

Summer at Seneca: Explorers Parent Handbook

Arrival

On your child's first day of the summer session, you may park your car and walk them in at 9:00 a.m. so you can meet the Summer at Seneca Director ("Director") and learn about carpool (drop-off and pick-up procedures). Morning carpool begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. All students may be dropped off in the carpool lane in front of the side porch.

Students who arrive after 9:30 a.m. must be escorted to the Summer at Seneca main entrance and signed in by a guardian. A staff member will then walk the student to their class. This ensures the accuracy of our attendance records.

Dismissal

Afternoon carpool begins at 3:30 p.m. (Students registered for the half-day option will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m.). All students should be picked up in front of the Summer at Seneca entrance, unless otherwise designated. Carpool numbers are required and must be displayed when picking up students.

Please notify the Director via email or phone if any student needs to leave before their normal dismissal time. The notification should include the date, student's name, time of dismissal, and the name of the person picking up the student. Students leaving early can be picked up from the Summer at Seneca entrance and must be signed out. If arriving after 3:15 p.m., please plan to pick up in carpool.

Authorized Pickup Policy

Carpool numbers will be given to families on the first day of each session and must be displayed when picking up students. It is the responsibility of the family to supply a carpool number to any individuals who are authorized to pick up their student. Summer at Seneca will not release students to persons who do not have a carpool number, or who have not been designated by a parent or guardian as an authorized pick-up person via email or phone. Summer at Seneca reserves the right to require any adult picking up a student to present a current photo ID. If you have made a last-minute carpool arrangement for the afternoon, please notify the Director before 2:45 p.m. on that day.

What to Bring

- Backpack/tote bag

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- Water bottle - refillable
- Lunch
- Extra change of clothes
- Sunblock [Sunscreen Authorization Form required]
- Clothing or swimsuit for water play
- Towel
- Water shoes or shoes that can get wet (no flip flops or Crocs)
- EVERYTHING CLEARLY LABELED

Encourage young children to be responsible for their items by practicing taking them out and putting them back into the bag.

Lunch and Snacks

Children should bring a lunch box or bag lunch with a drink. Lunch boxes or bento boxes that can open flat and/or be directly eaten out of by students are easiest to use. Lunch should contain foods that the child normally eats and that do not require refrigeration or warming. Seneca Academy is not a nut-free school, but we do work closely with families of students with food allergies to ensure their safety.

Students are provided a small snack mid-morning and will have access to water throughout the day. Students will be given milk per Office of Child Care regulations if parents have requested it. A Milk Authorization Form will be provided. Those children staying for the afternoon session will be provided an afternoon snack.

Clothing Policy

Children 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.

An extra set of clothing should be placed in the student's school bag for possible change as students may do messy or wet play while attending Summer at Seneca. Water shoes (no flip flops or Crocs) may be sent in for water play.

Lost and Found

We strongly encourage labeling items (e.g. hats, towels, lunch kits, etc.) that are sent with your child to Summer at Seneca. All non-valuable items that are found will be

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stored in our Lost and Found area. All valuable items will be kept in the office. Lost and Found items will be placed outside on a table on the porch each Friday afternoon; caregivers are encouraged to look through this each week for their child's lost items.

Outdoor Learning Policy

The benefits of outdoor learning are many, including development of fine and gross motor skills, self-regulation, risk assessment, and interpersonal skills. Students can practice and improve cognitive skills and take them back into the classroom. The school's faculty and staff are mindful of the risks associated with a natural environment and aim to balance play and exploration with safety. Students are guided to recognize and deal with risk as they learn about risk management and personal safety.

Risks include but are not limited to:

- Injuries from physical activity (bumps, bruises, scratches, twisted ankles)
- Rashes or scratches from plants (thistles, tree branches)
- Contact with insects (stings/bites, ticks)
- Inclement weather – Students go outside almost every day in all types of weather.

Discipline Policy

Seneca Academy recognizes that all children are learning how to self-regulate, navigate their social worlds and manage conflicts as they occur. Teachers ensure that the engaging curriculum, scheduling, and classroom setup are all designed to help students manage their behaviors and develop the skills they need to build a safe and caring "village" together. When a student's behavior is not in keeping with the age-appropriate norms of their classroom, teachers make use of a wide range of strategies both to maintain a safe environment conducive to learning in the classroom, but also to support the development of the child. Many of the school's techniques are based on the book *1-2-3 Magic for Teachers* by Thomas Phelan as well as on the work of Ross Greene, Ph.D. on "Collaborative Problem Solving."

