



SENECA ACADEMY

Turning Experience Into Knowledge

Parent Handbook 2017-2018

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Head of School	1
Mission Statement	2
Vision	2
Diversity Statement	2
Administrative Offices	2
General School Policies	3
Nondiscrimination Policy.....	3
Helping Your Child Succeed at School.....	3
Preparing Your Child for School.....	3
Drop-Off and Pick-Up Information.....	4
Health and Medical Information.....	4
Student Records.....	5
Lunch and Snack.....	5
Food and Allergy Policy.....	5
Library and Media Center Use.....	6
Visitors and Volunteers.....	6
Parties and Birthdays.....	6
Special Events.....	6
School Communications.....	7
Pictures.....	7
Dismissal from School.....	8
Anti-Bullying Policy.....	8
Emergency Plan	8
Full Day School Closing or Delayed Opening.....	8
Weather and Other Emergencies.....	9
Early Closing.....	9
School Evacuation.....	9
Code Blue Procedures.....	9
Preschool Policies	10
Preschool Curriculum.....	10
Preschool Registration and Admission.....	11
Preschool Tuition.....	11
Financial Aid.....	11
Discipline.....	11
Lunch Bunch.....	12
Seneca Preschool Clubs.....	12
Progress Reports and Parent Conferences.....	13
Preschool Pop-Ins.....	13
Clothing.....	13
Toilet Training.....	13
Field Trips.....	13
Elementary School Policies	13
Elementary Curriculum	14
Elementary Admissions	14
Class Times	14
Seneca Elementary Clubs	15
Tuition and Fees	15
Contracts	15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Elementary School Policies (continued)

Financial Aid	16
Discipline	16
Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices	16
Attendance	16
Field Trips	17
Parent Visit Days	17
Uniform Policy	17
Assessments, Report Cards, and Conferences	18
Technology	18
Homework Policy	19
Tutoring	19
The Parent Association.....	20

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This handbook is updated annually and contains the current policies and procedures of the school.

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.

In the months to come, please do not hesitate to call your child's teacher or me at the school office at 301-896-3728 if you have any questions about your child's program or progress. We know that it "takes a village to raise a child" and look forward to being part of your village.

Teachers will send newsletters home monthly (preschool) or at the beginning of Units of Inquiry (elementary) describing the learning activities of the class. The school will also send a weekly newsletter via email, FoxTales, updating families on school 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 an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB/PYP) World School. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michelle Parker, Ph.D.
Head of School

Welcome to 2017-2018

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

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.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Address	15601 Germantown Road Darnestown, MD 20874
Phone	301-869-3728
Fax	301-869-3348
Website	www.senecaacademy.org
Email	office@senecaacademy.org

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

Nondiscrimination 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.

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 comply with Maryland truancy laws by reporting excessive absences/tardiness of students to the State Department of Education.
- Label all removable clothing.
- Send your child's tote bag (preschool) or backpack (elementary) to school every day as well as your child's communication folder.
- Check your student's 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 mailing or email address, change of telephone number, 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 homework independently

Help your child by:

- providing a nutritious breakfast
- encouraging independence
- giving reasonable responsibilities at home
- being selective in television viewing choices and screen time
- 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 arriving to school on time

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 5th 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, park, and come to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge before proceeding to the classroom.

Pick-up:

Every student in preschool and elementary is issued a number to display in the driver's-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.

Parent's Day Out (PDO) students are generally dismissed from the playground. In case of inclement weather, parents are asked to pick their children up from the classroom at dismissal time. Parents are asked to wait until dismissal time before picking their child up to facilitate a smooth transition for all.

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, diarrhea or vomiting, have an undiagnosed rash, or show any other signs of illness. Your child must be free from fever and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child has had two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24 hour period, they may not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

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.

Parents should notify the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. The school will notify parents if their child has had exposure to a diagnosed risk.

In the event of an accident, 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.

In the event of a medical emergency, we call 911. We then attempt to call the parents or others designated by the parents.

If a child requires the administration of any medication at school, including over-the-counter medications, a Medication Administration form must be completed by a physician and returned to school.

Seneca Academy contracts with Health Links, LLC to provide an on-call delegating nurse. The delegating nurse does not provide direct care to students but provides consultations and supervises the administration of medications by staff personnel specifically trained as Certified Medication Technicians (CMT). The delegating nurse also ensures that best practices are being followed in all aspects of maintaining the health of our students.

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 or the Head of School. 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 or bag lunch with a thermos or drink. Lunch should contain foods that the child normally eats and that do not require refrigeration or warming. Pre-school students are provided a small snack mid-morning. Elementary students may bring a snack for mid-morning. This should be a small healthy snack ONLY; students may get water in the classroom. Visit the office for more information and a copy of the Food Allergy Policy.

