



Parent Handbook

2013-2014

15601 Germantown Road
Darnestown, MD 20874
(301) 869-3728

Letter from The Head of School

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Seneca Academy. We look forward to an exciting year filled with engaging learning experiences for everyone in our community.

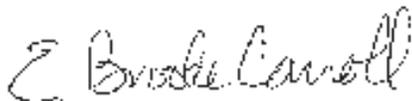
If you have any questions about your child's program or progress in the months to come please don't hesitate to call your child's teacher or me at the school office at 301-869-3728.

Teachers will send newsletters home monthly or at the beginning of IB/PYP units describing the curriculum and activities of the school. The School will also send weekly newsletter emails updating families on classroom activities and upcoming events. Periodically, you will also receive other notices from teachers and the office. It is important for you to carefully read these communications and to mark important dates on your calendar at home.

We are thrilled to be a fully authorized International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB/PYP). Our focus is on engaging students to think deeply about critical and relevant issues; communicate effectively using a variety of verbal, non-verbal, artistic and technological media; and interact positively with peers and adults to acquire information, solve problems, and promote friendships. Please look for formal and informal opportunities provided during the year for you to learn more about the IB/PYP and how we integrate this into our daily educational practices.

Thank you for choosing Seneca Academy for your child's education. We value your family as part of our community of learners and look forward to working with your child as they "turn experience into knowledge."

Sincerely,



E. Brooke Carroll

Head of School

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Welcome to 2013-2014

Mission Statement

Seneca Academy provides an engaging, challenging, inquiry-based education in a nurturing and diverse environment as an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB/PYP) World School. Through the IB/PYP, students develop the intellectual, physical, emotional and social skills to excel in a rapidly changing world.

Vision

To develop globally aware citizens who are life-long learners and leaders.

We believe in *turning experience into knowledge* through...

- Engaging students in developmentally appropriate active learning- indoors and outdoors
- Nurturing students in small classes
- Challenging students to meet their personal best
- Encouraging self-confidence and independence
- Fostering responsibility, respect and reflection
- Developing principled communicators and problem-solvers

Administrative Offices

Address 15601 Germantown Road
Darnestown, MD 20874

Phone 301-869-3728

Fax 301-869-3348

Website www.SenecaAcademy.org

Email info@SenecaAcademy.org



General School Policies

Non Discrimination Policy

Seneca Academy is non-denominational and does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, race, religion, politics, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status in the admission of children or the hiring of staff members. Seneca Academy seeks to admit students who will benefit from its philosophy, values and program.

Diversity Statement

Seneca Academy actively and routinely promotes and celebrates our diverse community. Our hiring and admissions practices, as well as curriculum and programs, are designed to advance understanding and inclusion of individuals and families of diverse ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, politics, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, in order to achieve our vision of “developing globally aware citizens who are life-long learners and leaders,” Seneca Academy is an International Baccalaureate World School. As such, we are guided by the IB mission statement:

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Helping Your Child Succeed at School

Please remember to:

- Bring your child to school on time and pick your child up promptly at dismissal time. Call the school office at 301-869-3728 if an emergency arises that interferes with normal drop-off and pick-up.
- Please notify the school of absences related to illnesses or health-care appointments. The school is required to report to the State Department of Education excessive absences/tardiness of all students.
- Label all removable clothing.
- Send a tote bag or backpack to school every day as well as your child’s communication folder.
- Check your students’ folders/homework planner daily for important information and completed work.
- When sending checks/money to school, use a sealed envelope with the name of your child, the name of the teacher, and purpose of the funds clearly marked.
- Notify the school office immediately of a change of post office or email address, change of telephone, or change in emergency numbers.
- Read all school newsletters/notices carefully.

Preparing Your Child for School

Teach your child to:

- dress him/herself, including clothes, coat, and shoes
- know his/her full name, address, and phone number
- care for toilet needs
- use and dispose of tissue properly
- wash and dry hands
- put away toys and other possessions
- take turns

- listen when others are talking
- express him/herself verbally
- plan time and organize materials to accomplish home work independently

Help your child by:

- providing a nutritious breakfast
- encouraging independence
- giving reasonable responsibilities at home
- being selective in television viewing choices and amount
- providing proper tools at home (scissors, pencils, calculators, etc.) and
- allowing the use of these items
- facilitating adequate sleep each night
- reading regularly to him/her and/or encouraging reading regularly

Your child's performance at school may be affected by a lack of sleep or by not following a positive morning routine. We have information available if you would like suggestions in these areas.

Drop-off and Pick-up Information

Drop-off:

Drop off takes place in front of the Seneca Academy building. Staff members begin the drop-off procedure shortly before official class time.

Kindergarten through 6th grade students' drop off is between 8:15 and 8:25 am.

Preschool students are dropped off and picked up per teacher instructions.

We ask that parents do not walk children to class. This helps with the transition to school for both your child and the rest of the children in the class. If parents need to drop something off for the class, or will be volunteering in class, please drop your child off in the carpool line and then park and come to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge before proceeding to the classroom.

Pick-up:

Every student is issued an individual number to display in the driver-side corner of the front windshield during pick-up time. Children are brought to the porch for dismissal and are called by number. Carpools are encouraged, and when a carpool is formed, children are issued an additional number. All students are released only to parents and other adults designated in writing by the parents.

