



A Maryland EXCELS, Quality Level 3 School

# Parent's Handbook

## 2023-2024

*Revised August 2023*

# **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 age appropriate learning activities for infants and toddlers and continues through preschool and our fours and pre-kindergarten students.

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.

"Play" is probably the most important means of learning. There will be many 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 and children in our Preschool-Four-Year Olds and Pre-Kindergarten classes generally attend monthly or bi monthly 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 and all families. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion or national origin in administration of its education policies, admission policies, hiring or any other School administered programs.

"It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:

- i. Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
- ii. Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
- iii. Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint."

Differently-abled students and students with any special health care or education needs will be fully considered if it is within the resources of the school and the ability of the teachers 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, to provide any additional materials to support your child in the classroom, and to schedule with any outside services or agency you may be working with.

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, unless an arrangement is made for the child to be nursed during the school day.** 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 or email 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 30 days written notice of withdrawal is given. If enrollment is canceled by the family at least 60 days prior to start date, the full deposit will be refunded, if enrollment is canceled after that date, the deposit will be kept by the school.

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
- Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Form
- Signed Parent Handbook & COVID-19 Policy Acknowledgement (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. No additional fees are collected at this time.

New children are assessed for class placement 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 needed. Children are generally moved to the next level all together at the end of the



summer session. Mid year transitions may occur to better serve the needs of the child, if an appropriate space is available and in consultation with the parents and classroom teachers.

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 requirements of the Maryland State Department of Education and the Office of Child Care. The SJCS Director, Administrators and the morning Head 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. Most 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. All Lead Staff members are required to be certified in First Aid and CPR.

### **REGULAR 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 Pre- 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 the 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.

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 morning Head Teacher to create and implement lesson plans for the afternoon that complement the morning lessons in theme and development goals.

### **Assistants**

Assistants must be at least 16 years of age, complete the MSDE approved Aide Orientation, a Basic Health and Safety course and the required Covid-19 training, plus at least 6 hours of continued training each year in early childhood education.

Assistants 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, with additional college coursework in Early Childhood Administration, Curriculum Planning, and School Age Methods and Materials. 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 23 years of experience working with infants - school age children. Jennifer joined St. James in September 2001.

MS SONIA, PROGRAM ASSISTANT: Sonia Schwartz is our Program Assistant. She works full time to support the teachers with curriculum and planning, classroom management, special events, and Maryland EXCELS standards in all classrooms. Sonia has taught 2's, 3's and pre-k children and has worked as . Sonia has a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Ryerson University. Sonia joined our staff in July 2002.

MS REMARIE, INFANT LEAD TEACHER: Remarie Nepomuceno is the Lead teacher in our Infant program. She has Bachelor's degrees in Elementary Education and Communications from Saint Louis

University in the Philippines and has completed all additional coursework to qualify for Infant to PreK Classrooms. She has taught Infants through Middle School, and spent the past few years in our Fours and PreK classes. Remarie joined St. James' in August, 2019.

**MS MARISOL OLDER INFANT LEAD TEACHER:** Marisol Castro is the morning lead teacher in our Older Infant program. She is currently pursuing an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Montgomery College. Marisol has over 20 experience with children Infant to Pre-K and joined us at St James in April of 2000.

**MS KIM, TODDLER LEAD TEACHER:** Kim Belcher is the morning Lead 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 25 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 the Head Teacher in our Twos program. She has over 25 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 the Head 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 Early Childhood curriculum and child development. Rita has many years' teaching experience with children, infant- school age and joined St. James in August of 2017.

**MS PAIGE, FOURS HEAD TEACHER:** Paige Distler is the Head Teacher in our Fours program. Paige has a degree in Art and Design and a minor in Psychology from Towson University, plus the additional coursework to qualify as a Preschool and School Age Teacher. She joined St James last year as Art teacher for our 2's through PreK classes, and as lead teacher in the Summer School Age program.

**MS ANTHONIA, PRE-K HEAD TEACHER:** Anthonia Agwamba is the Head teacher in our Pre-K classroom. She has over 24 years experience teaching Preschool to Elementary aged classes, in addition to having her own center for 13 years. Anthonia has a Bachelor's degree in Business Education and Master's Degree in Health and Wellness in Education, and additional coursework in Early Childhood for Infants to Preschool. Anthonia joined our team in August of 2023.

### **SCHOOL YEAR**

St. James' Children's School is a year round school. Our school year begins the day after MCPS starts their new school year and ends on the last Friday in August prior to the start of the next MCPS calendar year. 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 through our Brightwheel program or by check, but money order or cash are also accepted.

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, and the whole class moves up together. 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.

### **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 30 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**

### **Drop off and Pick up**

Children should be walked into the school and taken by a parent or guardian directly to the classroom door. Please take a moment to greet the teacher and help your child transition. A quick drop off is usually best, if you need assistance please let the teacher know.

