

**Silver Spring Day School
Parent Handbook
2019-2020**

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Philosophy Statement

At SSDS, we believe that children are capable, competent, and full of wonder. We believe it is our primary responsibility to help each individual child reach his or her greatest potential. This begins with building a solid set of social-emotional skills, because we know that the ability to relate to others and to care for and be confident in ourselves is the bedrock upon which all other success lies. SSDS allows each child the opportunity to explore the world around them, building meaningful friendships, and make discoveries about and by themselves. This fosters a strong sense of independence and social awareness. Our goal is to engage and guide children into becoming life-long learners.

Children come to our school at a time when their minds are developing at a rate unparalleled by any other. It is our responsibility to maximize this development by providing opportunities which will expand their ability to think, reason, analyze, relate, and understand. We believe that learning occurs through play and is a process of construction, growth, and reflection. Children learn best by actively exploring the world with the intentional support of the adults in their lives.

At SSDS, we believe in the value of families participating in the school environment – creating a community and a partnership of learning amongst faculty, children, and parents. It is our mission to jointly create an environment that is worthy of young children’s exploration: an environment in which children will encounter many questions to ponder, many materials with which to experiment, many opportunities to experience, and many relationships to build. By providing this type of content rich environment, we facilitate children’s ability to create their own understandings, and to add to them over time, thereby constructing their knowledge. By including our families in the daily life of our school, we enable children to place this knowledge within a broader community context.

Curriculum Goals

Our Curriculum at SSDS is inspired by numerous theories of early childhood development and education:

Jean Piaget: Cognitive-Development Theory/Constructivism

In 1963, Jean Piaget published a study of cognition which proposes that children must take an active role in their own development. Piaget further demonstrates that interaction with the environment and a child’s cognitive organization of experiences results in intelligence. Specifically, this theory emphasizes the fact that a child’s knowledge is constructed gradually through ongoing experiences which, over time, permit the child to develop an expanded understanding of the information gleaned from the experiences. As children grow, they assimilate new information and incorporate it into their existing structure of knowledge. In this sense, children actively construct knowledge through their experiences.

Lev Vygotsky: Vygotskian Approach

Like Piaget, Vygotsky also believed that knowledge is constructed by children themselves. Vygotsky claims that both physical and social interactions are essential for development. Proclaiming the significance of social context, Vygotsky asserts that children learn by first sharing activities with others and then by experiencing on an individual basis. He demonstrates that adults within the child’s social environment – family, school, community, and culture – must play the role of social mediator and must facilitate learning by first determining what each child actually understands. Teachers then provide instruction, intentional materials within the environment, and experiences to scaffold the child’s learning to ever increasing levels of competency.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell: Banks Street Model of Education

Mitchell created a model of education which focuses upon the education of the whole child - including the development of emotional, social, physical, and intellectual skills – through experience-based curriculum.

SSDS is committed to providing the absolute best early childhood education for young children. We understand that we are preparing children for the variety of experiences ahead of them, not only in school, but in life. Current research in early childhood education and neuroscience teaches us that the best way to do so is to focus on the simultaneous development of the whole child. It is our goal to provide opportunities and support for children's development within the domains of social-emotional, fine and gross motor, language, imaginative and cognitive skills. We do this by providing an enriching and intentional environment in which children can wonder, learn, and grow.

Social-Emotional Skills: The social-emotional growth of children is the key element of our curriculum because we know that, without strong social-emotional skills, children will not be successful in the world around them. We foster this development by building relationships amongst children and adults through warm, respectful communication and modeling. We utilize the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL) program to teach positive interaction skills. This model teaches that a strong faculty and staff, who focus on building positive relationships and environments, is the base upon which all other learning can occur. We help each child develop a strong sense of individual self-worth, and build a community which appreciates the uniqueness of each adult and child.

Physical Skills: The development of strong fine and gross motor skills is vital to many experiences children will have in their future, both in and out of school (such as sitting at a desk, playing on the playground, participating in sports, riding a bicycle, exercising, drawing, writing, and self-regulation). In our school, we support the development of fine motor skills by providing a variety of hands-on experiences including writing, drawing, cutting, clay-work, painting, and the creation of 3-dimensional art. We also provide a wide variety of sensory-rich experiences, knowing that the more surfaces children touch, the more their sensitivity to texture solidifies and the more their hand-eye coordination increases. Faculty incorporate a variety of opportunities to develop their gross motor skills throughout the day by running, jumping, climbing, skipping, dancing, climbing stairs, and hanging from the monkey bars.