For early pick-up, parents must come to the office to sign the child out. An office staff member will bring the child to the office for dismissal.

Health and Medical Information

Maryland law requires that your child's file contains health and immunization forms completed by a doctor or the Health Department. Children entering Kindergarten must have a new, complete health record on file.

For the protection of all students, children must be kept home if they have a fever, have diarrhea or vomiting, have an undiagnosed rash, or show any other signs of illness. Your child **must** be free from fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for **24 hours** before returning to school.

If a child is too sick to participate in **all** aspects of our curriculum (including PE and outdoor play), they need to stay home.

A parent will be called to pick up any student coming to school with signs of illness.

In the event of a medical emergency, we call 911. We then attempt to call the parents or others designated by the parents. Part of the admission form is your authorization for the school to contact emergency personnel and take whatever emergency measures are necessary.

Minor first aid treatment is administered at school. If a child needs to go home, the parent is called, and the child remains in the office until the parent arrives.

If a child has a condition that may require medication at school or a specific action plan (including allergies, asthma, seizures, etc.), please contact the office for the appropriate forms and procedures.

Student Records

A parent or guardian has the right to review student records. Seneca Academy policy requires that such review take place in the presence of the Educational Director, the Head of School, and/or the child's teacher. Student records are released to other parties only upon written consent by the parents or guardian.

Records are not released until all financial obligations have been cleared with the school.

Lunch and Snack

Children who have lunch at school should bring a lunch box with a thermos or a bag lunch with a drink. Lunch should contain foods that the child normally eats and that do not require refrigeration or warming. Preschool students are provided with a small snack. Elementary students may bring a snack for mid-morning. This should be a small healthy snack ONLY; students may get water in the classroom.

Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions

Seneca Academy does not certify any room to be allergen free but exercises caution to ensure the safety of all students. We also aim to be mindful of dietary restrictions. Parents of children with food allergies or other dietary restrictions should contact the office for the appropriate forms and procedures.

Tips for Successful Lunches:

- Send food that your child enjoys at home
- Send food in child-sized quantities
- Use containers your child can independently manage
- Include a napkin and all necessary eating utensils
- Do not send in soda or "red" drinks
- Limit candy and other "sweets"

Prayer

As Seneca Academy is an independent school, "prayer" is not recited in the classroom setting. A thankful poem, song, or other tradition (such as a moment of silence) is recited by all students before snack and lunch.

Library and Media Center Use

Each classroom has a grade-level library available for students use, as well as reference books. Elementary school students are provided a system to take home books from their class libraries. Children in all classes have free reading periods scheduled in the classroom and are encouraged to read daily at home.

In addition, the Media Center provides a resource library for teachers and students. Books, tapes, records, magazines, and videos are available.

Visitors and Volunteers

We encourage and appreciate parent participation at school both during class time and at other times. Teachers often provide opportunities for interested parents to work in the classroom. The Seneca Academy Parent Association (SAPA) encourages the participation of every parent and has a variety of volunteer opportunities. Please contact SAPA at senecaparents@gmail.com for more information.

Upon arrival, visitors and volunteers must stop at the office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge that must be worn while in the building. This helps to ensure the safety of all our community members.

Parents are reminded that observations of children made while volunteering at school are protected by confidentiality laws, and the behavior and academic skills of children should not be discussed. In addition, so that parents may focus on their Seneca Academy child, classroom volunteers may not bring other children with them.

Parties and Birthdays

Parents may be asked to assist with in-class parties either as a classroom helper or by contributing food or supplies. Parents should not be asked to contribute money. Teachers or Room Parents will communicate directly with parents regarding these events.

Birthdays may be celebrated at school by prior arrangement with your child's teacher. Outside birthday or other party invitations may be given out at school only if every child in the class is invited. Invitations should be given to the teacher for distribution.

No goodie bags of any kind are allowed to be distributed at school.

"Birthday Club" provides a forum for children to donate a gift to the school in honor of their birthday. Ask your child's teacher or the office for more information about this option.

Special Events

Many special events are held during the school year. Information about these events is shared in the weekly FoxTales newsletter that is emailed to all parents, and on the school website www.SenecaAcademy.org.

The Seneca Academy Parents Association (SAPA) plans many whole school activities such as the Fall and Spring Picnics, Book Fairs, International Night, and the Adult Social and Auction. SAPA communicates with the community about these events through "Evite" invitations, our Facebook page, the weekly FoxTales newsletter, and the school calendar on our website.

School Communications

Weekly School Newsletters: The FoxTales newsletter is distributed by email to all parents and is a combination of School and Parent Association news.

SenecaAcademy.org: The school web site contains information on school policies, admissions and registration. Class spotlights, photos, and links to helpful web sites are also available.

Class Newsletters: A newsletter is emailed or sent home by each teacher at the beginning of every month or PYP unit. This provides information about activities and learning that has taken place and that is coming up in the near future. Newsletters provide information about field trips and birthdays as well.

Yearbook: The yearbook is published at the end of the school year and contains individual photos of each child, teacher, and staff member, as well as candid photos of classroom activities and special events. The school provides a copy of the yearbook to each student.

School Directory: A directory is provided to school families at the beginning of the school year. It contains student and family phone, address and email listings and class assignments.

Bulletin Board: The bulletin board in our main hallway has paper copies of electronic announcements, preschool snack schedule, as well as other items of interest.

