**St. Joan of Arc School**

**Preschool Handbook**

**2019-2020**



**Philosophy**

St. Joan of Arc Preschool program welcomes children of all abilities and backgrounds into an environment in which each student is empowered to value his/her unique gifts. Available resources are utilized to enrich curious minds and develop individual interests. Students are engaged in a safe and nurturing setting which helps them to reach their full potential intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. Teachers are certified and seek continued professional development to ensure best practices. Sharing of various cultures is achieved through positive family involvement and fostering awareness of the global society in which we live.

**Hours and Fees**

Students in St. Joan of Arc Preschool program attend school according to the yearly calendar published in June of the previous school year. Students may enter the building at 8:00AM. Students arriving after 8:10AM will be marked TARDY. The dismissal bell rings at 3:10PM. Students will be escorted to the parking lot by their teacher and released to a designated adult. The tuition is the same for children in Preschool through Grade 8 and can be found on the school website <http://www.school.stjoanarc.org>

**Accreditation and Adherence to Maryland State Department of Education**

St. Joan of Arc School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement having met the requirements established by the AdvancEd Accreditation Commission.

St. Joan of Arc Preschool participates in MD Excels, a quality rating and improvement system that awards ratings from 1 to 5 to child care and early education programs based on nationally recognized standards and best practices. We have achieved the highest rating of 5.

St. Joan of Arc Preschool adheres to the Code of Maryland Regulations Title 13A State Board of Education, Subtitle 17 Child Care—Letters of Compliance and has been awarded a letter of compliance. The full text of these regulations can be found in the classroom or online at <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/12/subtitle_17_loc_comar_online.pdf>

Parentscan find the “Parents Guide to Regulated Child Care” at<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/parentbrochuremsdedecember2007.pdf>

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of St. Joan of Arc School not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin in its educational programs, admissions policies, employment, and general policies.

**Preschool Inclusion Policy**

St. Joan of Arc School welcomes children of all abilities into their Preschool program. The curriculum is based upon the development of the whole child. There is a balance of teacher-directed and self-selected activities which revolve around specific themes or units. Center time is scheduled to allow for small group activity and re-teaching. Age-appropriate, domain-based activities are planned and implemented on a daily basis. Information obtained from children with an IEP/IFSP is taken into consideration when plans are developed and written. We also welcome children of all ethnicities and celebrate their diversity by incorporating various customs and language into daily routines.

At the beginning of the school year, parents complete a parent questionnaire which recognizes the child's likes and dislikes as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Parent/Teacher conferences are offered twice a year to update these forms and discuss student progress. Ongoing assessment both formally and informally is completed and the information is compiled to assist with planning as well as student observations.

**St. Joan of Arc Preschool Transition Protocol**

In order to ensure a smooth transition from home to school, incoming students will participate in an Orientation. Prior to the start of school, students will come in with their parents to meet their teacher and visit their classroom.

 In order to ensure a smooth transition between classrooms, teachers will provide the upcoming year's teacher with your child's Progress Report and Brigance results. Children moving up to Kindergarten will also participate in a visit to the Kindergarten classroom to familiarize him/her with the next grade level.

If your child will be leaving our program and attending another school, we will supply your new school with your child's records after we receive a "Release of Records" permission form.

**Students with Disabilities and/or Special Health Care Needs**

Once documentation of a disability or special health care need has been received and reviewed by the Student Advisory Team (SAT) a Student Advocacy Plan is put into place. This plan addresses whatever special accommodations are needed for the child. The plan is then shared with the parents and other involved parties, i.e., school administration, child’s teachers, guidance counselor, and resource teacher. The plan transitions with the child to the next grade level. Upon parent permission or request, the Student Advocacy Plan is shared with the next school.

Health care needs are documented with the school office and shared with the child's teacher. Complete health records are sent to the child's next school.

**Child Assessment and Developmental Progress**

Student information gathered from the Brigance Developmental Screening tool and Progress Reports (which are distributed per trimester), is kept in each child's file. Teachers' of the student's next grade level, have access to these files to familiarize themselves with their new students and for planning purposes. Parents of students who are leaving our school can request transcripts (developmental checklists/progress reports) to be released and sent to the new school.

**Arrival Procedures**

Arrive on Plater Street lining up close to the curb – NO CARS ARE TO BE PARKED AT THE CURB – EITHER ALONG THE BUILDING OR PARKING LOT.