Language Skills: Young children develop language skills at a remarkable rate and we provide opportunities to help them do so. We facilitate the growth of spoken language through speaking with the children and through actively encouraging them to speak with each other. We ask for their opinions, model patterns of conversation, ask them questions, and utilize descriptive language to help them begin to label items and feelings. We encourage the development of pre-literacy skills through reading to children regularly, and through making books and the discussion of books an important part of their daily experience.

Cognitive Skills: In today's world, where Google can answer any question and provide you with any fact, our primary focus is teaching children *how* to think, as opposed to telling them *what* to think. We encourage children to not only ask questions, but to help find the answers themselves. Our goal is to provide experiences in which the children have the ability to physically process information and to create connections in their minds, literally building their own knowledge.

Communication with Families

SSDS believes strongly in collaboration with families. Faculty will communicate with families on a regular basis, and in a variety of ways, about their child's experience here at SSDS. In the event that parents have questions, concerns or something to share, there are multiple ways to do so. For a brief share, drop off and pick up are great moments for a touch base. For any conversation that will take longer than a few minutes, or is of a sensitive nature, parents are asked to reach out to their teachers and schedule a time to chat. Lead and Assistant teachers on a teaching team will regularly share information with each other and, when a concern is raised, with the Executive Director as well.

In the event that a concern is not resolved while speaking with the teacher, or if a parent has a concern that they are uncomfortable bringing to the teacher, parents are always welcome to reach out to the Executive Director directly.

Every child has an individual folder outside their core classroom utilized to file important information and artwork to go home with parents. Parents are asked to check their child's folder regularly.

Formal Check-ins

We have several formal check-ins which are spread throughout the year:

- A few weeks into the school year, faculty members will reach out to each family, either by phone and/or email, with a beginning of the year check in.
- Each family will be invited to a mid-year parent teacher conference to discuss their child's progress and experience.
- Teachers will reach out to each family near the end of the year with a final check in and to look ahead to next steps together.

Enrollment in SSDS

Enrollment Agreement

By setting up a payment account with SSDS, families expressly agree to and are bound by the following terms:

- All tuition payments, including the Enrollment Fee, are non-refundable.
- The family is enrolling a specific child in SSDS for the designated school year.
- The family will comply with all policies and statements in this Handbook. SSDS reserves the right to make changes to the Handbook at any time, and it is families' responsibility to stay in compliance with these policies.
- The parent has reviewed and understands the contents of this Handbook, including responsibilities as a parent in our school.
- Compliance with SSDS policies is a condition of continued enrollment.

It is at the sole discretion of the Executive Director to determine if violation of the policies stated in this Handbook has occurred. SSDS reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any child whose family does not adhere to the policies in this Handbook.

Enrollment for the School Year

Enrollment for one school year does not guarantee enrollment for future years for this child or any siblings.

SSDS invites families to enroll in specific programs based upon the school's expectation that these programs will fill. Should a class be under enrolled, SSDS reserves the right to cancel the class. In such cases, all enrolled families will have the option to switch to another age-appropriate class, on a first-

come, first-served basis, should space be available. All families in the cancelled class who do not choose to switch, or for whom there is not space in another appropriate class, will be granted a full refund.

Enrollment Fee

Upon enrolling a child in SSDS, families must set up a family payment account and pay a non-refundable Enrollment Fee, which covers 1/5 of the total tuition due for the school year, by the return date established by SSDS in the offer letter sent by SSDS. In the event that the payment is not submitted by the return date, the Offer from SSDS will be considered withdrawn and the Child's place may be made available to other applicants. SSDS, at its sole and exclusive discretion, may accept a child's enrollment after the return date but is not obligated to do so.

Required Paperwork

Families must submit all required paperwork and online forms by the deadlines set by SSDS. SSDS will not place child in a class, and a child cannot begin school, until all required paperwork and forms have been submitted.

SSDS requests that families fully disclose all medical and developmental issues which might affect a child's participation in any aspect of SSDS in the child's Medical Authorization form and/or Registration Form. SSDS further requests that families keep SSDS apprised of any changes to their child's medical or developmental status which might impact the child's ability to participate in any aspect of SSDS. SSDS asks for this information both because it is requested on the legal documents provided by the State of Maryland, but also as a part of SSDS's commitment to collaborating with parents to set each child up with the best chance for success.