Pictures

Seneca Academy takes pictures of our students, staff, and school building and grounds regularly to document and celebrate our activities. We post pictures in our classrooms and around the school. The school also creates an annual yearbook with pictures of each student in each class. All students' pictures are included in the yearbook and in the classrooms.

In addition, as part of the enrollment or re-enrollment process, parents are asked to sign a media release form. This indicates whether or not parents allow the school to use students' photos in communications and marketing materials such as in the FoxTales newsletter, on our webpage or Facebook page, and in brochures and flyers. Seneca Academy will assume that parents who do not complete a media release form are authorizing the school to use their child's picture in communications and marketing documents.

Camp Seneca

Each summer the school facilitates a day camp for children of a variety of ages. Singing, arts and crafts, games, drama and dancing are included in the daily activities for young children. Adventure camps for older students include frequent trips around the community to hike, splash, see shows, and partake in other adventures. In addition, older students choose from camps that focus on the arts, drama, science or cooking. Information is available in early spring. Students currently enrolled in Seneca Academy and their siblings have preferential enrollment until April 1.

Dismissal from School

A child may be dismissed from school should he or she require an inordinate amount of individual attention from staff members, demonstrate consistently disruptive or dangerous behavior at school, or if tuition is unpaid for that child.

Seneca Academy Playground Expectations

The Seneca Academy playground, pond, gazebo, sitting rocks, and fields are used daily by our students and faculty for engaging learning opportunities, gross motor movement, physical education, and just plain old fun! In order to ensure that students of all ages are safe, and that our habitat is protected, we have established the following expectations.

General Supervision

- Children on the playground and using the gazebo, sitting rocks, and fields must be supervised by an adult at all times. This means adults must have visual contact and physical proximity with every student at all times, before, during, and after school.
- Children may not be in the school building for any reason without adult supervision. This includes using the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Children may not enter the woods or fields next to school property without an employee of the school.
- Parents and students who use the playground after school are asked to be respectful of students and teachers in regularly scheduled clubs (including Fox Club) that may be utilizing the outdoor space. These clubs have priority use of the equipment. Students in clubs are expected to follow all school rules and are supervised by an employee of the school. Visitors are also expected to follow all school rules and must follow the direction of the employee on duty.
- Students on the playground after school hours without supervision will be charged for Fox Club.

Playground Rules

- The blue and yellow equipment is for the use of children 4 years or older. The blue and green equipment is for students who are second trimester first-graders or older.
- Students are not allowed to climb on the trees, playground houses, or furniture.

Storm Water Pond and Fish Pond

The storm water pond and the fish pond are for observing only and require close adult supervision. Students may not put objects, including rocks, sticks, plant material, etc. in the storm water pond or fish pond. Students may not put their hands in the water or touch any living thing (animals or plants) in the fish pond. If playground equipment accidentally falls in these areas, an adult must assist in the retrieval.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Seneca Academy believes that an atmosphere of safety, courtesy, and respect are critical in order to ensure optimal learning. The school's program, schedules, and curricula are all designed to foster an environment that nurtures caring, principled young people who demonstrate empathy, cooperation, and integrity. Bullying, harassment and intimidation have no place in the Seneca Academy environment, and are prohibited, as they create an atmosphere of fear, mistrust and suspicion which negatively impact learning.

Seneca Academy defines bullying, harassment, and intimidation as any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including an electronic communication, that:

1. Physically harms an individual;
2. Damages an individual's property;
3. Is intended to frighten or intimidate;
4. Creates a sense of inferiority in an individual;
5. Creates an unpleasant or hostile situation by uninvited and/or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct;
6. Substantially interferes with an individual's education or learning environment; or
7. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person, property, or mental state.

Individuals who witness or become aware of bullying, harassment or intimidation by Seneca Academy community members are responsible for informing the Seneca Academy administration (Head of School or Educational Director) so that consequences and remedial actions may take place. Individuals who provide such information are protected from reprisal or retaliation.

However, individuals who make false claims of bullying, harassment or intimidation will receive consequences.

The Head of School, Educational Director, or their designee will respond immediately (within 24 hours) of a report of bullying, harassment or intimidation by investigating the allegations. During the investigation time, close attention will be paid to the alleged victim(s) to ensure that additional acts and/or retaliation do not occur.

If bullying, harassment or intimidation are determined to have taken place, an appropriate consequence that includes education about the effects of bullying, harassment and intimidation, as well as action to restore a safe environment, will be given. In addition, the parents of the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) will be contacted and informed of the event(s).

If repeated acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation take place, suspension and/or expulsion of an individual from the school may occur.

Emergency Plan

Parents are strongly encouraged to promptly inform the school of current home, work, and cell telephone numbers as well as email addresses. In addition, parents must provide at least two local emergency contacts to the school. This ensures that we can contact you or a designee in the event of an emergency.

Full Day School Closing or Delayed Opening

The Head of School or her designate determines the need to close school or delay opening due to snow or other weather emergencies or facilities problems. Information about school closings can be heard on radio stations WTOP and WMAL and on television channels 7 (ABC) and 8 (NewsChannel). The most current information can be found at www.schoolsout.com. These sources are notified about the school's decision to close by 6:30 am. In addition, all efforts are made to have current emergency information on our website www.SenecaAcademy.org.

Note: Seneca Academy does NOT necessarily follow decisions of Montgomery County Schools regarding delay or cancellation.

