

Geneva Day School Parent Handbook – 2016-2017

Philosophy

Geneva Day School (GDS) provides a developmentally and culturally appropriate early childhood education program for young children from age two through kindergarten. Our experienced teaching staff members understand how children grow and develop, and realize that all children want to be good, successful, please parents and teachers, have friends, and have fun at school. Teachers also recognize that each child is unique and develops at his/her own rate.

Geneva provides educational experiences that are appropriate to each child's developmental level in a warm and nurturing environment. It attempts to be inclusive and address individual learning strengths, needs, and interests of students. Staff members offer guidance, assistance, encouragement, and necessary materials and experiences to promote age-appropriate learning. They foster confidence and comfort as they "encourage a lifelong love of learning."

Organization

Established in 1965, Geneva is a private, independent pre-school and kindergarten program. It is governed by a GDS Board of Directors composed of active members of the Geneva Presbyterian Church, on whose premises it operates and shares space. Daily school operation is the responsibility of the director and assistant director, with support from an administrative team. Daily class operations are the responsibility of classroom teachers, who supervise and direct the activities of their teaching assistants. Additional services are provided by an art teacher, music/movement teacher, and itinerant speech/language pathologist.

Curriculum

The curriculum of Geneva includes all instruction and activities that children experience while in school. It addresses developmental growth areas and fosters skills necessary for the maturation of the "whole child." Goals are established for classes based on developmental norms, while individual objectives are identified from assessments. Activities are hands-on, multicultural, and multisensory so that all learning modalities are addressed.

Teachers are responsible for assessing students and developing the classroom curriculum to address strengths, needs, and interests. A number of resources assist in this process:

- *Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3* published by Brookes Publishing
- *Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Assessments* and *The Creative Curriculum System for Preschool* published by Teaching Strategies,
- *Building Language for Literacy* and the *Early Childhood Program* published by Scholastic Books
- *Alfafiends for Pre-Kindergarten* and *Reading and Math Curriculum for Kindergartners* published by Houghton Mifflin
- *Handwriting Without Tears* published by Handwriting Without Tears

Staff members use a number of these and other resources to plan curriculum. Assessment information also includes observations, developmental checklists, screenings, work samples, professional texts, training and experiences, and community resources. Each class is unique in that it also features special talents, interests and backgrounds of staff, students and their families.

Goals

Specific learning goals are developed for individual children, but goals for all children include:

- Making a successful transition from home to school.
- Developing positive self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Becoming cooperative, respecting rules, property, and safety.
- Working and playing independently and in groups.
- Becoming increasingly responsible for oneself, personal belongings, and the class and school environments.
- Learning to make good choices, solve problems, and develop socially appropriate social skills.
- Developing large and small motor skills and coordination.
- Developing appropriate cognitive, language, literacy, numerical abilities, and science understandings.
- Exploring, observing, questioning, and listening.
- Understanding others and directions, and expressing oneself through language, drama, art, music, and play.
- Developing respect and appreciation for nature and the outdoors environment.
- Acquiring skills so kindergartners are successful in first grade.
- Feeling secure and happy in a warm and loving atmosphere as each child explores and discovers a “lifelong love of learning.”

Guidelines

Geneva is guided by principles of developmentally and culturally appropriate practices in planning early childhood education curriculum. Based on observations and assessments of children, and taking into consideration individual differences and backgrounds, teachers implement programs to promote growth for individual and group learning. Strengths, needs, interests and multiple intelligences direct not only the curricula, but also the physical set-up of rooms, classroom routines, types of activities offered, and expectations for children's participation in school. Parents of students with IFSPs and IEPs are requested to share assessments and program goals with teachers, so that these can be incorporated into the classroom, as well.

Learning takes place throughout the day including in individual and small groups, and in free choice play activities. Staff members encourage children to express themselves, question and experiment, make and test predictions, make good choices, solve problems, develop general life skills, and develop an enthusiasm for learning. Many school activities are offered on an open-ended basis to promote thinking and creativity.

Repetition is a key element of curriculum. Young children must frequently experience a concept in order to understand it, so classes provide children with lots of repetition to help develop understandings.

Inclusion

Geneva is inclusive of all children in its admissions and teaching practices, including those who may have disabilities, health care needs, or special learning needs. The curriculum and activities reflect the diversity of children, their families and culture, and the school community. Teachers work closely with parents to meet age appropriate and developmental needs for individual learners in six growth areas which also reflect special interests. Small groups and individual activities are designed to help each child make appropriate developmental progress in their learning.

Parents of children with IFSPs or IEPs or who are receiving therapy services are requested to provide a copy of the plans or current therapy progress reports. Diagnostic information is also requested to better understand how a child learns. Teachers use these documents to incorporate plan goals and objectives into daily lessons, and provide accommodations or modifications as the school can provide. With parent permission, teachers collaborate with outside agencies providing direct educational and therapeutic services so that similar learning activities can be reflected in classrooms, as well.

Geneva requests that families complete a Teacher Information Form, which includes the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3*, at the beginning of a school year to share information about their child's unique background. In addition, through observations, documentation, and early screening, teachers collect classroom information to share with parents and make appropriate referrals for more information or therapies as appropriate. These may include screening and/or programming in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Infant and Toddler or Child Find Programs. It may also include referrals for services with local private practitioners such as speech/language pathologists, occupational or physical therapists, developmental pediatricians, psychologists and counselors, and/or social workers, among others.

Geneva desires to be open and welcoming to as many students as it can appropriately serve. Part of the admission process for new students may include a visit to school or camp to better understand abilities. New students are placed into available classes with consideration given to a balance of age, gender, numbers, and needs.

Community Resources

Geneva has long been committed to meeting individual student needs. As part of the service provided to support families, it collects and maintains an extensive listing of local community resources. These include:

- Montgomery County Public Schools Infants and Toddlers and Child Find Programs
- Other county resources as Resource and Referral Centers, ChildLink, Department of Health and Human Services, Maryland Health Connection, among others;
- Local private child development consultants of various specialties
- Local private direct-service practitioners as speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, behavioral therapists, psychologists, developmental pediatricians, among others
- Local private programs for various therapies plus social skills groups, tutoring and counseling centers, evaluations, and parent support groups.

Families are referred to the school director for consultation about possible resources for evaluation and treatment to supplement the regular school program. Two large binders are located in the director's office in which information is organized by various professions. Staff and families help update resources with feedback on community services they have experienced.

One of the functions of the director is to work directly with families to help identify services to further support their child. Often, the director makes telephone calls to various agencies to learn where they are located, whether they are taking new clients, how long is the wait list, do they take insurance, and how to schedule a first visit. This information has been helpful, especially to those families from out-of-the area or new to this country.

In addition, Geneva annually contracts on a limited basis with a private child development consultation firm. Child Development Consultants (CDC) works directly with the school and families to observe

students, make recommendations for more effective teaching strategies at home and school, and make referrals to local resources for further support.

Diagnostic and Developmental Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings are available each year for children over the age of 3 for a nominal fee. Other free developmental screenings may be requested from MCPS. Parents must initiate this process, though a teacher may recommend that you initiate this process with your local public school. Areas for screening are language, motor, cognition, and overall development. An on-site itinerant speech/language pathologist at Geneva may also be scheduled for screenings, evaluations, and direct therapy.

Developmental Growth Areas

Identifying a child's strengths, needs, and interests is important in planning any curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable about what skills are age appropriate for their students and what skills can be mastered during a school year. Geneva uses developmental checklists to identify competencies in various growth areas at different chronological ages. These include:

Gross, Fine and Perceptual Motor Skills: These skills are enjoyable for their own sake, and include large or gross motor skills such as balance and coordination, jumping, hopping, galloping and skipping. Small or fine motor skills include such tasks as drawing, cutting, zipping, buttoning, and using small toys such as Legos and puzzles. Perceptual motor skills include the body and mind working together for activities that are the foundation for pre-reading and pre-writing.

Social-Emotional Skills: Social skills involve the ability to make and maintain friends, cooperate, take turns, exhibit appropriate manners and social graces, and solve social problems. Emotional skills involve developing self-awareness and a positive self-esteem, feeling safe and secure, being flexible, making good choices and exercising self-control.

Self-Help or Life Skills: As children mature, they acquire self-help or life skills to learn to take care of themselves and their belongings, the classroom, and the school and natural environment. Taking responsibility for getting dressed, eating neatly, using manners, cleaning up, performing specific class jobs, and working independently are examples of appropriate self-help skills for youngsters.