Turn into alley, but do not discharge students until you make a LEFT TURN into the DROP-OFF ZONE which begins at the exit of the parking lot going out to Edmund Street and ends at the Plater Street entrance.

Students will exit the vehicles on the passenger side and will be helped by safety patrol students to proceed safely in file to the small blacktop area and join their class line until the bell rings at 8:00 a.m.

AT NO TIME SHOULD A PARENT EXIT THE CAR IN THE DROP OFF ZONE.

All traffic will exit the parking lot onto Edmund Street. PLEASE DO NOT PASS OTHER CARS IN THE DROP OFF ZONE AS THIS POSES A DANGER TO STUDENTS.

*If a parent wants to walk his or her child to the line and wait, he/she may make a left turn into the parking lot; park on the side of the lot opposite the Drop-Off Zone (left side); and walk with the child to the small lot.* ***The parent is responsible for the child’s safety until the students enter the school.***

**Dismissal Procedures**

Vehicles are to turn right to enter the parking lot through the alley entrance on Plater Street only. Vehicles will be lined up in rows beginning at the residential side of the lot. (Parents are asked not to park in the lot before 2:55p.m. as physical education classes are conducted on this lot.)

All families will receive 2 placards to be placed in the right front passenger side of the windshield of the vehicle picking up the student(s) in that family. The names on the placards of the vehicles parked in the first row will be communicated to the office, and those students will be called for dismissal.

Students will proceed directly to their vehicles. The second row will line up in the lobby as soon as the first row begins to exit. Students will be escorted to the next row of waiting vehicles when it is safe to do so.

The rows will be dismissed through the Edmund Street exit. ALL CARS MUST EXIT WHEN DIRECTED TO DO SO. If your child is not yet in the car, you must exit the parking lot and reenter it through the Plater Street entrance.

The faculty and Safety Patrol will be directing traffic.

Since no child may be left unattended, students not picked up 15 minutes after dismissal time will be taken to Extended Care and parents will be charged for at least one hour according to the Extended Care fees.

**Inclement Weather Policy for Early Dismissal, Late Opening, and Closure**

St. Joan of School follows the policies and decisions of the Harford County Public School System regarding early dismissals, late openings, and closures due to weather. Information regarding late openings, early dismissals, or school cancellations will be announced over the radio and on various television stations. Parents will also be notified of delays and closings via the Alert Now

communication system either by phone call, text message, and/or email. St. Joan of Arc follows all decisions of Harford County Public Schools.

**Preschool Uniform Requirements
SUMMER** August through October 31st and April 1st through the last day of school

* any navy blue elastic waist shorts
* SJA logo white short-sleeve polo shirt (Flynn & O’Hara)
* Any navy blue elastic waist PE shorts for PE days
* SJA gray PE t-shirt (Flynn & O’Hara) for PE days
* solid white, navy or black rubber sole shoes with VELCRO closure (no high tops)
* white crew socks (extend over the ankle)

**WINTER** November 1st through March 31st

* any navy blue elastic waist pants
* SJA logo white long or short-sleeve polo shirt
* SJA logo or solid navy-blue sweater or cardigan
* any navy blue elastic waist sweatpants for PE
* PE days—SJA logo gray PE t-shirt
* PE days—SJA navy blue sweatshirt
* solid white, navy, or black rubber sole shoes with VELCRO closure (no high tops)
* white crew socks (extend over the ankle)

\*For the safety of students, tie shoes are not allowed at any time.

\*No belts should be worn.

\*No long sleeve shirts may be worn under short sleeve shirts.

\*No leggings may be worn under shorts.

**Developmental Screening and Assessment Policy**

Maryland State Department of Education has implemented State regulations for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. All children up to Kindergarten entry attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs will undergo a developmental screening conducted within ninety days of enrollment. St. Joan of Arc School will utilize the Brigance 3 Early Childhood screen III, 3-5 years.

In addition to the Brigance 3, data gathering tools include parent feedback forms which parents/guardians use to record input about their child's skills and behaviors. These forms are distributed at the time of the screening. Teachers complete progress reports, which are distributed three times per school year. The skills assessed reflect sound growth and developmental expectations of each age. Student observations are conducted throughout the year. These observations (narrative, anecdotal, and/or checklists) are used in conjunction with each child's progress report to help with lesson planning and remediation.