Weather and Other Emergencies

Should a weather or other emergency occur while school is in session, teachers will be instructed on where to take their children. In the event of a weather emergency requiring shelter, teachers will be instructed to take their children to the lowest indoor place in the building, our lower hallway. Students will not be moved from this location until the Head of School or her designate determines that conditions are safe and directs students to move. The school has a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) emergency alert radio with batteries, which was provided by the Department of Homeland Security. This radio is programmed to alert for severe weather and major emergencies. The Head of School or her designate monitors this radio daily.

Early Closing

If it becomes necessary for School to close early due to weather or facilities problems, parents will be notified via the Emergency Phone Tree. Morning preschool classes will typically dismiss as regularly scheduled and afternoon preschool classes will typically not be held. Dismissal time for K-6th will be communicated through class phone trees and www.schoolsout.com. All after-school activities (including Fox and Kit Clubs) will be cancelled. This information will also be placed on the school telephone 301-869-3728 and our website www.SenecaAcademy.org.

School Evacuation

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, students will be escorted to:

St. Nicholas Church

15575 Germantown Road, Darnestown

(Access the Church parking lot through the Seneca Academy Teacher and Staff Parking lot)

Butler School

15951 Germantown Road, Darnestown

Code Blue Procedures

If a local MCPS school announces a Code Blue situation, Seneca Academy will immediately check that all outside doors are locked and release children only to authorized adults. Only persons known to the school or who can show acceptable cause and identification may enter the building. All measures will be taken to assure the safety of students and personnel.

Should there be an emergency situation where the children cannot leave the building the following procedure will be used.

1. All windows and doors will immediately be closed and locked.
2. All students will be brought to the Gathering Room.
3. Emergency water and light snacks will be dispensed as needed.
4. Children will not be allowed to leave the building until the Maryland State Department of Education or the United States Government declares it is safe to exit the building.
5. Children will not be released to parents until the appropriate governmental authorities indicate it is safe for students. Parents **should not** come to the school until informed by public news sources.
6. Teachers must remain with students until all are released to parents or another designated adult.

The school has an emergency alert radio with batteries, which was provided by the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service. This radio has been programmed to alert for severe weather and major emergencies. Flashlights and other supplies are available in the building.

Preschool Policies

The Seneca Academy preschool (formerly known as The Circle School) has been in existence since 1983. Our preschool class sizes are some of the smallest in the area and our staff-to-student ratio exceeds state requirements, ensuring that each child gets the attention he or she needs. The school motto -“Turning Experience Into Knowledge”- reflects the school’s mission of teaching students experientially. All of our preschool teachers have college degrees as well as training in early childhood education.

Preschool Curriculum

Children in the preschool program are introduced to language arts, mathematics and scientific thinking, social studies, art, music and physical development in ways that are appropriate for their age and ability. Daily schedules include activities that are child-chosen and teacher-directed and are balanced with “busy” and “quiet” times. Children have many opportunities to choose activities that are of interest. Teachers encourage children to choose a variety of activities while at school.

Pre-Kindergarten classes have Spanish with our Spanish teacher and spend ample time participating in music and movement. Music and Spanish are presented during class time.

All students have an active gross motor period daily. We have daily outside play, weather permitting. Please dress children appropriately for the weather including rain or snow boots and pants.

Terrific Threes

We realize young children need time to practice their socialization skills and to begin the journey toward independence. At our preschool each child experiences a supportive and nurturing environment that provides ample time for guided exploration. Practicing cooperative behavior with classmates and solving problems prepares them for future success. Children examine and explore objects and materials and are stimulated to learn more about their environment. They also participate in dramatic play to encourage language, expand life experience and heighten cognitive functions. Each center in the room provides the variety of explorations necessary to stimulate thinking and intellectual growth.

Pre-Kindergarten Classes

Seneca Academy offers a variety of pre-kindergarten classes to meet the needs of children and their families. Every pre-kindergarten class is designed to ensure that children are ready for the next educational step into kindergarten.

Young children of this age primarily need a program that encourages social and emotional growth while nurturing and expanding intellectual interests. To round out their school experience, there must be ample opportunity to practice independence and to exercise both large muscles by vigorous outside play and small muscles by activities that include cutting, painting and writing. A balanced schedule of child-chosen explorations and teacher-directed activities are essential to successful development.

In our preschool, all children encounter experiences that stimulate thinking and instill a sense of wonder. They are exposed to an orderly classroom community that will propel them toward positive interactions with other students and with people in the world beyond the classroom.

Preschool Registration and Admission

Preschool is open to all students who will be at least three years old by September 1 of the year in which they enroll. Current students and siblings apply in February for the following fall. Registration fees and deposits are non-refundable.

Open Houses for new students are held in late fall and winter. Applications for new students are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis beginning February 8. All forms for new students must be completed and a tuition deposit and registration fee paid before the registration process is considered complete.

Children are grouped according to age. The Head of School has final authority in enrollment and placement of students.

Preschool Tuition

Preschool tuition may be paid in one, two, or 10 payments. Parents choosing to make two or 10 payments must use the FACTS tuition management system which automatically debits a bank account monthly or semi-annually beginning in July.

The school does not refund for days absent due to illness, vacation or inclement weather. Students may be dismissed from the school for payments more than 10 days late.