Language Skills: Expressive and receptive language skills are critical for learning in all areas. The acquisition of language is an active process which staff members support in many ways, especially in conversation and interactions. Understanding and following directions, and listening to stories and answering questions are examples of receptive language. Using language to share ideas, ask and answer questions, or use new vocabulary and concepts appropriately are examples of expressive language. Both are important for developing cognitive and early literacy skills.

Cognitive Skills: Cognitive skills involve “thinking skills” to know, perceive information, and remember. Children use cognitive skills when they understand concepts and make connections with objects, people, and mental representations, or transfer information to use appropriately in new situations.

Creativity: Children need time and opportunity to explore and experiment with a variety of multi-sensory materials and various arts. Staff support this development by responding enthusiastically and with interest when a child makes a discovery, especially if a child finds a new way or a new answer.

In addition to daily class art and music activities, all classes participate in a specialized weekly music/movement class. Students from ages 3-6 also participate in a specialized weekly art class.

Assessment

To understand strengths and needs of individual children, it is necessary to observe and informally assess students in developmental growth areas. All teaching staff are involved in this important, systematic and on-going process which serves as the basis for planning curricula. Parents, too, are included by completing an *Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3* at the beginning of the school year. Teachers discuss results, goals, and progress at fall Parent-Teacher Conferences and annual progress at spring Parent-Teacher Conferences. Other conferences may be scheduled any time as requested by parents or teachers.

Assessment information includes a developmental checklist, student observations, samples of art or other work, photographs, and parent input. Information collected paints a picture of how a child is developing, and is used to plan appropriate early education programs for individual and group learning. It guides staff in meeting unique strengths, needs, and interests of students, and preparing them for the next level of their education.

School Licensing Information

Licensing

Geneva is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care, Baltimore, Maryland, as a Private Educational Institution. It is inspected annually each fall.

Staff Qualifications

All Geneva staff members meet or exceed state licensing requirements for working in a pre-school or kindergarten.

- Teachers are required to have a Bachelor's degree or equivalency, with coursework in early childhood, elementary or special education or child development from an accredited university or college. Several teaching staff also have Master's degrees in education.
- Teaching assistants are required to be high school graduates and have completed 90 hours of basic coursework in early childhood growth and development and curriculum planning, resulting in the Early Childhood Education 90 Hour Certificate. Many have college degrees, too.
- All staff members have experience working with young children in a supervised program.
- All staff members complete 6 - 12 hours of continuing education annually.
- All lead teachers are credentialed by the MSDE Credentialing Office
- All teaching staff members hold current certification in pediatric CPR and first aid.

Statement of Class Size

Geneva strives to provide more than the required number of trained staff in each of its classrooms. Classes for 2s have an average of twelve children with three adults, and 3s and 4s classes have an average of fifteen-eighteen children with three adults. Each includes a lead teacher and two teaching assistants. Kindergarten may have up to twenty-six students with two co-teachers and one teaching assistant.

Required Medical and Emergency Forms

MSDE, Office of Child Care, requires that medical forms be updated and on file for each child every academic year. These forms are available on the school's website, and must be completed, signed and returned to the office before the start of school. These forms include the Health Inventory Form and the Immunization Certificate. If parents object to immunization, they must complete the Medical Contraindication section of the Immunization Certificate and have their physician sign the section. There are no exceptions to this state regulation.

In addition, an Emergency Form must be completed and submitted to the office prior to the start of school. It is important that Geneva have accurate emergency information and contact numbers beginning on the first day children are enrolled, and that it be updated as appropriate; again, this is a state requirement.

Staff members do not administer any medications at school, with the exception of emergency medications of EpiPens, inhalers, or nebulizers. These medicines require parents and the child's physician to sign a Medication Authorization Form providing specific medicine and treatment information. These emergency medicines must be checked in and reviewed by the school office staff, so that it is very clear what emergency procedures are to be followed when certain symptoms occur, what is the proper dosage, and what are side effects. Medicines must also be in the original container labeled by the pharmacist or prescriber to include the child's name and expiration date, and must not be expired. Should it be necessary to administer any emergency medications, parents are notified.

Admissions

Eligibility

Children begin school at Geneva when they are chronologically two years old and may begin school any time after this birthdate. Parents may pre-register a student turning two and pay for a particular class to hold a space which a child can join after celebrating a second birthday. All children enrolling in a 3s, pre-kindergarten, or kindergarten class must be three, four, or five years of age respectively by September 1. Children in mixed-age Open Classrooms, must be at least three years old by September 1 in order to be enrolled in these programs.

If a parent requests early admission of a child with a fall birthday, however, admission may be granted under the following conditions:

- An advanced to superior rating on the Wechsler Pre-School and Primary Scale of Intelligence – Third Addition (WPPSI-111) or similar evaluation.
- An assessment of social and emotional readiness for the age-group requested, and interview with the classroom teacher or director.
- Positive recommendation from the previous year's teacher.

Placement of Pupils in Classes

Geneva provides a wide-range of educational and enrichment services to support families and their children. The assistant director works with every family to carefully craft the kind of program that meets both student and parent needs. Class composition is based on criteria for eligibility and the selection process, as stated in the admissions section above, generally on a first-come, first-served basis, with vacancies filled from a wait list, and with consideration given to age, gender, and needs.

Parents may enroll their children in part-time classes for 2s, 3s, and 4s, and full-time classes for older 2s-4s, and kindergarten students. Extended Care is offered, both before and after the program day, plus Enrichment Classes are offered at the end of each program session. As families desire, they can design a school day for their child beginning in Before Care at 7:45 a.m., through a morning session, lunch,

afternoon session, and After Care until 6:00 p.m., with Enrichment classes offered at 12:15 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. By breaking down the various program possibilities, Geneva allows families to create the early childhood experience that works best for them.

By January of each year, parents apply or register for the class setting that best meets the chronological and developmental needs of their children. Registration Packets are distributed to families the previous December. Personal tours of classes are arranged at the convenience of parents to help them make the best decision for their child. Parents also consult teachers for their recommendations. Geneva offers personal tours of the school and the facilities as requested by outside families, again at their convenience.

Geneva uses a spiraling curriculum, so all classes offer developmentally appropriate programs for various ages while also recognizing the end-goal of successful public school entry by the time a student is going to be chronologically five years of age. Teachers of 4s are also guided by the MCPS Expectations for In-coming Kindergartners, while kindergarten teachers are guided by MCPS Expectations for In-coming First Grade students. Geneva is very successful in preparing students for transition into other public or private educational settings.

At the end of the school year, teachers share transition information with parents and the following year's teacher, including information from conference reports and county IFSPs or IEPs. New families are asked to share this information with their child's new teacher, as well.

Other Guidelines

Twins and triplets are often assigned the same classroom when they begin school at Geneva, unless requested otherwise by parents or as recommended by teachers.

In the Open Classroom, pupils may be assigned by chronological age to one of two teachers for administrative purposes, but are fully integrated for the rest of the program including morning meetings, story time, learning centers, playground time, and snack.

Toilet Training

Children in the 2s and 3s classes do not need to be toilet trained to attend Geneva. Students in the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes plus Lunch Program and Extended Care should be trained. Consideration is given to older children who may not yet be toilet trained if they have documented medical conditions that delay acquisition of this skill.

Procedures for New Applications and Selection

1. Applications for new Geneva students for a current school year are accepted at any time, and are processed on a rolling basis as space allows.
2. Applications for new Geneva students for the following school year are accepted beginning on the first day of school. Parents/guardians of a pupil fill out an application form, which is available on the school's website, submit a non-refundable application fee, and mail or deliver the form and fee to the school office. Applications are dated and held until the formal registration period which begins in January. Applications are date-stamped and processed in the order of receipt within each of the priority categories listed.
3. Priority is given to applicants in the following order:
 - a. Children whose families are active members of the Geneva Presbyterian Church.
 - b. Children of current GDS staff.
 - c. Children who are currently enrolled.
 - d. Siblings of current or former Geneva students.