**Daily Schedule**

The developmental needs of young children are considered when planning and implementing a daily schedule. We take into consideration the activity level of 4 and 5-year-old students, the time needed to teach curriculum standards, as well as the overall development of each child. The day is structured to alternate between student selected and teacher selected activities as well as between structured and unstructured activities. We believe the young child learns best through play based experiences therefore we offer two times during the day for students to play, interact, and learn at their own pace for extended periods of time. We also gather together as a large group or in small groups several times a day for direct instruction. The beginning of our year looks different than the end of our year when the students’ ability to focus and concentrate for longer periods of time increases. Students will meet with other teachers and the teacher aide for music, PE, art, library, and Spanish each week. The daily schedule will be posted at our classroom door as well as on our Pre-K webpage on the school website.

**Healthy Habits**

**Preschool Nutrition and Food Policies**

**Nutrition** – Children bring one small healthy snack each day such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, whole-grains, etc. to be eaten at snack time, about 10:00AM. Children also bring a water bottle for snack time and to use throughout the day as well. (No juice is allowed at snack time.)

**Lunch**

Children bring their lunches from home. Students in grades PreK-8 eat their lunches in their classroom. Students are responsible for the cleanliness of their classrooms. Students are not permitted to leave the school premises to purchase their lunch, nor to order in. Families may purchase a hot or cold lunch and side options through Good Taste Catering.

<https://goodtastecatering.boonli.com/login> Orders must be received 7 days in advance.

To support healthy eating habits, we will monitor lunches to ensure children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals. If there are any concerns, we will contact you. Healthy food choices are taught through lessons and example. Parents are asked to send fruits and/or vegetables in their child’s lunch. Our policy is that the sandwich or main course must be finished before snacks or “treats” can be eaten.

Any refrigerated food will be kept refrigerated until snack or lunch time. This includes cheeses, yogurts, lunch meats, and dairy. Therefore, any foods that will require refrigeration should be labeled with your child’s name. Please do not send foods that must be heated. Putting heated foods in a thermos is a good way to serve warm food for lunch.

NO food is prepared on the premises; therefore, no extra food is available for purchase. There are no refunds for missed meals. Students who do not want to order the special meal should bring their regular meal from home on that day. If a child forgets their lunch, we will contact the parent and they will drop off their child’s lunch in the school office. **Fast food lunches are not permitted to be brought to school for a student.**

**Food Safety** – For the safety of your child, please keep in mind that children this age can easily choke on foods that are not in small enough pieces. The most common choking hazards are: hot dogs, marshmallows and marshmallow fluff, cheese or meat chunks, globs of peanut butter, hard gooey or sticky candy, some raw vegetables, whole olives, potato or corn chips, sausages, whole grapes, raisins, popcorn, chewing gum, lollipops, nuts, pretzels, life savers, and cough drops. Please cut up all foods into small sizes that are long and narrow. For instance, cut grapes or olives lengthwise not crosswise, cut carrots into thin, long strips not little circles, and consider whether your child has had many opportunities to eat certain foods with you before sending them in their lunches or snacks. Also, with the rise of life threatening allergies, we ask that any food sent in for parties is allergen-free and that a complete list of ingredients is provided. If you are providing a snack for your child’s birthday, please schedule this with the classroom teacher ahead of time so arrangements can be made for any student who has an allergy. We want all students included in any celebration we have.

**Sleep** - Preschool children aged 3-5 years old require approximately 10-13 hours of sleep in each 24-hour period. To ensure your child has the best school experience possible, it is recommended that your child get the majority of that sleep at night. Providing for an early bedtime at home gives your child the opportunity to get the required amount of sleep they need. Our schedule provides a 30-minute rest period but allowances are made for a child who may need more rest, however they may miss out on other activities. Arriving to school well rested sets your child up for a great school day!

**Rest Time** – Students are given the opportunity to rest for 30 minutes in the afternoon each day. The lights are turned off, soft music is played and all students are expected to stay quietly on their rest mat. Bathroom use is allowed during this time. You will purchase a cloth rest mat that has a pillow and blanket attached that your child will keep at school to use each day. It will be sent home every Friday for you to wash and dry. Please remember to return it on Monday each week so your child has a rest mat. In addition to the rest mat, your child may bring in a small stuffed animal (8 inches or smaller) to hold at rest time only. It may not make noise, light up or create a distraction for others. Any students who fall asleep are left sleeping as long as they need or until the class needs to leave the room for an activity outside the classroom or for dismissal.