Preschool students may withdraw from school by submitting a written notice 14 days prior to withdrawal. Parents are charged for the entire month in which the withdrawal occurs. Registration fees and deposits are non-refundable.

Any change in enrollment status for the school year (including withdrawal) will incur a status change-fee.

Financial Aid

Financial aid may be available for eligible students in preschool through sixth grade. Parents wishing to apply for financial aid must submit a Parent's Financial Statement to School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) by January 2. SSS is an adjunct to the National Association of Independent Schools and will provide the school with an objective assessment of a family's ability to contribute to educational fees. This assessment is a required step in applying for financial aid. The Financial Aid Committee will meet in February to allocate funds and will notify families after that meeting. The front office provides guidance with the financial aid process.

Discipline

A variety of classroom strategies are used to maintain a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning. Engaging curriculum, scheduling, and classroom set-up are all designed to enable students to manage their behavior as developmentally appropriate. Seneca Academy approaches behavior management and discipline as a means of helping children learn to control their own behavior and to act in an acceptable manner according to their own emotional, intellectual and physical development. Children are taught that they may not hurt themselves or others while at school. Our staff employs techniques from *1, 2, 3, Magic for Teachers* by Thomas Phelan. If behavior warrants, a child may be removed from class and taken to the office of the Educational

Director or Head of School. After two incidents requiring removal, parents may be contacted and the child may be sent home for the day. Parents may be required to seek appropriate professional services for their child as a requirement of the child remaining at the school. Should the child demonstrate consistently disruptive behavior requiring disciplinary action, the child may be asked to leave the school permanently. This decision is made solely at the discretion of the Head of the School.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is a program that gives our preschool students an opportunity to enjoy lunch and social times with their friends after class. It is offered Monday through Friday for both our 3-year-olds and our 4-year-olds. Lunch Bunch for our 3-year-olds starts at the end of class (11:45am) and runs until 12:45 pm. Lunch Bunch for our half-day morning or afternoon 4-year-olds starts at 12 pm and runs until 12:45 pm. Children may attend Lunch Bunch one or more days a week. Registration for Lunch Bunch will occur at the beginning of each of the three Club Terms (fall, winter, spring).

Children enrolled in Lunch Bunch should bring a bag lunch or a lunch box with a thermos. Send lunch items that your child eats at home. Please do not send items that require refrigeration or heating. Please include a napkin and eating utensils. Juice pouches and "Lunchables" are discouraged.

Seneca Preschool Clubs

Seneca Academy offers two types of "clubs" for preschool students: Kit Club which is our before and after-care program offered throughout the year and activity clubs that are periodically offered after classes. Examples of activity clubs offered in the past have included Soccer and My Gym. Clubs are offered after Lunch Bunch and begin at 12:45 pm.

General Club Policies

- Students will be accepted on a first come first serve basis.
- No make-ups will be given and no credit issued for missed club.
- Students are expected to follow all class and school rules at all times. The teacher reserves the right to refer a student to the office for dangerous, disrespectful or disruptive behavior.
- Students who have an outstanding balance are not eligible to enroll in clubs until their account is current.

Kit Club

Kit Club is our before and after school program. Parents may drop children off as early as 7:30 am and pick them up as late as 5:30 pm. Kit Club availability is dependent on the class in which the child is enrolled. Contract rates are discounted and drop-in care is available.

Kit Club Payment Policies

- Kit Club contracts will be charged on a per term basis (September, October-December, January-March, April-June) and are due at the time of club sign-up.
- Drop-in care is available on a space available basis and is billed at the end of each month. Payment is due before the end of the following month. There is a \$10 late fee for late payments of Monthly Invoices.
- Changes in Kit Club enrollment after the term begins are assessed an administrative fee of \$25.
- Late fees for pick up of your child after 5:30 pm are due within three business days or before your child returns to after-care, whichever comes first.
 - Late fees are assessed as follows: \$5.00 for the first five minutes late, \$2.00 for every additional minute

There is a \$30.00 charge for returned checks.

Progress Reports and Parent Conferences

Three-Year Olds: In November, parents are asked to fill out a questionnaire that is returned to the classroom teacher. There is then a parent-teacher conference to discuss the child's social-emotional progress.

Four-Year Olds: Progress reports are sent home in November. Progress reports are also shared at a parent- teacher conference held in January.

Parents may conference with teachers on an informal or formal basis at any time throughout the year. A final progress report is sent home for all preschoolers at the end of the year.

Preschool Pop-In

Parents are invited to park and come into the school to visit their child's classroom during Preschool Pop-Ins. This is an opportunity for your child to share what they have been doing in class. Specific dates and times for your child's class are published in the classroom newsletter.

Clothing

Children attending the preschool program should wear the same type of clothing worn at home for play. Shoes should be suitable for active play (no sandals or crocs). All removable clothing should be labeled. Children are learning to do many things for themselves at school and will only receive help when clothing is such that it is too difficult to manage alone. Uniforms are optional for preschool.

An extra set of clothing should be placed in the student's school bag for possible change as we do messy and wet play at school. These clothes need to be updated throughout the year for appropriate weather and fit.

Toilet Training

All programs require that a child has been toilet trained. Toilet training is a good indicator of school readiness. Children should be able to manage using the toilet with adult supervision only. A child will be required to leave the program if not toilet trained. *Toilet Training in Less Than a Day* by Nathan Azrin and Richard Fox is a helpful resource.