- e. Children of Geneva alumni.
 - f. Grandchildren of Geneva Presbyterian Church members.
 - g. New applicants.
4. A Letter of Acceptance and a Tuition and Reservation Agreement are mailed to each family accepted by the school. Applicants have until the deadline specified to submit the appropriate non-refundable registration fee. This registration fee is not part of the annual tuition. If the registration fee is not submitted on or before the deadline, then the school assumes the parties are no longer interested.
 5. Families are asked to sign and return the Tuition and Reservation Agreement, and pay the non-refundable Registration Fee. Once the Agreement is signed, parents or guardians are financially responsible for paying the tuition fee for the full academic year.
 6. The school strives to maintain a reasonable gender balance in all classes.
 7. The school does not discriminate against any applicant because of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, ancestry, age, disability or any other characteristics protected by applicable law.
 8. Medical, Immunization, and Emergency Release Forms must be submitted to the school office prior to attendance.
 9. After a class is filled, a waiting list is maintained. Placement on the waiting list is determined by application date and other factors at Geneva's sole discretion.
 10. Tuition discounts are given as follows:
 - a. When full tuition is received by May 1, a 4% discount will be applied.
 - b. When one-half tuition is received by May 1, and the second half is received by December 1, then a 2% discount will be applied.
 - c. Active members of a local Presbyterian Church receive a 10% discount in tuition. If a family receives the 10% Church discount, they are not eligible for the additional 10% sibling discount.
 - d. Active members of the U. S. military receive a 10% discount.
 - e. When registering more than one child from the same family, the older child will be charged full tuition. Each child thereafter will receive a 10% discount in tuition.
 11. A monthly late charge is imposed if payment is fifteen days past due from the deadline date.
 12. If, after a reasonable amount of time, parents fail to pay their tuition or fees, the school reserves the right to dismiss the child, but the financial responsibility remains on the parents for the full year. Every reasonable effort will be made by Geneva to accommodate the parents.
 13. A child entering school on or after October 1st will have his/her tuition prorated. Tuition will be computed by dividing the annual tuition by nine and then subtracting the unused portion.

Procedures for Registration of Returning Students

1. Registration information is disseminated to families of returning Geneva students each year in December.
2. Registration for returning students, together with the designated registration fee, must be mailed to the school office and postmarked by a specific date in early January.
3. Priority registration is given to applicants in the following order:
 - a. Children whose families are active members of Geneva Presbyterian Church.
 - b. Children of current GDS staff.
 - c. Children who are currently enrolled.
4. A Letter of Acceptance and a Tuition and Reservation Agreement are mailed to each family accepted by the school. Applicants have until the deadline specified to submit the appropriate non-refundable registration fee. This registration fee is not part of the annual tuition. If the registration fee is not submitted on or before the deadline, then the School assumes the parties are no longer interested.

5. Families are asked to sign and return the Tuition and Reservation Agreement, and pay the non-refundable Registration Fee. Once the Agreement is signed, parents or guardians are financially responsible for paying the tuition fee for the **full** academic year.
6. The school strives to maintain a reasonable gender balance in all classes.
7. The school does not discriminate against any applicant because of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, ancestry, age, disability or any other characteristics protected by applicable law.
8. Medical, immunization and emergency release forms must be submitted to the school's office prior to attendance.
9. Tuition discounts also apply as indicated in #10 above.

Yearly Progression of Pupils

Children's progression through the school is based on age, developmental readiness, and parent requests, and teacher recommendations. As appropriate, the director may call a meeting with teachers, parents, and other specialists to consult about the appropriate placement for the child. The school makes the final placement decision.

Financial Policies

Tuition Payments

The first tuition payment is made by May 1 or at the time the contract is signed, whichever date is earlier. This first payment is applied to the May tuition for the following year. All subsequent payments are due on the first of the month beginning in September and ending in April. Payments received after the fifteenth of the month are assessed a late fee of \$30.00. If checks are not accepted by the school's bank, families are charged a processing and bank fee of \$35.00. For a schedule of available discounts, please refer to the admission section of this handbook.

Tuition payments may be made by cash, check, credit card (with a 4% fee), or money order payable to Geneva Day School. Payments may be mailed or given directly to the assistant director. Geneva is happy to work with families if a special payment plan is needed. Geneva reserves the right to terminate enrollment of any student should an account become overdue for more than two months with no attempt made to reconcile the debt.

Parents who have signed the Tuition and Reservation Agreement are financially responsible for paying the tuition fee for the **full** school year as stated in the Agreement.

Application Fee

There is a non-refundable application fee for all new families wishing to attend Geneva. If the application fee is paid and a space is not available, the fee shall be applied to subsequent applications for that child.

Registration Fee

In order to hold a confirmed space in a specific class, a non-refundable registration fee is due at the time the Tuition and Reservation Agreement is signed and returned.

Activity Fee

An activity fee to help cover the cost of supplies, special projects, and field trips is due at the time that the first tuition payment is made.

Withdrawals

When a contract agreement is signed by parents or guardians, it is understood that they are financially responsible for paying the tuition fee for the **full** academic year. In the most unusual of circumstances beyond their control, the parent or guardian may apply to the GDS Board of Directors for partial forgiveness of tuition. It is understood that withdrawal or transfer to another school in the area does not constitute unusual circumstances. If an enrolled child is withdrawn from Geneva prior to the beginning of school, all fees paid up to the time that he/she is withdrawn are considered non-refundable.

Financial Aid

There is a limited amount of financial aid available for eligible students which varies each year. Applications for aid are submitted at the same time as the enrollment application or registration. For further information, please contact the school office.

Programs and Schedules

Regular School Hours

Please honor the hours that school is in operation. Thank you in advance for bringing your child on time, so as to not disrupt class, and for picking your child up on time from each session, lunch, or enrichment classes. A fee will be assessed for those who are picked up late.

The following are the regular school hours for all classes:

Before Care Program	7:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Morning Classes	9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Kindergarten	9:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
All-Day Class	9:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Lunch Program	11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Enrichment Programs	12:15 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Afternoon Classes	12:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Enrichment Programs	3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.
After Care Program	3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Extended Care

For children who require additional care before school, from 7:45-9:00 a.m., or after school, from 3:00-6:00 p.m., Extended Care is available. Supervised by experienced and trained staff, youngsters have opportunities for inside seasonal activities, crafts, and games, plus outside playtime. Children should be registered in advance with the office, and pay additional fees. Exceptions in emergency situations may be discussed with the director or assistant director. There is no provision for napping children, however. A penalty of \$30.00 per hour is charged for any child picked up after 6:00 p.m.

Enrichment Classes

Geneva offers many after-school enrichment programs, after both the morning and afternoon sessions, with several conducted by Geneva staff. Classes may include a foreign language, music, art, science, cooking, ballet, and sports classes. Children who are between the ages of 3 and 6 and who are toilet-trained are eligible to register for these programs. Registration forms are sent home twice a year. Though children from other area schools are welcome to attend, Geneva students are given priority.

Lunch Bunch Program

Geneva children who are three years old and who demonstrate good table manners are eligible to stay for a supervised lunch period for a fee of \$10.00 per day. Older two year olds may try the lunch program with teacher recommendation.

Lunch Bunch is from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The school provides 1% low fat milk and water for students. Children may bring their own bag lunch, which is clearly labeled. The school does not provide refrigeration for lunches, so ice packs are recommended.

For the convenience of parents, catered lunches are also offered. Orders are placed for an entire semester on days selected by families and registered in the office. Please refer to the Lunch Bunch Enrollment form available from the office or the Geneva website.

Space for Lunch Bunch is provided on a first-come, space-available basis, with priority given to students enrolled in enrichment classes, so, please, register early. Drop-ins are permitted only as space allows, but arrangements must be made with the office by 9:30 a.m. each day.

Parent-Child Visitations and/or Mini-Classes

Before the school year begins, your children are scheduled to visit their new classroom for parent-child visitations and/or mini-classes during the last week of August. Children have the opportunity to meet their teaching team, explore the new classroom, have a picture taken, and may also be scheduled for a shorter day of class. These visits and mini-classes help children make a more comfortable adjustment to the first full days of school.

August visit dates and times were included in the recent summer mailing to each family. You are also invited to visit the school playground or children's garden after camp or school and on weekends to help excite your children about coming to Geneva and spending time outside. Enrolling your child in Summer Camp is recommended, especially for new students to help them with transition to school.

The first day of regular classes for the entire school this year, including the first day of carpool and Lunch Bunch, is Tuesday, September 6, 2016, just after Labor Day.