Participation Fee

Upon enrolling for the year, families select Full Participation (meaning the family is responsible for covering up to 12 days per school year in the classroom), Half Participation (meaning the family is responsible for covering up to 6 days per school year in the classroom), or Pay for Participation (meaning the family will not spend days as the 3rd adult in the classroom, but will instead support the school through this fee, the majority of which goes to cover the salaries of faculty members who will be in the classroom on the parent's behalf). SSDS reserves the right to consider a family's request to change their classroom participation status, but does not guarantee that change requests will be honored.

Activity Permission, Assumption of Risk and Release

By enrolling a child in SSDS, families actively give permission for that child to attend and participate in all aspects of SSDS's activities, including faculty supervised walks in the neighborhoods surrounding SSDS. This includes, but is not limited to, utilizing the playground equipment and both indoor and outdoor materials.

Families release SSDS, its Board, employees, and agents from all claims, liability, and damages that the family or the child may have for personal injuries or property damage resulting from the child's participation in SSDS. This release includes personal injury or property damages caused by negligence, active or passive, of SSDS, its Board, employees, and agents; however the release does not apply to liability for gross negligence, willful injury or fraud, and is not intended to release SSDS's insurers, if any, or non-agent third parties of any responsibility for any claims that may otherwise be asserted.

Tuition and Other Fees

Families must pay all fees as billed in accordance with the procedures and due dates set by SSDS. This includes:

- Tuition for Core programming
- Tuition for Early Bird and/or Extended Day programming (if applicable)
- Half In-Class Participation or Payment for Faculty Participation Fee (if applicable)

- Fees for Drop In to Early Bird and/or Extended Day (if applicable)
- Other fees assessed by SSDS

A family's obligation to pay the full amount of the tuition and other fees as described above is unconditional. No portion of the enrollment fee, tuition payments or other fees are refundable except in the specific circumstances outlined in this Handbook.

SSDS does not issue refunds or add additional days to make up for delays, cancellations, or early closures caused by weather conditions, building system concerns, or any other circumstances outside the direct control of SSDS.

No portion of tuition or fees may be applied to payment of another child's enrollment account.

SSDS requires all families to provide information to allow the school to set up automatically scheduled payments using either a credit card or an automatic bank withdrawal. All processing fees incurred by SSDS in processing payment will be passed along to the family. SSDS requires notice of at least three (3) business days to change an automatic payment. It is at the sole discretion of SSDS to make changes on shorter notice if possible.

Tuition payments, each equivalent to 1/10 of the total tuition due, will be automatically debited on:

June 5, July 5, August 5, September 5, October 5, November 5, December 5 and January 5

Parents of Children who enroll after any above-mentioned payment dates will work with the Director of Finance to establish an alternate payment plan.

Withdrawal / Removal

A child's enrollment at SSDS will only end upon

- 1- the receipt of written notification by the parent of the withdrawal of their child, or
- 2- the removal of the child from enrollment by SSDS for financial, or other reasons described in this Handbook, or at the discretion of the Director.

SSDS will cease automatic debiting of tuition payments for any payments scheduled for after the child's last day upon receipt of the written withdrawal notice. SSDS requires notice of at least five (5) business days to cancel an automatic payment. Any parent who withdraws a child less than 5 days before a scheduled payment date will be automatically charged said tuition payment as scheduled, and this payment will not be refundable.

Non-Payment

A 10% late fee per payment will be automatically debited if payments are not received when due.

If an e-check or if a credit card is declined, a \$40 fee will be assessed to the family to cover the costs incurred by SSDS.

In the event that a family does not fulfill its financial obligations to SSDS, it is at the sole discretion of the Director to agree to an alternative payment plan or to suspend child's enrollment in the school.

In the event that fees other than tuition are not paid in accordance with the schedule set forth by SSDS, SSDS reserves the right to automatically deduct payment from the account provided by the parent for regularly scheduled tuition payments. SSDS will provide two (2) business days' notice before making such a withdrawal.

Parent Participation Guidelines

By enrolling a child in SSDS, families are not only enrolling their child in a school, but they are also joining an active parent community which lies at the heart of SSDS' values. With this in mind, the

completion of participation responsibilities is an essential expectation for every SSDS family. This includes completing assigned parent jobs (a requirement for all families regardless of in-class participation status) as well as participation in the classroom for those families who select Full or Half in-classroom Participation. Participation requirements are outlined below.

Failure to honor a family's commitment to parent participation, either in the classroom or out, may result in additional fees, and potentially withdrawal from the school.