During drop off and pick up time, children must never be left alone by the parent in the lobby, 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. Parent's should call the office for help if another one of their children is ill in the car and help is needed to escort a student into or out of our building.

### **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 provided by the school 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, and asks programs to share basic nutrition guidelines with parents. 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 protein, 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.

Our Toddlers through Pre-K classes provide 2 snacks per day according to child care regulations and USDA guidelines. Please make sure your child has had a nutritious breakfast before coming to school as the morning snack may not be served until 9 or 9:30. If a child has any dietary needs or allergies, we may ask that the family provides snacks as well as lunch. The Infant rooms serve snacks from home as designated by a child's individual schedule.

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. After lunch, bags may be placed in the hallway cubby, so parents are advised to add an icepack if they wish to reuse any lunch items.

Infants and Older Infants

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, otherwise a schedule will be arranged for mom to come and feed at appropriate times.**

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 staff room is often available for private breastfeeding or pumping. Additional private space is available in the office spaces or in the conference rooms upstairs if needed.

**CHOKING HAZARDS**

The following foods can be choking hazards for children under the age of 4 . 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.

**Common Foods that Cause Choking in Children Under Age 4**

<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>Fruits</b>	<b>Protein-rich foods</b>	<b>Grain products</b>	<b>Other foods and snacks</b>
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Small pieces of raw vegetable (like raw carrot rounds, baby carrots, string beans, or celery), or other raw, partially cooked vegetables	Apples or other hard pieces of raw fruit, especially those with hard pits or seeds	Tough or large chunks of meat	Plain wheat germ	Hard or round
Raw green peas	Large, hard pieces of uncooked dried fruits	Hot dogs, meat sticks, or sausages (even when cut into round slices)	Whole-grain kernels	candy Jelly
Cooked or uncooked whole corn kernels	Whole pieces of canned fruit	Fish with bones	Crackers or breads with seeds	beans
Large hard pieces of uncooked dried vegetables	Whole grapes, cherries, berries, melon balls, or cherry and grape tomatoes	Large chunks of cheese or string cheese	Nut pieces	Caramels
		Peanuts, nuts, or seeds (like sunflower or pumpkin seeds)	Hard pretzels	Gum drops, gummy candies, or other gooey or sticky candy
		Chunks or spoonfuls of peanut butter or other nut and seed butters		Chewy fruit
		Whole beans		snacks
				Chewing gum
				Marshmallows
				Popcorn, potato or corn chips, or similar snack
				foods Ice
				cubes

*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.**

### 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

All children need and benefit from plenty of gross motor movement and 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 indoor 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. The Fours and Pre-Kindergarten class are designed for children who are toilet trained, but accommodations will be made as needed. Parents should be working on Toileting skills with their children prior to enrolling in one of these classes.

**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. While your child is toilet training we do require that they still wear underwear and bottoms in order to help contain any accidents if they occur.

### **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 do not send any personal items in with your child. 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**

**\*Parent visits, observations and volunteers during the school day will be limited and may remain outdoors as part of our Covid-19 Pandemic precautions. Teachers are still preparing special presentations, holiday celebrations or volunteer opportunities for parents, but they may also remain virtual or outdoors for the coming school year.**

St. James' Children's School uses the "Brightwheel" system for administrative and communication purposes. Teachers use Brightwheel notes, emails and messaging 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 Brightwheel to send parents notes, photos and additional classroom information. Brightwheel is also used to send Emergency Alerts to all families, when needed. Any replies to Brightwheel messages are sent to the main school email, not to the classroom Gmail accounts. Families may download the Brightwheel app at [www.myBrightwheel.com](http://www.myBrightwheel.com).

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 Brightwheel to communicate classroom information or school business with parents.

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 any time at the family's or teacher's request. Families will be informed about regular conference scheduling verbally, via written notice and/or email. Conferences may be virtual or in person outside or in an available large meeting room upstairs.

Information about daily schedules, lesson plans and calendar of class events will be shared primarily through Brightwheel, though you may get reminders by notes in your child's bag and email.

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 or Brightwheel. 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 and your child has joined you. If picking up on the playground, please make sure to speak to a teacher before taking your child. 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 that 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. You can request that your family email information be used for school or child related activities only and not shared with other families for birthdays or social planning.

## **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS**

### **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.

### **Art Program**

Our Art program introduces the Twos through PreKindergarten students to the 6 fundamentals of art: line, shape, color, texture, space/perspective and feeling. Process based lesson plans are used to create a strong foundation of artistic understanding and allow the children to express themselves with different mediums and materials.