Playground and Garden

Geneva is proud of its two playgrounds, which students visit nearly every day. We ask that you dress your child appropriately for the weather, the season, and time of day that s/he will be outside in the elements. We experience nature throughout the year in all kinds of weather, so light clothing and a hat when it is hot, and heavier clothing (with hats, mitten/gloves, scarves, boots) when it is cold are appropriate and expected. Please label all items, as many new coats look or are the same! Help your child look for his or her name on belongings, too.

Because most youngsters like to run, jump, and use the climbing equipment, Geneva requests that children come to school in closed, rubber sole shoes that fit. These keep sand and mulch out, while protecting toes. Flip-flops and crocs are fun, but not safe, and tennis shoe that are too big come off. An extra pair of "playground shoes" can always be put in a tote bag for recess.

The playground equipment is fun to use, but most pieces have rules about their use. Teachers review these rules with children so that everyone uses the equipment properly. Slides, for example, are one-way (down only), and swings are for sitting (not standing), forward facing, and those in line wait along the fence or on the bench. Sand is for digging (not throwing), and sand and sand toys should stay in

the sand box. Thank you for observing these rules when you use our playground in the evenings or on weekends.

Classes also have a chance to visit the garden and woods areas to observe plants and insects, especially butterflies. There are tree stumps for sitting and walking, lots of benches, and a garden deck for mini-classes, science activities, stories, and dramatic play. We hope youngsters will also want to draw or write about what they observe. Something is always happening in the garden!

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of a child's learning experience at Geneva, and are accomplished through gracious carpool assistance from parents. A permission form is distributed each year on which parents give permission for their child to participate on a field trip. This must be returned to the teacher or office before the first trip.

Teachers notify parents of planned trips at least one week in advance, often in class newsletters or by email, or posting a sign-up sheet on a classroom bulletin board or in the office. You may also notify the teacher of your availability to drive or chaperone by email or note. On the day of a field trip, no child will be allowed to take a trip without a signed permission form or parent's hand-written signed permission. Whenever possible, a chaperone is also assigned to a driver. Field trip drivers need to carry current collision and liability auto insurance.

Teachers prepare field trip carpool assignments in advance, considering a number of factors, so please honor these assignments and not request any last minute changes.

The primary responsibility of drivers and chaperones is to provide safe transportation and support to assigned students. Social conversations with other parents should be reserved for lunch periods. Instead, parents interact directly with children, talking with them, asking open-ended questions, calling attention to various items, and helping their assigned students benefit as much as possible from the field trip experience.

Parent Responsibilities for Field Trips

Geneva thanks parents for their gracious support and willingness to drive or chaperone on field trips and help children to benefit from the experience. A listing of "Responsibilities of Parents" is found in **Attachment 1**.

Please note that beginning June 30, 2008, safety regulations state that a safety seat or booster seat is required until a child turns 8 years of age, or weighs 65 pounds, or reaches 4'9" in height. All seat belts must be fastened and car seats or booster seats must be used as appropriate for each child. Parents are requested to install their child's safety seat in the driver's car to ensure proper installation and to speed departure.

Under no circumstances should a driver put or keep a vehicle in motion if a child is not properly restrained in a car seat. No child may ride in a front seat or be unbuckled at any time. These rules are strictly enforced.

Children are assigned to groups to ride together and be supervised by an adult. Please be sure that the teacher has your cell phone number(s) in case there is a need to reach you during the trip. Due to food allergies, NO snacks are offered children by parent volunteers without the teacher's knowledge and permission.

Children are assigned to a parent for supervision during a field trip and will be that parent's responsibility. Knowing the location of each child in a group, monitoring bathroom visits, and keeping children under control at all times are part of this responsibility. If the trip is at an indoors site, make sure children use "inside voices," walk, and stay together. Please **always** hold the children's hands when crossing a street or parking lot. Children may also hold a partner's hands to help keep a group together.

Teachers must be available to monitor children's behaviors and handle emergencies during field trips, so they are generally not assigned children to directly supervise. They keep a list of all groups, carry a First Aid Kit, emergency information, tissues, and a bag that may be used for trash. They are in charge of the schedule and make sure that the trip ends on time to return to school before dismissal.

All children wear the yellow Geneva identification vests on field trips. If the trip is outside, the vest may be worn over coats or jackets. If the trip is inside, the vest may be worn over clothes, but under coats.

Emergency Forms, Illnesses, Allergies, and Medications

Forms

Geneva must have proper means of reaching at least two adults at all times who are or can be responsible for each student. The school provides Emergency Information Forms to parents upon enrollment. These forms must be completed and returned to the office before the child's first day of class. Please help the school by also keeping emergency contact information up-to-date. Should your child become sick at school, we want to be able to contact you right away.

The emergency form includes the name and telephone number of the child's local physician, which the school will contact in case of an emergency. As appropriate, parents, other emergency contacts, and 911 are contacted in such circumstances. Copies of emergency forms are taken on field trips so that you can be contacted as necessary.

Illnesses

Geneva takes additional measures to minimize the spread of seasonal viruses and other respiratory infections. The onset of flu symptoms can be rapid, and young children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to these types of infections.

Germs can spread quickly in a school environment, so all children and adults stay healthier when sick individuals stay home. If a child develops symptoms of illness while in class, the child is isolated in a comfortable, supervised place, and parents are contacted to pick-up their youngster.

A child will not benefit from school activities if he/she is not feeling well. Any child who has shown signs of illness or has been ill in the previous 24 hours may **not** attend class. If a child has had a fever, rash, cough, diarrhea, vomiting, or other symptoms, s/he must be free of symptoms without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. We strictly observe this Health Department regulation to protect the health of children and staff. If in doubt, after a child has been brought to class, the staff will ask the director or assistant director to observe a child and/or contact a parent to ask questions about a child's condition. Common sense must prevail in the case of colds and allergies, which can range from a mild case of sniffles to a full-blown sinus infection or deep cough.

Geneva implements practices to minimize the spread of germs. Staff wash their hands once they arrive at school, just as children do after putting away their coats and totes. If a fever is detected, it is checked

by class staff, as every class has its own thermometer, and then rechecked in the office. Parents are contacted to pick up their child if a fever is registered or if the child displays symptoms of not feeling well.

Teachers review good hygiene measures with students, especially at the start of the school year, and use appropriate cleaning measures, such as using a bleach or vinegar solution or wipes on table surfaces and door knobs. Parents are encouraged to send in extra tissue boxes and containers of disinfecting wipes. Volunteers and visitors are also asked to wash hands or use foam hand sanitizers located throughout the school.

Parents must notify the school immediately if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. Geneva, in turn, is required to report certain communicable diseases to the Health Department, and to notify other parents in a class of suspected exposure, as well. The school reserves the right to request a physician's note when there is any doubt about contagious symptoms being transmittable to others.

Geneva expects every child to participate in outdoor play, which is scheduled daily, unless it is raining. If your child is recovering from illness and cannot go outside, please pick him/her up early from school. We do not have enough staff to supervise children inside.

All teachers and teaching assistants have current CPR and First Aid Certification. In case of a serious injury or accident, a staff member will administer first aid or CPR, and/or send your child to a hospital or physician for emergency treatment.

Signs of Illnesses

If one or more of the following symptoms is present in your child, you will be contacted to pick up your child from school:

- Temperature higher than 100° F,
- Loss of appetite,
- Nausea or vomiting,
- Red, pink or crusted eyes,
- Stomachache,
- Earache,
- Diarrhea,
- Rash/infection of skin,
- Pale or flushed face,
- Headache,
- Thick or greenish mucus from nose,
- Cough,
- Loss of energy/decrease in activity/lethargy,
- Sore throat, or
- Crying and not acting like regular self.

Lice

Children who are identified as having either live adult lice or nits (eggs) may not return to school until they are “adult free and nit free.” They should be treated with special lice shampoo at home, have hair carefully and thoroughly combed out, and be monitored throughout the 21 day life cycle of lice. Upon return to school, which can be the next day, a staff member must check the head of a previously affected student to be certain that no adults or nits remain before parents leave the premises. Heads are periodically checked during the 21 day cycle to be certain that the condition is no longer present.

Additional measures taken at school, which should also be followed at home, are to wash and dry (in a high-heat clothes dryer) dress-up clothes, pillows, soft toys, and blankets, among other items. Recently worn clothing should be laundered and dried, too. Other soft items can be placed in a tightly closed plastic bag and stored for two weeks to kill adults and eggs. Carpets are thoroughly vacuumed and the bag is discarded.

Other information is available from pediatricians and “Advice on Lice” at **240-242-4267**.