Approval to be Responsible for Children

As a parent participatory school, SSDS welcomes all families to play an active role in caring for children alongside our educators. In order to ensure the safety of our students and maintain compliance with Maryland State Law, SSDS requires that all adults supervising or caring for children at SSDS must be fingerprinted, must undergo an FBI and MD criminal history background check, must provide a completed Medical report signed by a doctor, and must complete the online SafeSchools training. In the event that anything on the background checks or medical report indicates that it is not safe for the adult to be responsible for children, said adult will not be approved for participation or to be responsible for children other than their own.

Adults who must complete the above listed requirements include, but may not be limited to adults who will be:

- choosing a HALF or FULL In-Class Participation option (at least one adult per family selecting either half or full must complete the requirements)
- volunteering or substituting in the classrooms
- assisting the class on field trips and/or driving children on field trips
- taking responsibility for SSDS students during school hours or activities

With full respect for and recognition of the fact that some SSDS families may not take on such roles, parents have the **option to opt out** of the above-mentioned requirements, with the expressed knowledge that in doing so they will not be able to engage in activities for which fingerprinting is required. Adults who only come to visit the classroom for special occasions such as birthdays or parties do not need to be fingerprinted, but may not take responsibility for any children other than their own during their visit.

Faculty are provided a list of all adults in their class community who are approved for participation. In the event that an adult arrives to participate who is not on the teacher's list, the teacher will ask said adult to go to the office to confirm their participation approval. If the adult is not approved, meaning he or she has not fulfilled all requirements listed above, the adult will not be allowed to participate in the classroom, and the family will be responsible for the cost of hiring a substitute to cover their day.

Parent Cell Phone Policy

Parent participants who bring personal cell phones to the classroom are asked to keep them out of sight during their shift except as it relates to completion of participation-related tasks. All cell phones should be kept on silent or on vibrate during the school day so that they will not disrupt the class by ringing or dinging unexpectedly.

Participants are asked not to use cell phones, including for, but not limited to, phone calls, texting, email or other internet use, during their participation shifts except in the event of an emergency, either personal or school related.

Parent Participation Supervision & Classroom Participation Expectations

Parent participants are not included in the consideration of adult-child ratios. All classrooms are staffed with SSDS Faculty sufficient to meet legal ratio requirements. Faculty should make their best

effort to limit opportunities when a parent participant would be in a situation of supervising a group of children. For example, if half the class is going to the bathroom, the group should be accompanied by a faculty member instead of, or in addition to, the parent participant.

Parent participants are responsible for helping with necessary tasks in the classroom. However, they are also there to be a part of the life of the classroom, and should be encouraged to participate in all aspects of the classroom day – both curricular and administrative. The relationship building that can happen during participation is value of SSDS.

Parent Participant Confidentiality Policy

One of the wonderful things about being a parent-participatory school is that parents who spend time in the classrooms will get to know their child's classmates very well. However, this means that parents will not only see other children at their best, but also when they struggle.

Participants are asked to respect the privacy of the children at SSDS, and not to share any reflections upon what they saw in the classroom or information they may learn about a child through their participation. Participants are asked not to provide other parents information about a student's day, other than their own. It is solely the teacher's responsibility to share information about any student's behavior or activities with the child's family.

Participants are also advised to direct any challenging behaviors to the teachers' attention unless immediate harm to a child is imminent. Participants must understand that the teachers have a wealth of confidential knowledge about the children in their classes, and utilize this knowledge to individualize their response to each child in each circumstance. What may look to a parent like favoritism, or perhaps a surprising judgement on the part of a teacher, is actually an intentional use of information about the child to best support him or her. While parents are welcome to ask questions if they feel uncomfortable, they must recognize that the answer they get will likely be a non-detailed statement along the lines of we are intentionally responding based on our knowledge of this child or this situation.

If any adult at SSDS ever witnesses behavior on the part of any other adult at SSDS which makes you concerned for the safety of any child, it is incumbent upon that adult to immediately notify the Executive Director or her deputy so action can be taken.

Parent Participant Hours of Work

Families who have signed up for Full in-class Participation should expect to participate up to 12 times per year. Families who have signed up for Half in-class Participation should expect to participate up to 6 times per year. In the event that class enrollment does not allow for Participants to cover all days in the classroom, SSDS will typically provide faculty members to be the 3rd member of the classroom teaching team for the days not covered by parent participants. In the event that class enrollment does not require participants for the maximum number of days, participants will participate in an equally pro-rated number of days.