Field Trips

The number of field trips outside of school for preschool classes varies based on the age and interest of the students. Watch class letters for information. Some trips are limited in the number of adults that can attend, while others require one parent to attend with each student. Teachers try to give each interested parent an opportunity to attend a field trip during the year. Trips involving private transportation require that each child have the appropriate car seat or booster seat installed by the parent in the driver's car. In no case is a child allowed to go on a field trip without written consent by the parent and the appropriate car/booster seat. Siblings are not allowed on school field trips.

Elementary School Policies

The Seneca Academy elementary program begins at kindergarten and continues through sixth grade. Kindergarten has been part of the program since 1985. Our Elementary program was added after completion of the Seneca Academy building in 1998.

The school motto -*"Turning Experience Into Knowledge"*- reflects the school's mission of teaching students experientially. Small classes, well-trained staff, and carefully chosen curriculum assure students' involvement in their education and encourage students along the path to life-long learning.

Admissions

Enrollment in kindergarten through sixth grade for the following school year begins with Open Houses. Specific Open House dates will be published by September 1, but generally occur in late fall and throughout the winter. New student applications are accepted at any time after the first Open House of the season. Current students and their siblings receive preferential status through February 15. The Admissions Committee will meet after February 15 to discuss new applicants.

Families with students in Seneca Academy preschool, who wish to enroll their child in kindergarten should submit an application and \$30 application fee. The transcript release form and student recommendation form are not required. Students enrolled in Seneca Academy preschool will have priority until February 15.

For new applicants from outside of Seneca Academy, an application and \$60 application fee are required. Previous school records, teacher recommendations, and the applicant's visit help us assess the child's ability to succeed within our community. Parents' understanding and support of Seneca Academy's philosophy and curriculum are also necessary, as we consider parents our partners in education. Parents are responsible for advising Seneca Academy about existing IEPs, educational testing results, or learning disabilities at the time of application. Acceptance of children from outside our school is provisional for the first eight weeks of enrollment and is subject to review at that time.

Class Times

- Kindergarten 8:30 am - 3:00 pm Monday – Friday
- Elementary 8:30 am - 3:15 pm Monday – Friday
- *Carpool runs from 8:15 am until 8:25 am. Students are considered tardy after 8:30 am.*

Seneca Elementary Clubs

Seneca Academy offers two types of "clubs" for elementary students: Fox Club is our before and after-care program offered throughout the year, and after-school clubs are offered in the afternoons.

General Club Policies

- Students will be accepted on a first come first serve basis
- No make-ups will be given and no credit issued for missed club.
- Students are expected to follow all class and school rules at all times. The teacher reserves the right to refer a student to the office for dangerous, disrespectful or disruptive behavior.

Fox Club

Fox Club before and after school care is available for Seneca Academy students. AM Fox Club is available from 7:30 until 8:15 am. PM Fox Club is available from 3:00 until 5:30 pm. Contract rates are discounted and drop-in care is available. Please contact the office for more information.

Fox Club Payment Policies

- Fox Club contracts will be charged on a per term basis (September, October-December, January-March, April-June) and are due at the time of club sign-up.
- Drop-in care is available on a space available basis and is billed at the end of each month. Payment is due before the end of the following month. There is a \$10 late fee for late payments of Monthly Invoices.
- Changes in Fox Club enrollment after the term begins are assessed an administrative fee of \$25.
- Late fees for pick up of your child after 5:30 pm are due within three business days or before your child returns to after-care, whichever comes first.
 - Late fees are assessed as follows: \$5.00 for the first five minutes late, \$2.00 for every additional minute.

There is a \$30 charge for returned checks.

After-School Clubs

After-school clubs run by parents, teachers and outside professionals are offered throughout the school year to Kindergarten through sixth grade students. Club offerings vary but have included: Studio Art, Sculpture, Soccer, Sports and Fitness, Drama, Film Making, Chorus, and Band. After-school clubs are offered on a trimester basis from October-December, January-March, and April-June.

Tuition and Fees

Upon acceptance in the program, a nonrefundable tuition deposit is due. As stated in the contract, parents/guardians are responsible for the remainder of the tuition and materials/activity fees for the year unless the Head of School is notified in writing by June 1 prior to the beginning of the school year.

A discount is applied to all fees paid in one payment by July 15. All families choosing the two or 10 payment plans must use the FACTS tuition management service, which automatically debits a bank account monthly beginning in July. Read all brochures for specific information. A student may be dismissed from the school if a payment is more than ten days late. Parents are encouraged to contact the office if there are unusual circumstances that may preclude prompt payment of fees.

Any change in enrollment status for the school year (including withdrawal) will incur a status change-fee.

Contracts

Re-enrollment contracts are distributed in January. Priority enrollment for current students is reserved until February 15, after which the Admissions Committee will begin to accept new applicants.

The enrollment contract obligates parents to pay all tuition and materials fees for the full academic year unless the school receives written notice before June 1. Under no circumstance is the tuition deposit refunded. Parents of students not completing the year may request in writing to be released from an Elementary contract. Requests are considered by the Board of Trustees on a case-by-case basis.

Financial Aid

Financial aid may be available for eligible students in preschool through sixth grade. Parents wishing to apply for financial aid must submit a Parent's Financial Statement to School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) by January 2. SSS is an adjunct to the National Association of Independent Schools and will provide the school with an objective assessment of a family's ability to contribute to educational fees. This assessment is a required step in applying for financial aid. The Financial Aid Committee will meet in February to allocate funds and will notify families after that meeting. The front office provides guidance with the financial aid process.