Allergies and Dietary Considerations

Parents identify any allergies, suspected allergies, and dietary considerations for their children. A list of food allergies is posted in appropriate classrooms and the kitchen.

Emergency Medications

Geneva staff do not administer medications to students, but are expected to administer emergency medications when necessary. Parents must administer all others to their own children prior to coming to or after arriving home from school.

MSDE, Office of Child Care, requires that emergency medications of EpiPens, inhalers, or nebulizers be properly registered with Geneva. A “Medication Administration Authorization Form,” **Attachment 2**, must be completed and signed by parents and the child’s physician describing how and when to administer emergency medications, under what conditions the emergency medication should be given, dosage, side effects, and any subsequent treatment if necessary. Any medicine administered is recorded on the “Medication Administration Log” which is attached to authorization form and securely stored in the classroom.

Emergency medicines must be checked in with the school office at the start of the school year or when the child’s physician provides a directive. Instructions are reviewed, and the form is examined to be sure it is properly completed by both the parents and the physician. Medications must be in the original container, labeled with the child’s name and instructions from the pharmacy for dosage, and with a current expiration date. If medications expire during the school year, they will be sent home for immediate replacement.

Only authorized and trained Geneva staff may administer medicine according to the instructions on the label, and the parent’s and licensed health practitioner’s written instructions. If a second dose of medicine is to be administered, then this instruction is to be specifically spelled out on the Medication Authorization Form. When an emergency EpiPen is administered, parents and 911 are immediately notified.

Behavior Management and Discipline

The following information, which explains Geneva’s philosophy, is also found in the GDS Staff Handbook:

Geneva Day School understands that young children may not yet have acquired “perfect” social or emotional skills. To foster positive skills, teaching staff establish classroom and playground rules and routines. They communicate and reinforce these with a caring approach on a regular basis. Common positive reinforcement techniques used include recognizing a child's accomplishments, encouraging a child's efforts, and rewarding a child for appropriate and positive behavior.

Teachers endeavor to create a low-stress environment in which positive social behaviors are taught and what types of behavior are not acceptable. When a child does misbehave, staff use redirection, distraction, and, when age-appropriate, guidance in problem-solving techniques. They encourage children to learn how to cooperate with peers and to have a positive learning experience. Focus is on helping each child learn what behaviors are appropriate and in making “a good choice.” The ultimate goal is to teach children to respect themselves and others, and to encourage the development of self-control and problem solving strategies.

Teachers draw on their training and experience to identify behaviors that indicate when a child may be unhappy, withdrawn, angry, or feeling stress. These behaviors require patience, understanding, and gentle intervention.

A number of strategies are used to support a child’s positive social-emotional skill development, including:

- *Providing a variety of activities and materials for the children that are developmentally appropriate and highly interesting for each child.*
- *Planning activities and using group management techniques to minimize waiting time for children.*
- *Using an appropriate ratio of adults to children.*
- *Using positive language to reward appropriate behavior and using instructional language to correct inappropriate behavior.*
- *Being aware of individual students and groups at all times, especially monitoring those locations when children may not be visible.*
- *Being flexible and willing to change plans if activities are not capturing the children's attention.*
- *Teaching children about a conflict resolution process and facilitating their participation in the process as much as is appropriate.*
- *Offering options and following through consistently.*

When these measures are not effective and problem-solving or redirection do not work, a child may be separated temporarily from a group to a quiet or cozy corner until s/he is ready to return to regular class activities.

Aggressive or disruptive behaviors, especially behaviors that cause injury or are extremely intense, are cause for concern and intervention. Teachers discuss situations of concern with the director and parents who converse or meet to jointly devise a plan to improve behavior. As appropriate, Geneva may request that parents seek additional professional assessment or support.

Staff members work cooperatively with parents and any support personnel hired by the parents to accommodate a child. Specialists may include MCPS Infant and Toddler or Child Find Program Specialists, other educational consultants, physicians, language or physical therapists, occupational or physical therapists, developmental pediatricians, or psychologists, among others. It is expected that parents will work with school staff to provide appropriate support and be involved in the development of individual learning plans for their child. If a child already has an IFSP or IEP, or any progress reports or goals from educational or therapeutic programs, they should be shared with the child’s teacher.

Geneva makes every effort to work with parents and their child. If, however, after exhaustive measures, the school is not able to sustain a positive classroom environment for all children that is consistent with Geneva's philosophy and goals, it may become necessary to consider another placement or discontinue the program for a child. The school is available to work with families to locate a more appropriate placement as requested.

Safety and Welfare

Geneva is always concerned about the safety and welfare of students and staff, and every precaution for safety is taken, both in and outdoors.

Visitors

All doors are locked, with the exception of the door to the school lobby during arrival and dismissal times, through which all visitors must enter and exit. Anyone wishing to gain entrance through another door will be asked to go to the lobby. All visitors must sign in and out at the front desk, and wear a "Visitor" sticker while visiting the school.

Doors

Doors to the outside of the building are closed and remain locked so that unwanted "visitors" (including animals) may not gain entrance. Staff members only may enter and exit through their classroom doors using keypad codes for entry. If a classroom door is opened for a short time, a staff member will monitor activity outside that area.

Class Welfare

Geneva staff members understand that children adjust to a school environment and develop social skills at their own individual rate. If a child has difficulty assimilating into a group setting, teachers and teaching assistants work with the child and the family to try to resolve transition difficulties. They try to serve each child's needs in the class setting with patience and reasonable accommodation.

Geneva, however, reserves the right to seek a more appropriate placement for a child if it is deemed necessary by the director and teachers. A child may be discharged from Geneva whose presence is detrimental to a group or who demonstrates an inability to benefit from the type of program offered at Geneva after attempts have been made to meet individual needs. Further, if the school believes that more information is required to understand a child's development and to program for a child appropriately, and the parents refuse to seek such information, then Geneva may also discharge or refuse to re-enroll a child in its program. Geneva takes these positions in the best interests of all children in the program. The school is always available to work with families to find more appropriate placements and provide referrals for screenings and evaluations.

Student Dismissal

A child's acceptance to Geneva is conditional on his/her adjustment to the school program. There may be occasions, however, when it is determined that a placement is not in the best interests of the individual child or a classroom. Possible causes for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Unable to separate from the primary caretaker within a reasonable time.
- High level of activity that interferes with the normal functioning of a class.
- Hostile attitude or mistreatment of other children.
- Disruptive behavior in the classroom that interferes with the normal functioning of the class.
- Displayed learning needs and behaviors which can be better met in a more specialized or therapeutic program.
- Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner.

- Failure of parents to consistently follow Geneva guidelines as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- In the event a parent(s) becomes disruptive to the Geneva program or staff, their child may also be dismissed or not be allowed to re-enroll for subsequent classes.

Custody Issues

Geneva abides by all legally served court orders. In order to follow such orders, the school must have current copies on file regarding parental custody matters. Custody disputes may not be addressed on school property. If such a dispute occurs, Geneva staff will try to calm the disputing parties first before calling the police.

Items Not Allowed In School

A number of items are not permitted at Geneva. Toy weapons are not allowed for philosophical and safety reasons. Pacifiers, Sippy cups, and bottles are also not allowed because they are not developmentally appropriate, and because they may be “shared” and become a source of germs.

Geneva staff members realize, however, that sometimes at the beginning of a school year, a child really needs a security blanket or object to help with transition. After children are comfortable, it is generally preferred that personal toys not be brought to school, as these are often difficult to share and may be broken. The school does not wish to have responsibility for the whereabouts and condition of personal toys. When it is appropriate, items are gently removed and stored in the child’s tote bag.

Chewing gum is not generally allowed because the Heimlich maneuver cannot dislodge gum if a child chokes. In very rare and special circumstances, however, and with parent and director permission only, gum may be permitted to assist an older child remain calm and focused on a task. Rules for using and disposing gum are clearly discussed, and the privilege is taken away if they are not observed.

Transportation and Carpool System

Geneva does not provide transportation for its students; however, class lists are distributed to families to assist in the formation of carpools.

Geneva does encourage families to use the “carpool system” for drop-off and pick-up purposes. This helps children transition to school and adjust more readily, minimizing separation concerns, and is more convenient for parents. If someone other than a parent picks up your child, please be sure that an authorization note is on file in the office.