In keeping with the notion that "it takes a village to raise a child," the school utilizes a team approach to supporting the social-emotional development of each student, including in responding to behavioral issues that may arise. The Head of School, Summer at Seneca Director, and other staff members are all included in this team and may be called on to assist in the support of a child or classroom. In some situations, support for a child and/or classroom may require that a child be removed from the

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classroom. If a pattern of needing to be removed from the classroom begins to emerge, parents may be contacted and the student may be sent home for the day. Should the student demonstrate consistently disruptive behavior requiring an inordinate amount of attention from staff, they may be asked to permanently leave the school. This decision is made solely at the discretion of the Head of School.

Rain Policy

We are bound to encounter some rain at some point this summer, but it will not stop us from having a great day and spending time outside, provided that there is no thunder or lightning. In the event of severe storms, we utilize the school's lower level as shelter. If you see rain in the forecast, please send your child with appropriate clothing as they may still go outside during the day.

“Code Red” Extreme Heat Alert Days

Activities are modified to allow less time in the sun, and more time in the shade and in the air-conditioned classrooms. Drinking water is important every day; on "code red" days we are especially insistent that the children take regular water breaks. Staff is trained to be especially alert on hot days for any change in the physical condition of a student.

Sunscreen Policy

Seneca Academy's policy for sunscreen application meets the recommendations of the CDC.

Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to their child before they arrive as the students will have an outdoor time shortly after arrival. Parents may request that the school apply non-aerosol sunscreen for their child prior to later outdoor times. This request must be made through the Director using the Sunscreen Authorization Form. Parents must supply the sunscreen, which will be kept in the student's school bag. The sunscreen must be labeled with the child's name and placed in a zip-lock bag. Sunscreen will be applied as close as possible to 30 min before going outside and reapplied every 2 hours as additional exposure occurs.

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Bug Spray Policy

Summer at Seneca highly recommends that caregivers apply long-lasting insect repellent at home each morning before coming to campus. There are many kinds of bug spray that last 12 hours! Staff are not allowed to apply insect repellent to students during the day.

Screen Time Policy

Seneca Academy believes that exploring, playing, and interacting with others encourage learning and healthy physical and social development. We understand that electronic media can interfere with these activities. Therefore, in preschool, there is no scheduled screen time during the week. Classrooms do not have televisions, tablets, or computers. On occasion, an educational video may be shown if it provides a unique perspective to our inquiry-based curriculum that cannot be accomplished using other means. Educational videos may be occasionally viewed, but not as routine or scheduled practice. Screen time content is always tied to learning activities scheduled for that day, and staff interact with children during that time. There will be no more than 30 minutes per week of screen time.

Health and Safety Requirements

For the protection of all students, children must be kept home if they have a fever of 100° or higher, diarrhea or vomiting, an undiagnosed rash, or any other signs of illness.

In order to return to school:

- A student with fever or diarrhea must be free from fever (without fever-reducing medication) and diarrhea for 24 hours, and parents should consult a physician;
- A student with two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period must be symptom-free for 24 hours, and parents should consult a physician;
- A student with an undiagnosed rash must have a note from a doctor stating that the student is not contagious;
- A student with other symptoms of illness, or diagnosed with a communicable illness, must fulfill requirements specified by the Maryland Department of Health.

In addition, Seneca Academy asks that individuals experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness (COVID-19, influenza, RSV, strep, etc.) follow [CDC guidance](#):

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- Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause.
- You can go back to your normal activities when, **for at least 24 hours, both are true:**
 - Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
 - You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- When you go back to your normal activities, **take added precaution over the next 5 days**, such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and/or testing when you will be around other people indoors. These additional precautions are especially important to protect people with factors that increase their risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses.

At times of greater community risk, Seneca Academy may mandate that some or all of the above-mentioned CDC-recommended precautions be taken to prevent additional spread of respiratory illness.

Seneca Academy follows the Maryland Department of Health's Communicable Diseases Summary for when to exclude children from school.

