographs or video of our child/children for general school use, class projects, church or school website and church newsletter.

Child's Name(s): _____

Parent Names (printed): _____

Parent Signatures: _____ Date: _____

Please initial each if appropriate:

Email Distribution

_____ Please exclude our emails from any classroom email distributions.

Photograph/Video Distribution Exclusions

_____ Please do not include photos or videos of my child on the school or church website or in the church newsletter.

**St. James Children's School
Handbook Amendment Acknowledgment
and COVID-19 Release and Waiver of Liability**

We acknowledge that we received a copy of the 2020-21 Parent Handbook and that we understand and agree to abide by these policies:

In consideration for our family's continued enrollment in St James Children's School programs and receipt of services from St James Children's School we further agree as follows:

_____ We understand that while present in the facility each day my child will be in contact with children, families, and staff who are also at risk of community exposure. I understand that no list of restrictions, guidelines or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as the virus can be transmitted by persons who are asymptomatic and before some people show signs of infection.

_____ I understand that I play a crucial role in keeping everyone in the facility safe and reducing the risk of exposure by following the practices outlined herein. I agree to maintain social distancing practices at school and at home, and to limit our family's exposure to others, avoiding large groups or gatherings and travel to areas known to have larger outbreaks of Covid-19. I agree to keep my child home if they have any signs of illness, and to communicate these symptoms to the school immediately.

. _____ We acknowledge that, if we choose to have our child participate in St James Children's School programs, we do so voluntarily and at our own risk. We hereby release St James Children's School, its officers, agents or employees from any and all liability claims, related to any loss or personal injury, including death, that our child or any member of our family may sustain from contracting, or being exposed to COVID-19, as the result of our child or any member of our family entering St James Episcopal Church property or participating in St James Children's School programs.

_____ We certify below that we have read, understand, and voluntarily agree to comply with the provisions listed herein. I acknowledge that care for my child may be terminated if it is determined that my actions, or lack of action unnecessarily exposes another employee, child, or their family member to COVID-19.

Child's First & Last Name

Child's First & Last Name

Print and Sign Name: Parent / Guardian #1 & Date

Print and Sign Name: Parent / Guardian #2 & Date

*Please note that both parents/guardians must sign this form except in the case of single parent families in which one parent does not have any custodial rights. A completed form must be returned to the program Director prior to your child starting school in our program.