### **Enrichment Options**

Throughout the year, we may invite professional instructors to teach special classes such as karate, or soccer during the school day (usually in the afternoons). Currently we work with SoccerShots to provide a session for our students only and Positive Impact Martial Arts rents the space directly from the church. All fees for these programs are paid directly to the outside company. 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 continue with regular activities in the classroom or outside. Parents should inform their class teachers about any enrollment in these additional programs.

### **Holidays and Special Days**

Children and staff have fun observing special holidays. On occasions such as Thanksgiving, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day, families may be invited to classroom or outdoor presentations, meals or events. When celebrating your child's birthday, we welcome family members to visit outside 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 store bought (with ingredient label attached) and 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 schedule additional staff to chaperone all trips as needed. 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**

Scholastic Books Fairs are held twice a year in the school lobby or outside. We take almost the entire commission in books to keep all the classrooms well stocked in new, age appropriate books. Any remaining funds are used for curriculum materials through Scholastic online catalogs.

We schedule twice annual Photography sessions for children and classes with Ms Vanessa, our own amateur photographer.

Occasional Dine Out fundraisers are held through nearby restaurants. All proceeds from Dine Outs support staff conference costs for those attending the State Child Care Conference.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

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

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 reduce 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 usable.

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 is a very common childhood issue and best managed with prevention and vigilance. Head lice is not a sign of dirty house or bad parenting; it is a sign of having close friends at home or school where side by side play can occur. Please inform us right away if an older sibling's class has head lice, since many 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 other 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 guidelines below from the Office of Child Care 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:**

<b>Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie)</b>	<b>- Contagious until fever free for 24 hours and blisters have dried/crusted over</b>
<b>Impetigo</b>	<b>- Contagious until after 24 hours on antibiotics</b>
<b>Roseola</b>	<b>- Contagious from onset of rash until fever is gone for 24 hours</b>
<b>Scarlet Fever</b>	<b>- Contagious until after 48 hours on antibiotics</b>
<b>Bronchiolitis</b>	<b>- Contagious for up to 7 days after onset of cough</b>
<b>Croup</b>	<b>- Contagious from onset of cough until fever is gone for 24 hours</b>
<b>Strep Throat</b>	<b>- Contagious from onset of symptoms until after 48 hours on antibiotics</b>

## **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, two in each classroom and the upstairs hall. 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 Prevention course 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. Please understand that our teachers 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.

St James welcomes services and support from the Maryland Infants and Toddlers program. This program assists families with concerns about their child with developmental screening, testing and support as needed. See the Appendix for the Maryland Infants and Toddlers brochure visit <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Special-Education/MITP/index.aspx> for more information and ways to get service and support for our child.

### **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 the MCPS school year begins), the first Friday in May, and the week between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. We do not have any half days.

First day of MCPS school year- VARIES-CLOSED for classroom set up

Labor Day – CLOSED

Veterans 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

Juneteenth - 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:**

### **St. James will:**

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

**Open 2 hours late at 9:30 am**

Montgomery Co. Public Schools are **CLOSED**

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

**If Montgomery County creates a virtual option on inclement weather days St. James will make an independent decision and distribute the information via Brightwheel text and email.**

**\*\*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 Brightwheel 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 Brightwheel 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 the teachers 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 it 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. Covid-19 Policy

B. School Board Members

C. Classroom Email Addresses

D. “A Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care” (online)

[https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide\\_to\\_regulated\\_child\\_care.pdf](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide_to_regulated_child_care.pdf)

E. Maryland Infants and Toddlers Information Brochure (online)

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Ed/rmmb/MITPOnlineReferral2019.pdf>

F. Emergency Form (online)

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ-1214-emergencyform.pdf>

G. Immunization Form (online)

[https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/oideor/immun/shared%20documents/mdh\\_896\\_form.pdf](https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/oideor/immun/shared%20documents/mdh_896_form.pdf)

H. Medication Form (online)

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ1216-medicationadministrationauthorization.pdf>

I. Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Form (online)

[https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ\\_1216e\\_-\\_topical\\_product\\_application\\_approval.september\\_2022.pdf](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ_1216e_-_topical_product_application_approval.september_2022.pdf)

J. Parent’s Handbook Acknowledgement Form

## **St James Children's School**

### **Covid-19 Policy                      Effective August, 29 2023**

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 continue to follow the CDC guidelines for Covid exposure and isolation.

#### **Staff Vaccination Policy**

St James Children's School requires that all staff keep up to date with their covid vaccines and boosters as qualified by age and in consideration of any individual health conditions.

#### **Mask Policy**

Masks are not required for staff or children unless they have a recent exposure to Covid or are returning from a Covid isolation. Masks are encouraged for staff who develop signs of illness during the day to prevent general spread of illness.

