

July 2016

Dear Geneva Day School Families and Friends:

Welcome to new and returning families and students for the 2016-2017 School Year, the 51st year of the school! We are honored that you have entrusted Geneva with your precious children, and we pledge to work closely with you to provide the best and most appropriate early childhood educational program possible. Our excellent staff have many, many years of experience and are very excited to meet your children to begin learning.

The start of each school year is always busy, especially getting to know new friends, learning names, and successfully transitioning to school routines. Your Teachers will be informally assessing children so that programs can be designed to address strengths, needs, interests, and various intelligences. If your child has an IFSP or IEP, or is receiving private therapies, we respectfully request that you share this information with your child's teacher so that this information can also be considered when planning programs.

Teachers will give you a copy of an *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* for you to report on the development of your child. Your observations are also considered when developing learning goals which are then finalized with you at the Fall Parent Conference. On-going communication with you and from you is vital to providing successful programs for your child, as you are always important in this process.

We have included a roster of your child's class together with a Visitation and/or Modified Class Schedule for the week of August 29. Your child will have an opportunity to meet the Teaching Team, make a name tag, tour and play in the classroom, and play on the playground. Should this schedule not be convenient, you may contact the office after August 15 to reschedule. If you plan to be out of town during the visitation week, just plan to come a little earlier on your child's first day of school in September.

All classes will be in full session at regular times on Tuesday, September 6, right after the Labor Day weekend. Lunch Bunch and carpool will also begin on Tuesday, September 6, and Enrichment Classes will begin on Monday, September 12.

Some children will be attending Geneva for the first time, while others are returning to a familiar setting. For all, new Teachers, new classes, and new friends can be a concern, so we know that you will give your child whatever time and support is needed to settle in.

Separation is a natural part of life, and our Teachers will work with you and your child to help ease any anxieties. Talking or reading about school in quiet, low-keyed moments, and developing good-bye rituals provide comfort for children so that they can understand what to expect. Predictability and consistency on your part, as well as ours, are vital in generating comfort and safety for students.

The manner in which your child handles separation on the first day will depend very much on your example plus your child's personality, age, and experiences. Be sure to arrive on time for school, preferably in carpool, but you may also walk in to enter the classroom. Staff will meet and greet you both, help your child put away belongings, and become involved in activities or centers. When you feel it is appropriate, give your child an affectionate and happy good-bye with assurance that you will be back. Then, please, depart quickly. The longer you stay, the longer the transition takes, not just on the first day, but on future days, as well.

Please save conversations and questions with Teachers for after school, later e-mails or phone calls. Staff members really do want to give their full time and attention to your children on the first day and every day of class. If you want to talk with other parents, we respectfully request that you adjourn to the lobby or outside, so that classes are not disturbed or distracted by your conversations.

On the first two full days of school, September 6 and 7, drop your child off in carpool or in class, and walk upstairs to the Founders' Room for coffee, conversation and questions with the Geneva Parents Association (GPA) President, other parents, and the Director. Should you have particular concerns about how transition is going, we will check on your child and report back to you. We want you to feel comfortable about the big step your child is taking, respond to any questions you may have, and give you some transition hints.

Many of you would like to walk your child into class on the first few days of school. After then, we respectfully request that you use carpool during the designated periods, and allow our staff to help your child arrive and depart from the building. We help with getting in and out of the car and up and down the steps. Staff members are positioned in the halls to help guide your child to the proper classroom or to your car. Use the luggage tags the Teachers give you at the class visitation so that it can be put on your child's tote bag to help in this process. Please also keep the large safety pin on the bag for notes back and forth to you.

Of course, you are invited to use the playground prior to the start of school, after 5:00 p.m. on week days or on weekends. A child already familiar with our grounds is often excited about coming back for school.

We have included other brief information about the start of the school year in this mailing. We hope that you will take a few minutes to read it over and become familiar with Geneva's practices. The office will be open every day except during the week of August 8 and will reopen on August 15. Please feel free to contact us should you have additional questions or concerns.