As parents prefer, they may escort children directly into their classrooms. They should never leave children alone inside or outside of the building, or alone in a car. Classroom staff members may be gathering supplies from elsewhere in the school, and not be in their classes, so please do not allow children to walk in on their own. Geneva cannot be responsible for the safety of a child who is not escorted into the classroom.

Parents notify the school or child’s teacher in writing if someone other than parents will be picking up a child. If a childcare provider, grandparent, or friend will be picking up a child on a regular basis, a letter of authorization must be given to the office. No child is released to anyone who is not a parent or not on the Emergency Release Form, unless the parents have officially notified the school.

The drop-off and pick-up schedule is as follows:

- 8:50 – 9:15 a.m. Morning drop-off
- 11:30 – 11:45 a.m. Morning pick-up in carpool and lunch drop-off in carpool
- 12:15 – 12:30 p.m. Lunch pick-up and afternoon drop-off
- 2:45 – 3:00 p.m. Afternoon pick-up

Carpool System

The carpool line begins from the Seven Locks Road entrance and forms at the back door of the school at the green awning for both arrival and pick-up. Please turn off your car engine and please do not idle while waiting in line in accordance with Maryland state law. Once the line starts moving, please conclude all cell phone conversations and turn off your phone. You do not need to get out of your car, as a staff member will escort your child to or from the car.

When dropping off your child, a staff member opens the car door, unbuckles it (if appropriate) and helps the child out of the car and to the stairs. Staff are positioned throughout the hall to help escort children to class. The colored luggage tag (which your child's teacher will give you to be affixed to their tote bag) helps in this process, so please keep it attached.

A carpool number is assigned to each child, and must be displayed when picking up your child. Again, enter from the Seven Locks Road entrance, show your number when you turn the last corner for staff to read. By the time you arrive at the steps, your child is ready to be escorted to your car. If your child needs help to buckle in, please drive to the far side of the parking lot to provide assistance before leaving the property. We respectfully request that parents not try to buckle in while in line, as this greatly slows the line.

The school requires that children use car seats or booster seats at all times. Please note that beginning June 30, 2008, new regulations require that a safety seat or booster seat be used until a child turns 8 years of age, weighs 65 pounds, or reaches 4'9" height. Under no circumstances should a driver put or keep a vehicle in motion if a child is not properly restrained in a safety seat. We do not want to place a child in a car without appropriate seating.

Should you or a family member forget to have a safety seat in your car, the school will ask you to secure a safety seat first and come back, or come to the office and sign a "Statement Regarding Transporting a Child Without A Safety Seat" before picking up and transporting the child home.

Walking In for Arrival or Pick-up

Some parents prefer to drop-off or pick-up their child directly from the school building. If you are not using the carpool line, please enter the school property from the Goya Drive entrance, park on the parking lot section closest to the woods, hold your child's hand when walking across the parking lot, and enter the lobby to escort your child to the classroom at 8:55 a.m. or 12:15 p.m.

After the morning session, you may pick-up children by entering the lobby and showing your number to one of the office staff. They will retrieve children from the carpool hallway and escort them back to the lobby. This practice allows staff in the Open Classroom to focus on assigned Lunch Bunch children so they are not distracted or disturbed. After the afternoon session, you may enter the lobby and join the line by the kitchen door at 2:45 p.m. for pick-up. Please wait until after the last child has left the classroom to begin the line by the kitchen.

Carpool numbers must be used at all times for pick-up purposes, not only in carpool, but also when coming into the building.

Other General Arrival and Dismissal Information

Arrival

Parents walking their children into the classroom may wait outside on the playground or in the school lobby until the scheduled time for class to begin. Morning students should arrive in class no earlier than 9:00 a.m.; afternoon students should arrive no earlier than 12:15 p.m. Geneva requests that afternoon students arriving for lunch at 11:30 a.m. to arrive in carpool, so that other lunch students are not distracted.

Dismissal

If you are not using the carpool line for pick-up at 2:45 p.m., please enter the building through the school lobby. Persons not recognized by school personnel will be asked to show personal identification, such as a driver's license, before a child is released.

The school is required to track dismissal of each child each day. No child is released from class or the playground in advance of dismissal unless the parent signs a child out from the office. If a carpool number is forgotten, please request a temporary number from the office.

It is important that all children be picked up on time. We reserve the right to charge a fee for those children dismissed to and supervised in Extended Care while awaiting a late pick-up. If you need to pick up your child early, please notify the teacher in advance and explain the plan to your child.

Kindergarten Carpool

Parents of kindergarten students who are dropping off in the morning drive onto the property from the Seven Locks Road entrance. After crossing the bump and going around the corner, bear left, and stop in front of the steps to the Kindergarten Learning Cottage. A teacher will assist children out of the left side of the car and guide them up the steps to enter the cottage.

Afternoon dismissal from kindergarten also involves entry from Seven Locks. After going around the corner, bear left again, stop in front of the cottage steps, and show your carpool number. A staff member will call children from inside the classroom and open the left side car doors for them.

If your kindergarten student is the sibling of a younger student from a different Geneva classroom, s/he will be escorted into the main building to join the sibling in their class carpool line for dismissal. Parents may pick up both children from the green awing carpool door during regular carpool dismissal at 2:45 p.m.

Important Note: If your child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent, the carpool driver, or the person(s) authorized to pick up your child daily (listed on your child's Emergency Information form), you must provide written notification to Geneva in each instance with a person's full name. Inform this person that we will require proof of identification before releasing your child. **Geneva will not release your child to a stranger without written consent from a parent, no matter how well the child seems to know that person.** If an unexpected event causes a last minute change in plans, call the school and speak to a staff member or leave a message. Children or siblings under 16 years of age may not pick up Geneva students.

Parking Lot Reminders

Thank you for driving slowly and carefully on the parking lot at all times. Cautious driving can truly be a lifesaver. Please hold the hands of children you take into the building or onto the parking lot. Our

children are short and cannot be seen between or behind cars, and are quick to scoot away. We have had a number of close calls because children were not holding an adult's hand.

Carpool Reminders:

ABC = ALWAYS BE CAREFUL!

- Always drive slowly and carefully as soon as you turn into the parking lot.
- Keep your child in a safety or booster seat until unbuckled by staff.
- Turn off your car engine if you are waiting in line.
- Conclude all cell phone conversations when the line begins to move. Please do not be distracted!
- Hold up your carpool number so staff can read it. You may have to hold it up again or clip it to your visor.
- Please stay in your car. A staff will open the car door so your child can climb into his/her safety or booster seat.
- Be sure to buckle in your child on the far side of the parking lot before leaving the school premises.

Please do not turn left onto Seven Locks Road. There are too many drivers coming down the hill and driving fast. Instead:

- Exit the property and turn **Right** onto Goya Drive,
- **Right** onto Greenleaf Avenue,
- **Left** at stop sign onto Fontaine Street,
- Immediate **Right** on Gainsborough Road, and
- **Left** onto Seven Locks at the light.

Holidays

Though Geneva is a non-denominational school, it recognizes that holidays are important in a child's life. Teachers incorporate some holiday activities into class plans, especially those of their students' families, by inviting them to visit and share traditions. Special activities and foods may be a part of the celebrations. Sign-up sheets and/or the Sign-Up Genius on-line are posted to notify parents of these and other special occasions as well as to request contributions.

Geneva generally follows the MCPS calendar for holidays and breaks, with an extra week for Winter Break. Geneva offers Winter and Spring Break Camps for the convenience of working families. Please refer to the school calendar. Please also note that this year Geneva is open on Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Election Day, and Inauguration Day.

Weather, Delays, and Closings

Weather and Daily Outdoor Playtime

As a Maryland Green School, Geneva recognizes the importance of being outside to experience nature, which hopefully occurs every day. Geneva expects that parents will dress their children appropriately for the weather, including heavy coats, gloves/mittens, and hats in very cold weather, or light clothing and hats in hot, sunny weather.

Our pediatric consultant states that children may go outside at any time if properly dressed, even in very cold weather, as germs rather than cold temperatures, cause colds. In hot weather, children may be outside in the shade for shorter periods of time. Water is available in all classes and from the outside water fountain.

Remember the season of the year and the time of day that your child's class is outdoors, as, it can be before the high temperatures of the day. Staff use their discretion in scheduling daily playground time, and may reduce the period outside due to weather conditions.

Weather Code Days

Weather Code Days are determined by Clean Air Partners from a number of factors that relate to air quality and the related impact on health. These factors may be considered unhealthy for everyone, especially children who physically exert themselves when out of doors.