Parent Participants are expected to arrive in their designated classroom at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day. Participants in the Pre-K classes should arrive no later than 9:00am and participants in all other classes should arrive no later than 9:15am.

Participants should plan to stay for at least 15 minutes after the end of the core school day to help the faculty clean up and shut down the classroom for the day. Participants in the Pre-K classes should plan to stay until at least 1:30 and participants in all other classes plan to stay until at least 1:45.

Schedulers are to maintain the online participation calendar and to post the participation schedule outside each classroom at least one month in advance.

Parent Participant No-Show Policy

The participation of families in our classrooms is a key aspect of our school functioning. Faculty rely upon having the third member of their team present, and make their daily plans with this in mind.

In the event that a parent knows in advance of a scheduling conflict on his or her assigned participation day, the parent must immediately reach out to the other parents in the class to arrange a participation swap with another family.

In the event of a last-minute conflict or illness which would prevent a family from participating on their assigned day, the family is required to reach out to other families in the class immediately to find someone to swap with them. SSDS recommends families reach out to other families individually and directly as this is, in our experience, the best way to find someone. If a parent is unable to find a replacement, the parent should reach out to the class Scheduler. The Scheduler may, at his or her discretion, assist in finding an emergency replacement.

It is permissible to have two participants split the day if needed.

Parents may participate in a classroom other than their child's class when covering for another family. In such cases, covering for a friend in another classroom will not count towards a participating family's days in their child's classroom. All participants must be approved for classroom participation – meaning they have successfully completed all required background checks, provided all required paperwork, and completed all required trainings.

In the event that no parent participants are able to cover for the family who has to cancel, the parent must contact the school office by 8:30am. At this point, the school will arrange to hire a substitute to assist in the classroom. The family originally assigned to participate will be assessed a \$100 per day administrative fee to cover the costs associated with covering for the absent parent. In the event that a family misses 3 participation days for which a substitute must be hired, the family will automatically forfeit their role as in-class participants and must pay the non-participation fee, in addition to the \$100 substitute reimbursement fee for each day that a substitute was hired.

Shadow Participation

SSDS requires all families who will be participating in the classrooms to have at least one participant from their family "shadow" an experienced parent participant prior to their first day participating solo.

Participation Day Parking

Parent participants in the 2s and 3s classes are asked to park in the small SSDS parking lot, across from the Woodmoor shopping center. Participants are asked to use the spots specifically designated for Parent Participants, and are welcome to enter the building through the white door leading from the small parking lot. Parent Participants in our Pre-K classes should park in the large parking lot across the street from Blair High School.

Participation Day Clothing Recommendations

We recommend parent participants dress for fun. Please plan to wear clothes that are comfortable, can get dirty, and allow you to sit on the floor with ease. We recommend closed toes shoes that can get dirty, allow you to run, and keep you warm and dry outside.

Siblings

Siblings are not allowed to join their parents for their participation day. Families are asked to make alternate childcare arrangements for any siblings so their full attention can be focused on the class and their enrolled child.

Parent Jobs

Each family at SSDS is required to take on one job per child enrolled in SSDS. SSDS will ask parents to rank their preferences, and will do our best to honor them whenever possible. In the event that a family fails to successfully complete their assigned job, they will need to pay a \$300 fee to cover any costs, realized or not, associated with not completing their job. In the event that a family fails to complete

their job two years in a row, SSDS reserves the right not to extend admission to the family for following years.

While faculty and staff regularly clean the school, all families are required to participate in our bi-annual deep-cleaning on School Wide Clean Up Days. Families are encouraged to come and help clean in person on the scheduled days, but may also sign up for a take home job if that works better for the family schedule. All jobs are important – the cleaner the school the better.

Child Guidance Policy

What is often referred to as discipline, we here at SSDS view as a key part of our curriculum. Helping young children develop the skills to behave in both a developmentally and socially appropriate manner is a key piece of our work as educators. We believe that every child deserves to be seen in the highest possible regard and adults are responsible for actively supporting their needs. Every behavior is a message. When challenging behaviors arise, the adults must work together to figure out what isn't working for the child and how we can help.

Our school utilizes a variety of methods to create a safe and positive learning environment for all children.