Each year, the school and our wonderful GPA sponsor a Welcome Back Social and Celebration in September for all Geneva students, graduates, and their families. This year, we will have our celebration on Friday, September 9, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Come meet your child's Teaching Team, and enjoy pizza and popsicles as you meet other parents and their children. This is always a fun evening.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and your young scholars as we work together to provide a great program this year. On behalf of the entire staff, welcome to our 51st year of *encouraging a lifelong love of learning* at Geneva Day School, a Maryland Green School, and the “Best Preschool 2012 and 2014” as voted by readers of *Bethesda Magazine!*

Very truly yours,

Suzanne Funk
Director

Enclosures:

School Calendar

Parent Information for the Start of the School Year
Social

Parent Coffee Information

School Directory Ad Solicitation

Email Address Request

Interest and Talent Questionnaire

Lunch Bunch Registration Forms

Fall 2016 Enrichment Class Brochure

Invitations to First Day Coffees and Welcome Back

Carpool Map, Turning Left Route Reminder

Substitute Teacher Recruitment

Class List

Modified Class and Visitation Week Schedule

Letter from GPA President

Brief Parent Information for the Start of the Geneva School Year 2016-2017

Modified Class and Visitation Schedule for the Week of August 29

Your child's Teacher has developed a modified schedule for visitations or mini-classes during the week of August 29. For young 2s, this will be a short meeting with the Teaching Team, and opportunity to see the classroom, make a name tag, and get excited about some of the new toys and books. For 3s and 4s, this will be a short visitation and/or a shorter school day, perhaps with half the class, to become acquainted with the staff and room, and to also make a name tag. For Kindergarten, there will be an orientation visit on Thursday and Friday, August 25 or 26, with half-day classes to start the week of August 29, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. (carpool at 8:50 – 9:10 and 11:45-12:00). The regular, full day class for all students will be the Tuesday after Labor Day, September 6, with carpool and Lunch Bunch also beginning then.

During your class visits, Teachers will distribute information packets which will include an updated class list, your carpool number, and other school information. The Parent Handbook will be posted on-line and available for review in the office. Please refer to the Welcome Letter from your Teacher and the schedule for your child's class visit, which are included at the end of this packet.

Should this schedule not be convenient for you, please contact the office after August 15, from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and we will reschedule your time. If your child will be on vacation during this period, s/he may come to school a little earlier on September 6 or 7, the first full days of school, to meet the staff.

School Hours

Beginning Tuesday, September 6, all classes will be in full session at the regular times, and carpool and Lunch Bunch will also begin. Morning arrival is 8:50-9:15 a.m., and afternoon arrival is 12:15-12:30 p.m. Morning pick-up is 11:30-11:45 a.m., and afternoon pick-up is 2:45-3:00 p.m. Enrichment Classes will begin Tuesday, September 15.

Please observe and honor arrival and dismissal times each day. This makes it easier for your child and others to transition successfully into class. When you arrive on time, your child is welcomed into the classroom and can begin activities with other children. When you arrive late, activities may already be in progress, teaching staff are not able to spend time greeting your child, and important opening activities may be missed. If your child is late, please remember to sign in on the appropriate clip board in the school lobby.

Please hold questions and conversations with Teachers until the end of the school day. This practice allows staff to attend to the immediate needs of students, and begin interactions and teaching right away. All Teachers welcome e-mail, and their addresses are on Class Lists. Though Teachers will be friendly and cordial, they want to begin their program right away.

Health and Emergency Forms and Concerns

The Maryland State Department of Health requires that all enrolled students have a completed Health Inventory and an Immunization Form on file prior to the beginning of each school year. These forms must be signed by a licensed physician. In addition, a current Emergency Release Form must also be on file prior to the start of school.

These forms are available on our website. We request that you return them to the school office no later than August 1, and that you keep the school informed of any changes or additions during the year. If you have not already returned these forms, please do so immediately. No child will be admitted to school unless all three of these forms are completed and on file in the office.

As you already know, school personnel do not administer drugs of any kind to children. Only emergency medications, such as Epipens, inhalers, or nebulizers, may be administered as you and your child's licensed physician have directed on a written Medication Authorization Form, copies of which are available from the office or the website. Please bring appropriate medicines and directives to the office, so that we can properly log them in and notify staff. All medications must be in the original labeled container from the pharmacy and will be properly stored in class cabinets away from children.

Other School and Specialized Service Reports

If your child has been enrolled in another private preschool or specialized programs or therapies, including MCPS Infants and Toddlers or Child Find programs, Geneva must have copies of IPSPs or IEPs and the most recent progress reports from those programs. Teachers will design classroom experiences that reflect the goals and strategies from those programs. Please make a copy and share it with your Teacher or bring it to school so we can make a copy here.

Peanut Free School

Geneva is a "Peanut Free School," so no peanuts or peanut products are permitted. Please consider soy, almond, cashew or other nut butters for sandwich spreads.

Healthy Snacks and Lunches

Geneva recognizes the importance of providing healthy food choices for snacks and tries to offer fresh fruits and vegetables frequently. The school strongly suggests that personal lunches and birthday treats be healthy, too. Non-food treats are other possibilities. Please discuss special celebration arrangements with your child's Teacher so that consideration can be made for allergies and dietary preferences of others.