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

Smart Lunches

Seneca Academy partners with Smart Lunches, an online service that allows students in Elementary and the Extended Pre-Kindergarten class to purchase lunches prepared by local caterers and delivered daily to the school. Parents have the flexibility to determine the days they would like to utilize this service and to choose from a selection of hot and cold options. More information is available at www.smartlunches.com.

Food Allergy Policy

Seneca Academy does not certify any room to be allergen-free but exercises caution to ensure the safety of students with food allergies. Procedures are in place to respond to the needs of students with allergies. Visit the office for more information and a copy of the Food Allergy Policy.

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, magazines and other media 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 visit the SAPA website at <http://senecaacademy.my-pta.org/> or email the Steering Committee at senecaparents@gmail.com for more information.

In accordance with best practices in school safety procedures, Seneca Academy requires a criminal background check for all volunteers who have direct contact with students. Prior to volunteering, a [Background Check Authorization Form](#) must be signed and returned to the office. Background checks are conducted on the following websites: <http://casesearch.court.md.us/> and www.nsopw.gov. Information obtained through these searches is considered confidential and used strictly to determine eligibility for volunteering. Background checks are valid for 3 years. Seneca Academy reserves the right to determine eligibility for volunteering at the school in its sole discretion and to withdraw such eligibility at any time.

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. 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 goody bags of any kind are allowed to be distributed at school.

Special Events

Many special events for community building and information sharing 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 calendar on our website.

The Seneca Academy Parents Association (SAPA) plans many whole school activities such as the Fall Homecoming, Spring Picnic, Book Fairs, World Cultures Celebration, and STEAM Fair. SAPA communicates with the community about these events through electronic 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 (typically on Thursday afternoons) and is a combination of school and SAPA news.

SenecaAcademy.org

The school website contains information on school policies, admissions, and registration. The school calendar, photos, and links to helpful websites are also available.

Class Newsletters

A newsletter is emailed or sent home by each teacher at the beginning of every month or Unit of Inquiry. This provides information about activities and learning that have taken place and are coming up in the near future as well as important dates to remember.

Yearbook

The yearbook is published at the end of the school year and contains individual photos of each child aged 3 through 5th grade, teacher, and staff member, class photos, and candid photos of classroom activities and special events. The school provides a copy of the yearbook to each student in preschool threes – 5th grade.

School Directory

The school partners with A to Z Directories to provide families with secure online access to phone numbers, addresses, email listings and class assignments for the entire community. Parents are asked to verify and update their information at the beginning of each school year.

Bulletin Board

The bulletin board in our main hallway has paper copies of electronic announcements, the preschool snack schedule, and 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 all students in PS-5th grade.

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.

Seneca Academy cannot guarantee, however, that your child will not appear in a group photo or in a photograph or video that might be taken or shared by a student, parent, other individual, or the press.

Dismissal from School

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

Anti-Bullying Policy

Seneca Academy believes that an atmosphere of safety, courtesy, and respect is 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 repeated 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 one local emergency contact 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 designee 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 and the Seneca Academy Facebook page.

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 designee 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 designee 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. Dismissal time for K-5th 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 one of the following locations:

St. Nicholas Episcopal 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 a NOAA emergency alert radio with batteries, which 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 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, at a minimum, college degrees, as well as specific training in early childhood education.

Preschool Curriculum

Seneca Academy has been an authorized International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme since 2012 and provides an inquiry-based, globally-minded curriculum to all students, starting with our 3-year-old programs. Our school’s Program of Inquiry describes each class’s units of study and guides our yearly curriculum planning. Each grade explores four transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry, spending six or more weeks on each unit.

Through our Program of Inquiry, 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 active and quiet times. Children have many opportunities to choose activities that are of interest. Teachers encourage children to participate in a variety of activities while at school. All students have an active gross motor period daily. We have daily outside play, weather permitting.

In addition to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, Seneca Academy’s preschool curriculum is also informed by several other programs including early childhood resources *Creative Curriculum* and *Active Learning for 3’s and 4’s*.

Terrific Threes Classes

Seneca Academy offers a variety of preschool 3s classes to meet the needs of children and their families. We realize young children need time to practice their socialization skills and to begin the journey toward independence. In each of our 3s classes, children experience 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 area in the room provides a variety of explorations necessary to stimulate thinking and intellectual growth.

Pre-Kindergarten Fours 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 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 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.

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.

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 and tours for new students are held throughout the fall and winter. Applications for new students are accepted on a first-come, first-served 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 for contracts and deposits received by May 1st. Parents choosing to make two or 10 payments must use our tuition management system that automatically debits a bank account monthly or semi-annually beginning in May.

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 threes through fifth grade. Parents wishing to apply for financial aid must submit a financial aid application to FAST by January 2. The financial aid application and information about the financial aid process are found on the school's website: <http://www.senecaacademy.org/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 setup 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 time 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 four-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). Drop-ins are allowed if space is available. Contact the office to schedule.