**Independence** - This is an optimal age for your child to learn new skills. Please allow them to learn how to be independent with self-care skills such as working zippers, cleaning up after themselves, opening lunch containers, putting their shoes on and taking them off, getting their jacket on and off, unpacking and packing their book bag, just to name a few. Your child wants to be independent and this helps in the classroom with smooth transitions.

**Acute Illness guidelines** – At times it is necessary for students to not be in class when they are contagious or have an illness that is preventing them from participating comfortably in class. Any child with a fever that is at or above 100 degrees orally or 101 degrees temporally (forehead scan) may not return to school until 24 hours after the fever has subsided without medication. Any child with diarrhea or vomiting may not return to school until after 24 hours has passed since the last episode. Any child with impetigo/scabies may not return to school until treatment has been started.

**Injuries** – all bumps, scrapes and injuries will be recorded. Parents will be notified whenever their child has a head injury.

**Managing and Maintaining Health Information: Parental Responsibilities**
Parents must complete and submit a Health Inventory as required by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care, to St. Joan of Arc School. This inventory will be provided upon enrollment and supplies important information regarding all health issues unique to the child.

* A Medication Administration Authorization form must be completed, signed, and submitted by the child’s health care provider in order for medications to be administered by a licensed MedTech in the school office.
* Parents must provide accurate information about the child’s medical status and condition.
* Parents are responsible for notifying St. Joan of Arc School of any changes in health care including provider treatment goals and medications at all times.
* Parents must supply all prescribed medication and/or medication delivery devices.

**Screen Time**

Students in the Preschool classroom use iPads and computers during a specified time or activity based upon the learning outcomes of the day. Educational movies or videos are used when appropriate to meet a learning objective and to support a lesson. The use of passive technology is limited to 30 minutes per week. Students have access to iPads, one class computer, and the interactive whiteboard during center time or whole group lessons for interactive technology activities. Online resources include websites such as GoNoodle, Scholastic, Starfall, ABCya, PBS Kids, and Sesame Street online.

**Preschool Physical Fitness Policy**

Childhood obesity has tripled in the last 20 years. Preschool-aged children who are inactive risk becoming overweight in the future. The U.S. Surgeon General says daily exercise is the key to being fit. Implementing physical activity in the preschool setting can increase a student's fitness and motor skills.

St. Joan of Arc Preschool has adopted MSDE's recommendations for physical activity. Students who attend full day are given two 25-30-minute physical activity times each day, which include physical education classes weekly. Weather permitting, all unstructured/gross muscle play is outside. When weather is an issue, similar activities are provided in the classroom. Children do not go outside in extreme weather or temperatures. However, the children do go outside when it is cold, therefore, winter coats, hats, and mittens must be brought to school each day during our cold winter months. At no time is physical activity withheld from preschool students.

**Preschool Communication Policy**

Preschool students will receive a St. Joan of Arc Take Home Folder at the beginning of the school year. Please make sure your child's folder is in his/her tote bag each day. Feel free to put notes to the teacher in this folder. Email is also utilized to communicate with families. Any email message from a parent will be responded to in a timely manner (within 48 hours).The St. Joan of Arc School website will have updated and current information <http://www.school.stjoanarc.org> To access information pertinent to preschool, click on Parents in the top right, Teacher Sites. A monthly preschool newsletter will be posted on this page each month. Progress reports are distributed three times throughout the school year. Parent Conferences will be offered in November and in the spring. Conference requests by parents will be honored at any time throughout the year.

**St. Joan of Arc Preschool Professional Development Policy**

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Archdiocese of Baltimore to work in a Catholic School which requires a current MSDE teaching certification, the staff of St. Joan of Arc Preschool participates in the Maryland State Department of Education's Credentialing Program. This program recognizes, “individual child care providers who increase their qualifications beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations.” The St. Joan of Arc Preschool teacher is credentialed at level 6, the highest level.

Preschool staff will receive continued training throughout the school year in *The Core of Knowledge* which is defined by MSDE as “theories and practices that are essential for individuals working with children in family child care programs. It is divided into six major areas: Child Development, Curriculum, Health, Safety & Nutrition, professionalism, Special Needs, and Community.

**Preschool Discipline Policies**

St. Joan of Arc School strives to develop responsible, courteous, self-disciplined individuals whose pride in themselves, their parents, their school, and their community is reflected in their behavior. The development of such young people requires a consistent practice of thoughtful, responsible behavior during these formative years. Students are made aware that they are an integral part of the faith community and that their actions affect themselves as well as the entire community. The ultimate purpose is to develop true Christian character and a sense of responsibility: to establish an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence; and to protect the welfare of the individual, as well as the school community.