Carpool System

Geneva uses an optional, but highly recommended, Carpool System for drop-off and pick-up, which begins this year on Tuesday, September 6. You will be assigned and given two carpool numbers during the Visitation and Mini-Class Week. Additional copies may be requested through the office. The carpool number can be displayed on the dash or visor of your car, and held up for reading by the staff at the time of pick-up. This number is used both in the carpool

line and inside the building. Be sure to read the back of your carpool number for other specific directions.

The entrance to the carpool line is from the Seven Locks Road driveway and begins around the corner at the side door of the school by the long, green awning. Please refer to the enclosed map to acquaint yourself with the direction and movement of the line. For Kindergarten, however, their line begins outside the Learning Cottage with entrance from the Seven Locks Road driveway, as well.

Geneva is always concerned about the safety and security of children. Carpool numbers may seem impersonal, but they allow staff, including substitutes not familiar with all students, to be certain that children are released only to appropriate and authorized adults either from carpool or from the hall. Should a carpool number be lost or forgotten, a new number can be issued by the office. Temporary pick-up slips may also be obtained in the office.

During dismissal, if a Geneva staff member observes that a vehicle in carpool does not have a safety seat or booster seat for transporting a child home, the staff member will request that the adult park the car and come into the office. The adult will be asked if it is possible to return home to pick up a safety seat before transporting the child, or to sign a statement indicating that s/he is taking full responsibility for transporting the child and releasing the school from any liability if a safety seat is not available.

Arrival

When you use carpool, there is no need to get out of your car. For arrival, staff will open doors, unbuckle seatbelts, assist students getting out of cars, and walk children holding hands to the steps where they are greeted and ushered by other staff to their classroom. All children are expected to carry their own tote bags and lunch. This is a good practice to promote independence and gross motor skills.

After arrival is over, part of the parking lot is blocked off by large, orange traffic cones. This is done to protect children as they walk to and from the playground. If you come to school during non-carpool times, park in open spots and do not drive around or past the cones, please.

Dismissal

For dismissal, staff will read your carpool number while you are in the carpool line, identify and call your student, walk him/her to the car, and be certain that the child is seated in a car seat. Again, please do not get out of your car. Though staff will not buckle in children, you can pull over to a parking space on the other side of the parking lot to buckle in your young child safely; older students can buckle themselves. If your child's seat is on the far side of the car, it is expected that the child can get into the car, step over and into his/her own car seat. All occupied seats MUST have belts fastened BEFORE leaving the Geneva property.

If someone other than a parent picks up your child on a regular basis, please be sure that a Note of Authorization is on file in the office. If someone other than a parent or authorized adult is

going to take your child home on a one-time basis, for a play date or after school event, please send in a written note or call the office authorizing this arrangement at the beginning of the school session.

Driving Safety Concerns

Every year, we experience some driving and parking incidents. Please, please drive slowly and carefully when on school property. Please turn off your car engine if you are waiting in carpool for the line to begin. When the line does move, either for drop-off or pick-up, please conclude cell phone conversations and please do not use your phone at all. Safety is a first priority, and we do not want to risk “close calls” because attention is diverted. Thank you for understanding and respecting these requests.

A continuing Geneva practice is to hold hands of young children as they walk (not run!) across the parking lot. Please set the example now so that this is an on-going expectation. Thanks to those of you who already do this on a regular basis.

Please be very careful of cars on either side of you when you park, especially when you are opening doors on the parking lot, and when children are getting in and out of your car. Watch feet and keys sticking out as you walk between cars, too, so that they do not scratch other vehicles.

Please do not turn left onto Seven Locks from the Geneva parking or from Goya Drive. When traffic is heavy, it can be very unsafe. Instead, we suggest:

Turn right onto Goya Drive,
Turn right onto Greenleaf Avenue,
Turn left at the stop sign onto Fontaine Street,
Turn right onto Gainsborough Road, and
Follow to traffic signal and turn left onto Seven Locks Road.

Walking In

Though you are strongly encouraged to use the Carpool System for drop-off and pick-up, there may be times when you may want to walk into the school building to bring or pick up your child. Enter the school property by the Goya Road entrance and park at the far end of the parking lot on the left. Entry into the building is allowed only through the main school lobby. Please be mindful of carpool, crossing at the crosswalks, and always hold your child’s hand.

Pick-up from the morning session is at 11:30-11:45 a.m. from the school lobby. Please give the staff your carpool number and your child will be fetched from the dismissal line. We respectfully request that you not walk into the Open Classroom during this period, as this is distracting for children in the Lunch Bunch Program.