Discipline

A variety of classroom strategies are used to maintain a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning. Engaging curriculum, scheduling, and classroom set-up are all designed to enable students to manage their behavior as developmentally appropriate. Our *Responsive Classroom* curriculum, which guides the social-emotional learning that takes place in every grade, also helps students to learn appropriate ways to manage feelings and behavior. Nonetheless, there are times when a student needs redirection. Teachers then employ techniques from *1, 2, 3 Magic for Teachers* by Thomas Phelan. If behavior warrants, a child may be removed from class and taken to the office of the Head of School. After two incidents requiring removal, parents may be contacted and the child may be sent home for the day. Parents may be required to seek appropriate professional services for their child as a requirement of the child remaining at the school. Should the child demonstrate consistently disruptive behavior requiring disciplinary action, the child may be asked to leave the school permanently. This decision is made solely at the discretion of the Head of the School.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones and other hand-held electronic devices to school. They are not allowed to access such devices during school hours. The school is not responsible for damage or loss.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all scheduled school days. Absences and tardiness are noted on the Report Card sent to parents three times a year, and the school is required to report excessive absences and tardiness to the Maryland Department of Education. Parents should call the office to notify of absences for any reason.

Students may be excused for the following reasons only:

- Death in the family
- Illness
- Religious Holiday

Students absent due to illness for longer than three days must have a doctor's note for the absence to be "excused." Family vacations are not usually excused. Families should plan vacations to coincide with scheduled school holidays. Students are responsible for any work missed during an absence regardless of the reason. Arrangements must be made with the teacher to complete assignments in a timely manner.

Field Trips

Educational field trips are typically a part of the classroom curriculum. Travel is by private car, school bus or public transportation. A permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before each trip. Parents are invited as needed to transport or chaperone these trips. Every effort is made to allow participation of each parent who wishes to attend. Car/booster seats are required as appropriate. Additional fees may be required.

Parent-Visit Days

Approximately once a month parents are invited to visit the kindergarten-sixth grade classrooms. Students share with their parents evidence of their academic progress as well as the "happenings" in their class. Teachers will inform parents of the scheduled times for Parent Visit days.

Uniform Policy

Uniforms are mandatory for all K-6th students. The school reserves the right to determine what appropriate and/or acceptable uniform clothing. Outerwear may not be worn in the classroom.

Uniform pieces may be purchased through Lands' End or at any store provided they are part of a uniform line and conform in color and style to those available at Lands' End. Our preferred school number with Lands' End is 9000-3007-3 and our logo # is 0853315K. You can earn "Box Tops" points for the school by accessing Lands' End through the Box Tops website.

The following uniform clothing is acceptable for all students in grades K-6:

Girls

- White, red or navy collared tops (polo shirts or button-up blouses) and turtlenecks. Colored t-shirts are not permitted nor are long-sleeved shirts worn layered under short-sleeved uniform shirts.
- Navy or khaki skirts, skorts, pants, jumpers or shorts. Knit fabric is acceptable provided the item is part of a uniform clothing line from Lands' End, Target, J.C. Penney, Kohl's, etc. (corduroy and cargo pants are not acceptable).
- White, red or navy knit polo dresses from a uniform clothing line.
- White, red, navy or khaki leggings or tights. Prints are acceptable provided they are the accepted colors. The same policy applies for socks.
- White, red or navy sweaters and sweater vests are acceptable to wear in the classroom as are light fleece jackets and vests.
- Shoes/boots must be suitable for active play and be closed-toe with rubber soles (no open-toed sandals, crocs or hard-soled shoes (i.e. cowgirl boots).

Boys

- White, red or navy collared tops (polo or button-up shirts) and turtlenecks. Colored t-shirts are not permitted nor are long-sleeved shirts worn layered under short-sleeved uniform shirts.
- Navy or khaki pants or shorts. Knit fabric is acceptable provided the item is part of a uniform clothing line from Land's End, Target, J.C. Penney, Kohl's, etc. (corduroy and cargo pants are not acceptable).
- Red or navy sweaters and sweater vests are acceptable to wear in the classroom as are light fleece jackets and vests.
- White, red, navy, black or khaki socks.
- Shoes must be suitable for active play and be closed-toe with rubber soles (no open-toed sandals, crocs or hard-soled shoes (i.e. cowboy boots).

PE Days – Applies to girls and boys

Students may wear their regular uniforms for P.E. Other options listed below may be worn to school on designated P.E. days if desired. Sneakers must be worn on P.E. days.

T-shirts: White or navy Seneca Academy t-shirts (long or short sleeved). The t-shirt must say Seneca Academy (can be a logo from Lands End, the official IB World school t-shirt, or SENECA ACADEMY t-shirt). Plain t-shirts are not acceptable.

Shorts, pants and sweatshirts: Official (with logo) or plain (no logo or other marking such as company logo) navy sweatshirts, sweatpants and shorts (including mesh shorts).

Assessments, Report Cards and Conferences

Assessment is ongoing at Seneca Academy. We use a variety of different methods to evaluate individual student's knowledge, skills and abilities. Teachers assess students throughout daily class activities, as well as at the end of a learning unit. Assessment provides parents with information, helps each student succeed as a learner, and enables teachers to make changes in instruction if necessary.