Summer at Seneca has a delegating nurse off-site in case of emergency; Certified Medication Technicians are on site to provide first aid and dispense emergency medication, but they cannot provide medical diagnoses or evaluations. As a result, if a child is showing any of the following signs or if the Director/staff determine it is in the best interest of the child, caregivers will be contacted to pick them up:

- Fever of above 100F
- Nausea/Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Earache
- Persistent Headache
- Pink Eye
- Skin Rash
- Head Lice
- Fatigue

Any student with the above signs and symptoms will be directed to the Director, and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. If a parent/guardian is not available, a phone call will be made to the emergency contact person. If the emergency contact person is not available, the child will be kept comfortable until someone is reached. In case of serious injuries/illnesses (concussions, broken bones, severe cuts, internal trauma, spike in temperature, etc.), 911 will be called, followed by the delegating nurse and parent/guardian.

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Our primary concern is your child's safety and welfare. Children will always be supervised and every precaution will be taken to prevent any accidents from happening. However, children are active and accidents do occur. In the event of an accident, the Director or teacher will determine the severity of the circumstance and you will be notified at their discretion. Incident reports are filled out for most accidents and kept on file in a student's record.

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. Contact the Director for more information and a copy of the complete Food Allergy Policy.

Administering Medication

Summer at Seneca is prohibited by law from administering or distributing any medication, including over-the-counter medication, without a physician's order. In order to distribute medication to a child, Summer at Seneca must have a completed and signed Medication Administration Form on file. By law, Medication Administration Forms must be signed by both a guardian and a physician.

Summer at Seneca CANNOT accept telephone permission to administer medication to students. Summer at Seneca CANNOT accept medical forms from other schools or camps. All medication must be provided in its original container and will be administered by Certified Medication Technicians under the supervision of a delegating nurse.

Toilet-Training Policy

All students must be fully toilet-trained to attend Summer at Seneca. Please see the definition of toilet-trained below. Summer at Seneca reserves the right to dismiss students who demonstrate that they are not toilet-trained to the standards of the policy.

Fully toilet-trained children must be able to do the following:

- Be accident-free in cloth underwear during the day
- Verbally tell a teacher that they need to use the bathroom
- Control the muscles used for toileting until they are on the toilet

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- Get on and off the toilet independently
- Pull down/up their pants/underwear or lift dress/skirt
- Wipe themselves after using the bathroom
- Flush the toilet
- Wash/dry their hands

Emergency Procedures

Should a severe weather event or other emergency occur while school is in session, teachers will be instructed in accordance with the school emergency plan as to where to take their children and procedures to follow. 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. Flashlights and other supplies are available in the building.

While the school's principal focus will be the safety of the students, the school will communicate with parents as quickly as possible, primarily through the Remind texting platform, followed by the school's Facebook page and website at www.SenecaAcademy.org.

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

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.

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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 directed to a secure location.
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

Enrollment Deadline

The registration for each session ends at 3:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the beginning of that session and is subject to availability.

Minimum and Maximum Enrollment

Required minimum enrollment numbers apply to all programs and classes. Summer at Seneca reserves the right to cancel or combine classes or programs if the minimum number of registrants is not met. Programs also have maximum enrollment numbers. Early registration is always recommended.

Waitlist Policy

Waitlists will be established for any program that reaches its maximum enrollment. If a space becomes available in the waitlisted program, Summer at Seneca will contact the first family on the waitlist and families will have 48 hours to respond and accept the open space. After 48 hours, the next family on the waitlist will be contacted.

Payments and Deposits

A non-refundable \$45 registration fee per student is due upon registration. All program fees must be paid in full and become nonrefundable after May 15, 2025.

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Registrations occurring after May 15, 2025, require full payment at the time of registration and are nonrefundable. Acceptable forms of payment include cash, check, and electronic payments made through the School's online tuition management program, powered by Diamond Mind, Inc. Electronic payments are additionally subject to the terms and conditions of Diamond Mind, Inc, and service fees will apply based on your method of payment. A fee of \$60 will be assessed for any returned check or electronic payment; this fee is set by Diamond Mind, Inc and is subject to change without notice.

Registrations may be transferred to a different session or program within the same season. Transfers are subject to availability. The deadline for transferring out of a session or program is 8:00 a.m. on the Monday the week prior to the beginning of that session/program.

Summer at Seneca does not prorate fees for any sessions or programs. Families may not enroll for just part of or for only specific days of any session. Enrollment is for the full stated session.

Refund Policy

Cancellation requests made prior to May 15, 2025, will receive a refund, minus the \$45 registration fee. Refund requests should be submitted in writing via email to the Director prior to May 15, 2025.

No refunds will be granted after May 15, 2025, for changes due to work or vacation schedules, illnesses, or any other issues.