The office receives daily e-mail notices identifying the code for the day using five categories:

- Green – good
- Yellow – moderate
- Orange – unhealthy for sensitive groups
- Red – unhealthy
- Purple – very unhealthy

On Code Green and Yellow Days, normally scheduled outside activities are conducted. On Code Orange or Red Days, which generally occur later in afternoons, the office alerts staff of predicted code conditions. Teachers are encouraged to limit outside time, 15 minutes or so, and to direct activities to less exerting ones. Instead, quiet outside activities, such as digging, circle games, singing, reading, or simple art may be planned and be more appropriate. Children have access to water before and after being outdoors, and while on the playground from the outdoor water fountain. Depending on the time of the conditions, teachers may also elect to conduct inside rather than outside activities. On Code Purple Days, classes remain inside.

Delays and Closings

Please watch the television or listen to the radio for announcements concerning school closings due to weather, natural or national emergencies, or other situations. Geneva is listed on Channels 4 (NBC), 5 (Fox), and 7 (ABC). You may check the status of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) on the Internet at <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/>. You may also call the Geneva telephone number for a recorded message at 301-340-7704, check the Geneva website at www.genevadayschool.org, or check social media for postings.

Please note the following situations during which GDS will be closed or delayed:

- If MCPS are closed for a day, then Geneva is also closed.
- If MCPS opens one or two hours late, Geneva always opens one hour late at **10:00 a.m.** Before Care is cancelled on late opening days. The afternoon classes begin at the usual times.
- If Geneva knows in advance that MCPS will close early, Geneva will cancel afternoon classes, including afternoon enrichments and After Care.
- If an early closing is announced after afternoon classes have begun, room parents will be contacted to initiate class telephone trees to notify parents to come and pick up their child.

Parking Lot Safety during Snow

The driveway and parking lots are scheduled to be plowed early during snowy weather, though sometimes the school experiences delays. If you decide to park your car and walk in when this happens, please be very careful. Instead, we recommend that you use the carpool line.

Depending on parking lot conditions, we may receive and release children using the school lobby door facing the flagpole. A sign will be posted giving directions. In the event that the driveway is impossible

to negotiate, and you wish to walk your child in, you may park on the street and walk up to the building. Please be careful when driving around the building, as the driveway is slippery in icy weather. Please exercise caution and always drive slowly.

Make-Up Days

The school has organized the calendar to accommodate up to three school closings due to extreme weather conditions or other circumstances. Only the kindergarten class is required to make up days if they do not meet 170 days. The exact days to be used as make-up days will be decided by the director, and could include using professional days, some spring break days, or some days after the Memorial Day weekend. When choosing the exact combination of days to be used as make-up days, the director takes into consideration guidelines from state and county officials with staff and parent input.

No credit is issued for Lunch Bunch or contracted Before or After Care when school is closed due to weather.

Nutrition and Snacks

The school is responsible for serving daily snacks during each program session. Menus are posted in the kitchen and in each class. Snacks often include fresh fruits or vegetables, crackers, cheese, cereal, popcorn (for children over 3 years), items baked in class, among others. Geneva highlights nutritious and interesting foods and models good eating habits. No peanut products are ever served or permitted in the school.

The school provides fresh produce to students at least twice every week. A farmer's market sells local produce on the property every Wednesdays from May to December. It leaves a big box of seasonal foods which are used by classes for snacks the following days. Vegetables may vary from zucchini and beets, to eggplant, broccoli, cucumbers, asparagus, tomatoes, potatoes, and more. Fruits may vary from berries and melons, to peaches and pears. The school also purchases fresh apples, oranges, bananas, carrots, celery, and cherry tomatoes, among other items throughout the year.

Geneva believes that snack time should be a pleasant experience when appetizing and nutritious foods can be enjoyed. It is a time to socialize, talk, listen and exchange experiences or stories. It also provides practice in using table manners and in handling utensils. Staff help children sit throughout snack, pass items, and clean up when they finish eating.

All children and adults must, of course, wash their hands thoroughly with soap under running water, or use an instant hand sanitizer before preparing, serving, or eating food. Staff serve snacks using utensils or by wearing gloves.

Snacks with 1% low fat milk or water are offered to all children. If your child is allergic to milk, you may provide a substitute drink. Water is available to the children at all times in their classrooms. Children are allowed and encouraged to serve themselves from coolers and water fountains.

For special events, such as birthdays or holidays, a nutritious snack is preferred. Alternative possibilities include fruit kabobs, muffins, yogurt, tea sandwiches, crackers and cheese in special shapes, pretzels, and trail mixes, among others.

Peanut Policy

An increase of extreme, potentially life-threatening allergic reactions to peanut butter and all peanut products (including peanut oil) has necessitated the elimination of these from the school. Peanut butter is not served as a snack, and Geneva asks that no peanut butter sandwiches or peanut products be

brought into school. Nut substitutes, as cashew or soy nut butters, may be used. We realize that this may cause some inconvenience, but we feel that the health of children with these intense allergic reactions must be a high priority.

Allergies and Dietary Considerations

The school reviews all medical forms to identify food allergies and dietary preferences of students. A listing is compiled, posted in the kitchen, and distributed to staff. Teachers make a listing for class use, and notify parents of specific class allergies and preferences. Geneva honors these considerations when providing snacks, lunches, cooking activities and birthday parties, and other special events.

Please notify the school and teacher if your child develops any food allergies or your family has dietary preferences. If a child has numerous or severe food allergies, please discuss how you would like snack arranged for your child, which may include sending in your own supplies for your child.

Emergency Preparedness

Your children's safety and welfare are of utmost importance. As a result, various emergency plans and procedures are in place should they be necessary to implement. Hopefully, we will never have to use any, though it is prudent to be prepared. Should an unusual situation occur, you will be notified by email, social media postings, the school website, and by a school telephone recording.

Geneva staff members are prepared for emergencies for such events as loss of electricity, telephones, or water, fire, natural (such as an earthquake) or national emergency, or lockdown situations. School may be dismissed early or closed until such time as it is safe to return. If there is a radio or television announcement about severe weather or a terrorist attack in our area, you may come and get your children before dismissal. Staff remain with their classes throughout the emergencies; some may be released to care for their own children, but only as they can be spared and covered by other staff. There will always be school staff available to wait with and supervise children until parents or authorized adults arrive for pick-up.

Emergency Closing

In the unlikely event of a prolonged utility loss, or other event that would jeopardize the health or safety of the children, Geneva will close until the situation is corrected. Every reasonable effort will be made to expedite any repair. These closings are non-reimbursable.

Fire Drills

Geneva conducts monthly fire drills during the school year as required by the fire department. Staff and children are notified and prepared before the first drill occurs.

Lockdown

Please be aware of public notices on radio, television, and the Internet about emergency conditions. If local authorities restrict access to our school, Geneva must comply. Should a lockdown situation occur, parents will be notified. Please be certain that we have current contact information for your family.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, Geneva will respond and act at the direction of local, county, and/or state safety and health officials. Teachers have activities planned and stay with the children until the lockdown is over. If an emergency of this type does occur, and we need to extend our stay in the building, please be assured that the school has additional food and water for emergencies.

Evacuation

MSDE Regulations require that Geneva practice evacuation procedures annually. As a result, an evacuation drill is held for classes in the main building to evacuate or relocate to the Kindergarten Learning Cottage, and for the kindergarten class to evacuate or relocate to the main building. Provisions of water and snacks are available in both locations for such emergencies.

If the entire school needs to evacuate the premises and relocate to a site off-campus, then classes will gather first on the playground and walk as a group to the Seven Locks Baptist Church, located at 11845 Seven Locks Road, Potomac; **301-279-9388**. We will be relocated to meeting rooms in the church basement. Parents will be contacted to pick their children up at this location, and only parents or adults with carpool numbers or signed permission for pick-up will be allowed to do so. When you show your carpool number or proof of identification, you will be asked by your child's teacher to sign, date, and write the time you left with your child or children on an evacuation form provided by the classroom teacher.

Parent Participation and Communication

Communication

Geneva values parent involvement in the school. We hope that you will have an open dialogue with your child's teacher, and share special concerns or information throughout the year. Thank you for not expecting to speak directly with staff while they are in class. Instead, you can leave a message by calling the school, emailing (office@genevadayschool.org) or the teachers' email address, stopping by the office, or by utilizing the "Tote-Bag Express."