#### **Management of Symptoms, Cases and Exposures -**

The new CDC guidance focuses on keeping children in schools and ECE programs and managing symptoms, exposures and positive cases with preventative measures such as masking and testing. If the CDC adjusts their guidance during the coming school year, we will amend our procedures as well.

See Updated CDC guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.htm>

!

#### **Covid Exposures:**

The CDC recommends that children in an ECE program who are exposed may attend class if they are asymptomatic, can wear well fitting masks in class for 10 days and get tested at least by Day 6. For children under 2 or those who can not wear a mask in an ECE program, the CDC recommends using other layers of protection after a known exposure. At St James these children may remain at school if asymptomatic and with negative rapid tests on Day 3 and 6. If testing is not possible for a non masking child, the exposed child should remain at home for 7 days after exposure.

#### **NEW Covid Symptoms:**

For anyone with new and persistent Covid like symptoms, the school will exclude that person if symptoms warrant, and ask the child/staff to wear a well fitting mask until symptoms improve. If a child is unable to wear a mask we may ask the family to test for Covid before sending the child back to school.

### **Positive Covid Cases:**

The CDC still requires at least a 5 day isolation period following a positive covid-19 test. When returning to school after isolation is completed, children in an ECE program should wear a well fitting mask around others through Day10.

Children under 2 or a non masking child with a positive test must first isolate for 5 days at home. To help our youngest children return safely to school, if the non masking child is asymptomatic at day 6 they can then test to return to school after 2 negative tests 24 hours apart. If choosing this option parents should begin testing at the end of Day 6, repeat at the end of Day 7 until 2 negative tests are achieved or the full 10 days have passed. If testing can not be completed, a full 10 day isolation will be required for a child under 2 or any non masking child that tests positive.

**Outbreaks** - If there are 2 or more linked cases in a classroom we will notify the county Health Dept and follow any guidance to prevent additional spread.

**Please keep your child home and contact the school immediately if they develop a fever over 100.4, a new persistent cough, vomiting or diarrhea, or shortness of breath or any of the current symptoms for Covid-19.** We recommend that families contact their primary provider if their child develops a new persistent cough/shortness of breath or any other symptom of Covid-19 to decide whether a test for Covid-19 is warranted, or if another diagnosis is applicable. If the Covid-19 test is negative, then the child can return according to the usual health guidelines.

While we certainly hope that it will not be the case, there may be future instances when it will be necessary for a class or 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 a class or the school for any period of time as mandated by the State or Health Department, no refunds for tuition 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.**

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](mailto:preschool@stjamespotomac.org).

Astrid Crookshank, Director

St. James' Children's School



Please visit our website at ([www.stjameschildrenschool.com](http://www.stjameschildrenschool.com)) for the above forms and additional information and photos

**Appendix B:**  
**St. James' Children's School**  
**School Board of Trustees - September 2020**

Ronna Halbgewachs, Chair, Parishioner

Philippus Willems, Treasurer, Parishioner

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

Lori Minasian, Senior Warden of Church

Astrid Crookshank, School Director

Sonia Schwartz, School Admin

Kenny Kong, School Parent

Jennifer Chandler, School Admin

Caitlin Janniello, School Parent

Tracy Forrest, Parishioner, former School Parent

Kali Huch, Parishioner, former School Parent

Sarah Hnatov, Parishioner

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

**Infants Room: [infants@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:infants@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Older Infants Room: [olderinfants@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:olderinfants@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Toddlers Room: [Toddlers@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:Toddlers@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Twos Room: [twos@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:twos@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Threes Room: [threes@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:threes@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Fours Room: [fours@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:fours@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Pre-Kindergarten Room: [Fives@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:Fives@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Summer School Age program [Schoolage@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:Schoolage@stjamespotomac.org)**

**Appendix J**  
**St. James' Children's School Parent Handbook**  
**Acknowledgment Form**  
**2023-2024**

The 2023-2024 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,

1. 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.
2. I/we acknowledge receipt of Maryland Childcare information through "A Guide to Regulated Child Care" and receipt of Maryland Infants and Toddlers program information.
3. We also give permission for School to share our emails with other parents in our child's class, and
4. For 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, unless initialed below.

Child's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial each if appropriate:

**Email Distribution**

\_\_\_\_\_ Please EXCLUDE our emails from any classroom directory distribution to other parents for social/birthday planning purposes.

**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 2023-2024 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 other children, families, and staff who are 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 an important role in keeping others in the school safe and healthy. To help protect all children at St James. I agree to keep my child home when they are sick, to communicate symptoms to the school immediately, and to help my child wear a mask at school if requested.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will inform the school if any member of our immediate family, or an extended visitor inside our home has tested positive for Covid 19. I agree to work with the school administrators to decide when it is safe for my child to return to school after a known Covid exposure or after isolation.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