St. Joan of Arc School uses Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) which is based on the belief that all students can exhibit appropriate behavior. PBIS is a framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. Positive behavior is taught, rewarded, and supported at St. Joan of Arc School.

Expected Student Behavior

At St. Joan of Arc School, Positive Behavior is demonstrated by the following expectations:

 ***Step up to Respect***

***Jump to Responsibility***

***Accelerate to Leadership***

Respect, Responsibility, and Leadership are defined in all school settings and school-related activities. These expectations are communicated to students throughout the course of the school year. PBIS expectations regarding Respect, Responsibility and Leadership are posted throughout the school and referred to when giving verbal and written reinforcement for good behavior. Students receive individual, class, and school wide rewards for demonstrating respectful, responsible, and leadership behaviors.

In conjunction with PBIS, the class uses Dojo Classroom to track positive behaviors throughout the day. Dojo points are given for making positive choices throughout the day. Students earn those points by following directions, using kind words, participating, being persistent, cleaning up, setting a good example, sharing, and helping others. When a student earns a specified number of Dojo points in a day, they receive a Class Dojo star for the day. Each time they accumulate a specified number of stars, they earn a choice from the prize box. Each trimester, the class can earn a school-wide award by being a Dojo Champion with an average of 3 times a week.

 If a student has chosen to not make a positive choice, they are given two positive choices from which to choose. For instance, if a child doesn’t line up when asked to, they are given the choice to either get in the line to walk or hold my hand to walk to our next activity. If they are not using a center properly, they are offered two different centers to play in until they remember how to use the original center properly. Four-year olds are still young and learning how to make positive choices, how to use words to express themselves, and how to function in a group setting. We strive to help them communicate their feelings in a positive manner.

**Local Community Resources available to families:**Child Find
Harford County Public Schools/Hickory Elementary School
2100 Conowingo Road

Bel Air, MD 21014
410.638.4386
410.638.4387
www.hcps.org

The Family Tree
Grove Presbyterian Church
50 E. Bel Air Avenue, Suite 203
Aberdeen, MD 21001
410.272.7425
410.272.7427 | Fax
1.800.243.7337 | Parenting Helpline
info@familytreemd.org
[www.familytreemd.org](http://www.familytreemd.org)

Grandparents Support Group

Bel Air United Methodist Church
Fellowship Room 202
21 Linwood Avenue
Bel Air, MD 21014
410.838.5181

MD Poison Center

1-800-222-1222
[www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com)

Partners in Success

Harford County Public Schools

Department of Special Education
253 Paradise Road
Aberdeen, MD 21001
410.273.5579

410.273.5599 | Fax
partners.success@hcps.org

Summer Meals for Kids Program
Community Action Agency
1321 B Woodbridge Station WayEdgewood, MD 21040
410.612.9909

MRDC Head Start (Maryland Rural Development Corporation)
410.620.7058 Ext 17
www.mrdc.net/kids.html

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
Harford County Health Department
1321 Woodbridge Station Way
Edgewood, MD 21040

410.612.1776
410.612.9182 | Fax
www.fns.usda.gov/wic

Harford County Public Library

Winter Reading link

 [http://www.HCPLonline.beanstack.org](http://www.hcplonline.beanstack.org)
Aberdeen branch
21 Franklin St.
Aberdeen, MD 21001
410-273-5608
<http://hcplonline.org/aberdeen.php>

YMCA of Harford County
101 Walter Ward Blvd.
Abingdon, MD 21009
410-679-9622

<https://ymaryland.org/locations/familycenterys/wardharfordcounty>

Anita C Leight Estuary Center

700 Otter Point Rd,
Abingdon, MD 21009
410-612-1688<http://www.otterpointcreek.org/>

Arena Club
2304 Churchville Rd,
Bel Air, MD 21015
410-734-7300
<http://www.thearenaclub.com/>

Department of Social Services DSS Harford

Mary E. W. Risteau DC/MSC

2 South Bond Street / Suite 300

Bel Air, MD 21014

410-836-4700

**Handbook and Discipline Policy Agreement**

I have read and understand the St. Joan of Arc Preschool Handbook and Discipline Policy. I understand I have access to the Parent Guide to Regulated Child Care upon request or online.

Child’s Name

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Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

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Parent/Legal Guardian Name Printed

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Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_