To send a note via the "Tote-Bag Express," simply attach a note/envelope to the outside of your child's bag with a large safety pin. We especially appreciate learning about concerns or events that may affect your child's emotional life, such as a new baby or parents traveling out of town. Thank you for keeping the pin on the bag, so it is convenient to send messages back and forth.

Newsletters

A school newsletter containing general school information is prepared monthly and available on our website (www.genevadayschool.org). Class Newsletters and Talk-About Calendars from teachers are posted on the website around the first day of the month under the class name. Your child's teacher will share the class password with you. This information includes summaries of the past month, highlights of the upcoming month, plus various other messages and reminders for parents. Hard copies of the school and class newsletters are available and can be requested from the Teacher.

Confidentiality

All information regarding a child's development, areas for growth, or family situations, are kept in strict confidence by all Geneva staff members. Substitutes and volunteers working in classrooms are also held to this same standard.

Classroom Visits

Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom. Confer with the teacher regarding the best time for a visit. Please sign-in in the school lobby when entering and leaving the building, and wear a visitor's badge.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Classroom teachers are always happy to talk with you about your child's progress, behavior, and adjustment after school by e-mail or telephone. In preparation for fall or spring conferences, staff members complete assessments with written comments for each child. Reports are based on on-going

documented observations of individual children during class time. A copy is shared with parents and another copy is placed in each child's file.

School is closed on conference days with the exception of the kindergarten class, which conducts only a morning session. Childcare is provided during parent teacher conferences for children whose parents are attending conferences.

Change of Address/Telephone

Please inform the school office and the teacher if you move or change your telephone number, including cell phone numbers. All emergency information must be kept updated at all times, so thank you for your help in this regard.

Extended Vacations

If you are going out of town, please inform your child's teacher as to the length of the trip, who has responsibility for the care of your child, and how to reach responsible adults.

Birthday Celebrations

Home parties: Birthday party invitations may be distributed in school for a home celebration only if every child in the class receives an invitation.

School parties: We are happy to accommodate parents who wish to send in a special activity or snack to celebrate a child's birthday. Please notify your child's teacher in advance, so that you can be aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions in the class. We recommend healthy birthday snacks which may include fruit kabobs, muffins, yogurt, tea sandwiches or crackers and cheese in special shapes, pretzels, trail mixes, among other healthy choices. We prefer that no rubber balloons be displayed.

Parents contact teachers regarding upcoming birthdays to coordinate a special time for a visit, activity, or celebration. We welcome parents who may want to read a favorite story or share a fun craft. If two or more birthdays fall on the same day, parents may choose to celebrate jointly or on another day. Some classes choose to designate a date once a month to celebrate the birthdays of that month.

Volunteers

Geneva encourages and looks forward to family participation in class activities and special events. Teachers welcome help in the classroom, especially with small group or individual activities, and for field trips. Teachers are also pleased to arrange a special time for you to visit to share information about your job, hobby, culture, profession, talent, or recent travel experiences.

If you volunteer for any class event, teachers will provide you with instructions as to your role and what are desired outcomes. Always remember that information about students and the school is privileged information. Please respect the confidentiality of every child, the staff, and the school. If you have concerns or questions, please share them with the teacher, director, or assistant director.

Hopefully, each family can volunteer for some activities in their child's class during the course of the school year, as Geneva would love for you to be part of the fun!

Room Parents

Each class has two room parents to provide support to the teacher, communicate with families, and help with class events and field trips. They prepare a class telephone tree to be used for reminders and emergencies. They also volunteer or identify parents to attend monthly GPA meetings, which this year will rotate between Tuesday evening and Friday morning meetings. Information is shared about

upcoming GPA events, as family dinners, annual auction, and spring carnival, among others. Thank you for supporting your GPA!

Outside Visitors

Visitors to Geneva enter at the school lobby entrance to sign in and get a visitor's sticker. If they have arrived for a school tour, they will also complete the Tour Information Form.

Parents of prospective students may visit at any time during the school year. Visiting children may be invited to participate in class activities during a tour, but parents supervise their own child.

Parents who wish to enroll new children in Geneva may be requested to schedule their child for a half day observation visit in a specific classroom. Parents remain on the school premises to be available as questions or concerns arise.

Letters of Recommendations to Other Schools

As children prepare to leave Geneva, other schools may require letters of recommendation, or school conference or other records. We are happy to supply these letters which are confidential communications between schools. All requests must be processed through the school office with parents signing a Release of Information Form as found in **Attachment 3**.

Suggestions and Feedback

Geneva wants to hear from you regarding areas of concern, thoughts, or suggestions. If you have questions about your child or a class, please first communicate with the teacher. If the teacher cannot fully address your concerns, please feel free to contact the director or assistant director. There is a Suggestion Box in the lobby in which to drop written recommendations, as well. We really do value your input to our program, as the only problems we cannot address are those about which we do not know.

Geneva Parents Association (GPA)

The school is fortunate to have a very supportive and wonderful parent group with which to work on common school projects. All parents are automatically members of the GPA. This year, meetings will be held on alternating Tuesday evenings and Friday mornings as indicated on the school calendar. Childcare is provided in the Open Classroom during evening meetings.

Many activities are planned and sponsored during the year by the GPA for the entire school community. These include partnering with the school for the Welcome Back Social, plus parent enrichment speakers, the spring Carnival and Auction, fundraisers at local "kid friendly" restaurants, among others. Funds are used to help to defray expenses for GPA-sponsored events, enrich the children's school experience, provide social events for families, and support the school for a specific purpose, such as for the playground or scholarship fund. Watch for GPA news in weekly Tuesday e-blasts. The school encourages and supports our partnership with the GPA, and hopes that you will, too!

Photographs

Individual and class photographs are taken annually in the fall and in the spring. Details are announced in advance. Other class events are often photographed by staff for class displays, teaching activities, e-mailing to families. Teachers appreciate being able to share your pictures, too. For those who indicated on their contracts that they do not wish to have their child photographed, the school will honor this request.

Socials and Special School Events

Welcome Back Social

Several special school events are held annually to which parents, families, and alumni are invited. This year, the school and the GPA are jointly sponsoring the “**Welcome Back Social on Friday, September 9, from 5:30 – 7:00** p.m. Please reserve the date and join the fun and opportunity to meet other families. Alumni are always welcomed back for this and other Geneva events, of course!

Back-To-School Night

Geneva’s annual Back-to-School Night will take place this year on **Wednesday evening, September 14, from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.** This meeting is for adults only, as childcare is not provided. Teachers and teaching assistants meet with parents in classrooms to discuss curriculum and class goals for the school year at either 6:30 p.m. for morning classes or 7:30 p.m. for afternoon classes. Parents hear teachers describe the program and schedule, and display some of the materials children will be using during the year. The director welcomes parents and introduces the staff in the church sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.

Other Events

Other planned school and class events may include class dinners or breakfasts, Thanksgiving Feasts, holiday celebrations, the GPA Spring Carnival and Auction, the Annual Art Show, Kindergarten programs, cultural events, Family Picnic, and more! These activities are publicized in advance in school and class newsletters. Something is always happening at school and you are always welcomed at these and other events!

Donations

Recyclables

"One man's trash is another man's treasure" are words we live by at Geneva, especially in planning science and art activities. We greatly appreciate your assistance in saving items which can be recycled, such as: toilet paper tubes, paper towel tubes, foam and cardboard egg cartons and trays, unusual and computer paper, cardboard, large boxes, buttons, calendars, strawberry baskets, plastic margarine tubs and lids. Thank you!

Birthday Books

Books open new worlds for children, and are “presents to be opened again and again.” Geneva has established a wonderful tradition of Birthday Books, when a book is donated by your child on the occasion of his/her birthday. It can be a favorite story or author, and your child’s class has the opportunity to read the book first. A bookplate is placed in the front of the book showing your child as the donor. By donating a book to the school, you are teaching your child that giving is as important as receiving. Reminders about this program are sent to all students in the month prior to their birthday.

Thank you for reading and reviewing this Parent Handbook!

This Handbook is being sent to you via Constant Contact together with a form to verify that you have read and understood it. Just print and sign the form, and return it to the school office via your child’s tote bag by September 9, 2016. The Handbook is also available on the Geneva website, in the office, and as a hard copy should you desire a copy. Thank you!

See you September 9th from 5:30-7:00 p.m.
on the parking lot and playground for the
Welcome Back Social!

Watch for more information about this fun evening! Thank you!