Children enrolled in Lunch Bunch should bring a bag lunch or a lunch box with a thermos labeled with their name. 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 or other prepackaged lunches are discouraged.

Seneca Preschool Clubs

Seneca Academy offers two types of clubs for preschool students: Kit Club, 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, karate, science, art 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-served 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 with an outstanding balance may not 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. 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 allowed 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.
- Changes in Kit Club enrollment after the term begins are assessed an administrative fee of \$25. Late enrollment will also incur a late 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 fill out a pre-conference questionnaire that is returned to the classroom teacher. This is followed by a parent-teacher conference to discuss the child's social-emotional progress, as well as a written progress report.

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-Ins

Parents are invited to park and come into the school to visit their child's classroom during Preschool Pop-Ins. These are opportunities 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 are encouraged to be independent. Uniforms are optional for preschool.

An extra set of clothing should be placed in the student's school bag for possible change as we may 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, except for Parent's Day Out (PDO), 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. Please contact the office if you need further support.

Field Trips

The number of field trips outside of school for preschool classes varies based on the age and interest of the students. Information about field trips is shared through class newsletters. Some trips are limited in the number of adults that can attend, while others require one parent to attend with each student. For the safety of our students, adults who wish to chaperone a field trip must complete a [Volunteer Waiver Form](#) consenting to a background check.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL POLICIES

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

In September 2012, Seneca Academy became a fully authorized International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme providing an inquiry-based, globally-minded curriculum.

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.

Elementary Curriculum

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

Our school’s *Program of Inquiry* describes each class’s units of study and guides our yearly curriculum planning. Each grade explores six transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry (including the distinct disciplines of reading, writing, social studies, science and engineering, technology, listening and speaking, and viewing and presenting), spending four to six weeks on each unit. Each unit addresses one of six distinct transdisciplinary 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.

Elementary Admissions

Enrollment in kindergarten through fifth grade for the following school year begins with an open house or school tour. New student applications are accepted at any time after November 1. Current students and their siblings receive preferential status through February 15. The Admissions Committee will meet after February 15 to discuss new applicants. Enrollment contracts for admitted new students are mailed beginning March 1.

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 status until February 15.

For new applicants, 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. To give parents a chance to ask questions and to help us get to know each family and child better, our admissions process also includes a parent meeting with our Head of School. 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
1st-5th	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 aftercare program offered throughout the year, and other various after-school clubs are offered in the afternoons.

General Club Policies

- Students will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis
- No make-ups will be given and no credit issued for missed club sessions.
- 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 allowed 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 enrollment will also incur a late 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 are offered throughout the school year to kindergarten through fifth grade students. Club offerings vary but have included: drawing and painting, horseback riding, sculpture, soccer, sports and fitness, drama, filmmaking, chorus, band, and others. 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 May 15. All families choosing the two or ten payment plans must use the school's tuition management service, which automatically debits a bank account monthly beginning in May. More information is available from the Admissions Office. 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 threes through fifth grade. Parents wishing to apply for financial aid must submit a financial aid application to FAST by January 2. The financial aid application and information about the financial aid process are found on the school's website: <http://www.senecaacademy.org/financial-aid/>. The Financial Aid Committee will meet in February to allocate funds and will notify families after that meeting. The Head of School 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 setup 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, smart watches, and other 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 absences 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
- Doctor's appointment (with doctor's note)

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 excused. Families should plan vacations to coincide with scheduled school holidays. Students may be responsible for work missed during an absence. 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 typically by school bus and/or public transportation. A permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before each trip. Parents are invited as needed to chaperone these trips. Parent participation in field trips is designed to support the educational experience of the students. Additional fees may be required. For the safety of our students, adults who wish to chaperone a field trip must complete a [Volunteer Waiver Form](#) consenting to a background check.

Parent Visit Days

Approximately once a month parents are invited to visit the kindergarten-fifth grade classrooms. This provides an opportunity for students to share evidence of their academic progress as well as the happenings in their class with their parents. Teachers will inform parents of the scheduled times for Parent Visit Days.

Uniform Policy

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

Uniform pieces may be purchased through Lands' End, French Toast, or at any store provided they are part of a uniform line and conform in color and style to those available at Lands' End. NOTE: All tops must have the Seneca Academy logo.

Uniform Providers

Land's End: www.landsend.com Our preferred school number 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.

French Toast: www.frenchtoast.com Our Source Code is: QS4TFQ

If you choose to purchase non-logo uniform items, you also have the option to have it embroidered for \$7 per item at:

Charlie's Embroidery
416 Main Street, Third Floor
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Kentlands
240-477-4363

The following uniform clothing is acceptable for all students in grades K-5:

Girls

- White, red or navy collared tops (polo shirts or button-up blouses) and turtlenecks with logo. Long-sleeved shirts worn layered under short-sleeved uniform shirts are not permitted.
- 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, French Toast, Target, JCPenney, Kohl's, etc. (Corduroy and cargo pants are not acceptable.)
- Red or navy knit polo dresses from a uniform clothing line with logo.