Report cards are issued in December, March, and June. Progress (growth from the beginning of the year) and performance (how a child compares to the expectations for children at the same grade level) in academic subjects, work habits, and citizenship are reported.

Parent conferences are held in December and March to discuss a student's progress. Conferences may also be scheduled at the request of the parent or teacher at other times during the school year.

Technology

Technology is viewed as an educational tool at Seneca Academy. Computers are available in all third through sixth grade classrooms. A formal technology curriculum is implemented in grades three through six and includes keyboarding, word processing, and presentations as well as use of audio and visual technologies. Teachers provide parameters for use of technology in the classroom and oversight when students use items such as computers and cameras. Students are not to use computer games or disks from home because of the possibility of introducing viruses or damage to school computers. Parents and students in grades three through six are asked to sign a computer use contract at the beginning of the year.

Homework Policy

The purpose of homework at Seneca Academy:

- Establish habits of responsibility
- Develop independent work-study skills
- Give parents an insight to the skills and subjects being taught

Homework will usually be one of four types:

- An enrichment activity
- A reinforcement activity of a skill already taught
- A long-term project
- Reading

Homework is only assigned Monday through Thursdays, excluding holidays and should take 15-60 minutes to complete depending on the grade level of the student. Older students may expect to spend more time completing homework. If your child is spending more time than this, please contact your child's teacher. Students in grades three through six will receive additional information about homework as a student at Seneca Academy.

Homework is for the student to do independently unless otherwise noted. Provide a time and a space, but please allow him or her to complete work alone. We all learn from mistakes. It is suggested, however, that parents look at the homework planner as well as the completed assignments. If a student is unable to complete the assignment with minimum parental direction, the student should bring the uncompleted assignment to school for additional teacher instruction.

If a child is absent due to illness or vacation, that student must complete all homework missed in a timely manner. Questions about homework should be directed to the classroom teacher.

Tutoring

The school makes an effort to provide space for private tutoring of students before and after school. Arrangements must be made through the Educational Director. In addition, an on-staff, certified Phonographix tutor is available during school hours to address specific, language-based learning needs.

Elementary Curriculum

Seneca Academy's elementary curriculum is informed by a variety of state and national organizations including the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Program, Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland State Department of Education, and the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Our school's *Program of Inquiry* describes each class's units of study and guides our yearly curriculum planning. Each grade explores six trans-disciplinary units of inquiry (including the distinct disciplines of reading, writing, social studies, science and engineering, technology, and viewing and presenting), spending four to six weeks on each unit. Each unit addresses one of six distinct trans-disciplinary themes: *Who we are, Where we are in place and time, How we express ourselves, How the world works, How we organize ourselves, and Sharing the planet*. In addition, our math curriculum, guided by Everyday Math, is linked when applicable to the units of inquiry. Our Specialist teachers work with classroom teachers to further integrate art, P.E., Spanish, and music into students' daily activities. At the beginning of each unit of study, parents are given a description of the unit, along with the skills and abilities students are learning. Copies of our current Program of Inquiry, as well as a complete overview of our elementary curriculum, are on the Seneca Academy website.

The Parent Association

Mission, Purpose and Goals

The mission of the Seneca Academy Parent Association (SAPA) is to support Seneca Academy by facilitating events, social gatherings, discussion groups and fundraising activities that foster an informed, connected and engaged parent community, focused on promoting the goals and mission of the School for the enrichment of our children.

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide the structural framework, leadership and organization for the Seneca Academy Parent Association. The volunteers who serve on the Steering Committee are designated and appointed to their positions in the spring of the previous school year.

SAPA's primary goal for 2013-2014 is to facilitate community building. All events and activities are focused on relationship-building, with opportunities to continue the conversation outside the School environment.

The Parent Association welcomes and encourages the participation of all parents. Please contact any Steering Committee member to discuss ways to get involved. We can also be reached through the Parent Association email account: senecaparents@gmail.com.

2013 – 2014 Parent Association Steering Committee

Head of School

Brooke Carroll bcarroll@senecaacademy.org

President

Angie McAlpine angie_mcalpine@hotmail.com

Secretary

Cristy Morgan cvmorgan6@gmail.com

Assistant Secretary

Jenna Boig jenna.boig@gmail.com

Treasurer

Twila Logan twila.logan@lmco.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Kellie Hodges kmchodges@gmail.com

Room Parent Liaison for PK

Janet DeMoor janet_and_carl@hotmail.com

Room Parent Liaison for Elementary

Amy Skelton billandamada@comcast.net

2013 – 2014 Parent Association Activities and Events

- Jul./Aug.:** Summer Socials
- September:** Back to School + Class Socials + Scholastic Book Fair
- October:** Fall Picnic
- December:** Barnes & Noble Book Fair + Holiday Store
- January:** STEM Fair
- February:** International Night
- March:** Annual Benefit
- May:** Staff & Teacher Appreciation
- June:** Spring Fling

Ongoing:

- Box Tops for Education
- Community Outreach
- Grocery/Retail Store Reward Programs
- Hot Lunch Program
- Ink/Cell Phone Recycling
- Media Center Assistance
- No Uniform Days
- Teacher Appreciation
- Restaurant/School Spirit Nights
- Used Uniform Sales