Pick-up at the end of the school day is at 2:45-3:00 p.m. inside the building in the Open Classroom by the door to the kitchen. After all students are dismissed from the Open Classroom,

please form a line at that door with your carpool number and show it to the staff member on duty. If you do not have a number with you, you must stop by the office to pick up a temporary pick-up slip. Your child will be called from the dismissal hall and assisted, as appropriate, to walk down the steps to meet you. Please remain in the Open Classroom area to pick up your child, as there is no room for additional adults in the dismissal hallway.

When you walk with your child to or from class, please allow him/her to carry his/her own tote bag and lunch box. This is an important activity to promote individual responsibility and gross motor skills.

We respectfully request that children not play in the Open Classroom when activities are occurring in that space, especially in the loft area. Thank you for being considerate of such activities as the Lunch Bunch Program, beginning of the school day, and Enrichment Classes.

Lunch Bunch Program

The All-Day and Kindergarten classes are in session during lunch, so they eat in their classrooms with their own teaching staff.

Geneva offers a supervised optional lunch program for the convenience of parents of children attending half-day sessions who are at least 3 years old, and who demonstrate appropriate eating manners. Children must be able to sit at a table for the lunch period, and understand and practice good table manners. Children who “forget manners” may be asked to learn them at home first so that they can practice them later at school.

The fee for supervision during lunch is \$10.00 per day. The Lunch Bunch Program runs from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., with pick-up from Carpool or dismissal to an Enrichment Class at 12:15 p.m.

The Lunch Bunch Program will begin this year on Tuesday, September 6. If you would like your child to stay for the supervised lunch, please register him/her on the enclosed Lunch Registration Form and include a check for supervision for the appropriate number of days. Please do not include payment with the monthly tuition check. No refunds are made if the child is absent or if the school is cancelled.

Students may bring their own lunch, which the school will supplement with 1% low-fat milk. Water, of course, is always available. A catered lunch may also be ordered in advance, as indicated on the enclosed Catered Lunch Registration Form.

Before and After School Care Program

Geneva families are offered the opportunity to extend their child’s school day at the beginning and/or end of their educational program. Before Care is available anytime between 8:00-9:00 a.m., and After Care is between 3:00-6:00 p.m. The fee for this program is \$10.00 per hour, and arrangements can be made in advance with the school office.

Enrichment Classes

Geneva offers many wonderful after-school Enrichment Classes for your children. Some are offered at 12:15-1:00 p.m., after the morning session and lunch, while others are offered after school, from 3:00-3:45 p.m. Pickup from each class is from the school lobby or outside the Founders' Room upstairs in the Narthex.

A copy of the Fall Enrichment Class Schedule is enclosed, with activities ranging from languages and music, to sports, drama, and 4s Enrichment. If you would like your child to participate, please submit a registration form and payment soon, as classes are limited in size and some fill up quickly.

Tote Bags Available

We request that every child bring a tote bag to school with first and last names clearly marked on the outside, and with the child's class luggage tag attached. Tote bags help children keep their personal possessions together. We have found that briefcases and backpacks are too cumbersome and often destroy precious artwork. The school suggests using a Geneva tote bag instead, which is made of sturdy canvas, with blue or pink trim, and is just the right size for little folks. It may be purchased in the office for a fee of \$15.00. These bags are preferred for all classes and required for all All-Day and Kindergarten students.

Back-To-School Night

Every fall, Geneva and the Geneva Parents' Association sponsor a Back-To-School Night. Parents attend a class meeting with the child's Teaching Team, and then an all-school meeting in the church sanctuary to meet other staff, members of the Board of Directors, and the Geneva Parents' Association President and volunteers. This year's meeting is planned for **Wednesday, September 14**. The All-School Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., and Class Meetings will be either 6:30 or 7:30 p.m., depending on whether your child's session is in the morning or afternoon. Watch for more information from your child's Teacher.

We hope that this early information about Geneva is helpful to you. Please feel free to contact the school office should you have other questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you to make this another great year for your child, our 51st year of *encouraging a lifelong love of learning!*

Future Dates:

Week of August 29	Parent-Child visitations and/or mini classes Kindergarten in half-day sessions, 9:00-11:45 a.m.
September 6 & 7	First full days of school with Lunch Bunch and carpool beginning Parent Coffees at 9:15 and 12:30 on both days
September 9	Welcome Back Social, 5:30-7:00 p.m. outside
September 12	Enrichment Classes begin
September 14	Back-To-School Night, all-school meeting at 7:00 p.m. with class meetings at 6:30 or 7:30 p.m.