- White, red, or navy leggings or tights worn under skirts, skorts, dresses and jumpers. Prints are acceptable provided they are the accepted colors. The same policy applies for socks. Leggings may not be worn as pants.
- Red or navy light fleece jackets, sweaters, and vests with logo.
- Shoes/boots must be suitable for active play and be closed-toe with rubber soles (no Crocs, hard-soled shoes such as cowgirl boots, or open-toed sandals).

Boys

- White, red or navy collared tops (polo or button-up shirts) and turtlenecks with logo. Long-sleeved shirts worn layered under short-sleeved uniform shirts are not permitted.
- Navy or khaki pants or shorts. Knit fabric is acceptable provided the item is part of a uniform clothing line from Lands' End, French Toast, Target, JCPenney, Kohl's etc. (Corduroy and cargo pants are not acceptable.)
- Red or navy light fleece jackets, sweaters, and vests with logo.
- White, red, or navy socks.
- Shoes must be suitable for active play and be closed-toe with rubber soles (no Crocs, hard-soled shoes such as cowboy boots, or open-toed sandals).

P.E. Days – Applies to girls and boys

Students may wear regular uniforms for P.E. Options below may be worn on designated P.E. days if desired. Sneakers must be worn on P.E. days.

- T-shirts: Only red, white, navy, or blue t-shirts with "Seneca Academy," (purchased through the school) may be worn on P.E. days.
- Sweatshirts, shorts and pants: Navy sweatshirts with logo, navy shorts (including mesh shorts) and navy sweatpants (Seneca logo optional. No other logo or company marking.)

Assessments, Report Cards, and Conferences

Assessment is ongoing at Seneca Academy. We use a variety of different methods to evaluate an individual student's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Teachers assess students daily through class activities, as well as at the end of a learning unit. Assessment enables teachers to tailor instruction to the needs of their students, helps each student succeed as a learner, and provides parents with information about their child's progress.

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) 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

Although technology is viewed as an educational tool at Seneca Academy, we also firmly believe that preparing students to be principled, balanced, and responsible digital citizens is a necessary component of a globally-minded education. Students are introduced to a digital citizenship curriculum based on the standards provided by Common Sense Media beginning in second grade. This curriculum was adopted by our faculty in accordance with the following vision statement:

In today's world, information technology is everywhere. As such, Seneca Academy has both the opportunity and the responsibility of helping students understand how to navigate the digital world safely, ethically, effectively, and appropriately. We aspire to help our students become wise and caring digital citizens. Our

students will work to develop the skills and sensibilities to explore the electronic world responsibly, whether inside or outside the school. In building digital citizenship skills, our students will have the ability to connect with information and people around the world, demonstrating sound etiquette, solid stewardship, and thoughtful independence.

A computer is available in the 2nd grade classroom for limited and carefully chosen activities. 3rd – 5th graders have access to a one-to-one laptop/Chromebook device in their classrooms. Students in the 3rd-5th grades are also provided specific instruction in keyboarding, word processing, presentations, and audio/visual technologies.

When classroom activities require the use of cameras or computers, teachers provide specific parameters for their use as well as careful oversight. Students are not allowed 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 two through five 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 typically 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 five will receive additional information about homework as a student at Seneca Academy.

Homework is for the student to do independently unless otherwise noted. Parents should provide appropriate time and space, but allow their child to complete work alone. Parents are encouraged to look at the homework planner as well as the completed assignments regularly. If a student is unable to complete the assignment with minimal parental direction, the student should bring the uncompleted assignment to school for additional teacher instruction.

If a child is absent, that student should 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.

THE PARENT ASSOCIATION

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 is to facilitate community building. All events and activities are focused on relationship-building, with opportunities to continue the conversation outside the School environment.

All Parents are members of the Parent Association and SAPA welcomes and encourages the active participation of all parents. Information and opportunities to volunteer can be found on the SAPA website: <http://senecaacademy.my-pta.org/>. Please contact any Steering Committee member to discuss ways to get involved. SAPA can be reached through the Parent Association email account: senecaparents@gmail.com.

Typical events sponsored and supported by SAPA throughout the school year include: summer socials, back to school nights, homecoming, book fairs, geography bees, the STEAM Fair, a spring picnic, the World Cultures Celebration, and others. SAPA also coordinates many activities at Seneca Academy, including Box Tops for Education, retail reward programs, no uniform days, teacher appreciation lunches, restaurant nights, used uniform sales, and the hot lunch program.

The calendar on both the school website and the SAPA website are regularly updated; please check there for the most recent event/activity dates and volunteer needs.