- We begin with the belief that the physical environment is, in itself, a teacher. When a classroom is calm, organized, developmentally appropriate, and engaging, we have taken the first steps towards setting children up for success.
- We learn about the known needs and interests of each child so that we can, from the beginning, provide children with as many of the tools possible to help them be successful.
- We treat children with the respect they deserve at all times because we want them to know they are valued and safe. We never shame, humiliate or intimidate children, physically harm or restrain them, or withhold food or other physical necessities.
- We do not use time outs. Children are given the time, space and support they need, without judgement, to self-regulate.
- We never use profane language. We always maintain the highest level of professionalism which includes kind, respectful, and gentle tones when speaking with children.
- Redirection is conveyed in a positive manner: We tell children what they should do (shovels are for digging) as opposed to what they shouldn't be doing (don't swing the shovel).
- We use logical consequences as a form of guidance.
- Conflict resolution is dealt with on an individual basis so as to support all children involved.
- We model problem solving skills, helping children learn how to resolve their own interpersonal problems, in an age appropriate manner, rather than solving the problems for them.

Observation and Support Services Policy

Faculty members routinely observe each child's development, including but not necessarily limited to speech, articulation, social-emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical development. These observations occur both formally and informally throughout the year. In addition to the informal observations which happen on a daily basis, the faculty utilize the Early Learning Assessment tool and family responses to the ASQ3 assessment tool to help individualize their planning. Individualizing the curriculum goals, the development of classroom management strategies and the creation of strategies for individual children is a central responsibility of teachers. It occurs on a regular basis and is communicated to parents as appropriate.

On occasion, the teacher's observations indicate potential benefit from intervention comprising additional classroom strategies and/or referral for observation by a specialist. In the event that a

teacher feels it appropriate based upon observations of a child, the teacher shares observations about a child with the Director. The Director and the teacher establish a plan for further support which may include such steps as further observation, follow up meetings, creating a list of classroom strategies to assist the child, conversation/s with the family, and/or recommendations for observation by a specialist.

SSDS has a contractual relationship with Child Development Consultants (CDC), including a Pediatric OT and a Pediatric Speech and Language Specialist. The school's contract entitles us to a specified number of hours in which the consultants can work with our school observing individual children and/or entire classrooms, as well as providing ongoing professional development to our faculty.

If, based on the objective observations of faculty, the Director feels an observation by CDC representatives is warranted and would benefit the child, the Director and the teachers will meet with the child's family, share the school's observations, and request permission from the family to have the child observed. Individual children will only be formally observed with the family's written permission. CDC representatives can observe a classroom as a whole to provide generalized classroom management strategies to the teachers without permission from or notification of the families. All observations conducted by and communications with representatives of CDC remain confidential and are shared only with the child's parents or legal guardians (if applicable) and relevant SSDS faculty and/or staff.

In the event that a child is receiving support services, in order to best support the needs of the child, and so that the school can work together with the parents and the specialist as a collaborative team, the school will ask parents to provide written authorization for the teacher and relevant SSDS faculty and staff to work directly with specialists. It is the parent's prerogative to decline to provide such authorization, and it is the school's responsibility to accept this decision.

Documentation of all observations and meetings between faculty, specialists and parents will be kept confidential.

SSDS strives to meet the individual needs of every child who attends our school whenever possible. When additional supports are needed, SSDS will provide them to the extent that is viable. In the event that SSDS determines a child needs one-on-one support in the classroom, it will become the responsibility of the family to cover all costs associated with that support. Anyone providing support to a student in the classroom will report to the lead teacher for guidance while the child is in the classroom. In the event that a family is unwilling or unable to pay for one-on-one support, or any other supports which SSDS determines are needed, SSDS has the right, at the sole discretion of the Director, to counsel a family out of the school. In such cases, regular withdrawal policies apply.

Child Illness / Wellness Policy

All faculty are responsible for monitoring children for signs and symptoms of illness. If a faculty member believes a child to be ill, the lead teacher must be notified and the child shall be cared for in accordance with the policies stated in the Parent Manual. The lead teacher should calmly notify the parent or legal guardian as soon as possible. If the lead teacher is not available, then the Director should be consulted and either the Director or the assistant teacher should notify the parents and relay all pertinent details of the conversation to the lead teacher. School employees do not diagnose, they only report, information to the families. For example, school employees do not tell parents their child has "a fever," we report to parents the degree of the child's temperature.

Communicable Diseases

Families must notify the school at once if a child has a communicable disease, including but not limited to:

- Strep throat: Child can return to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics, so long as the child has also been fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours.

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye): Child can return to school 24 hours after starting antibiotic drops for bacterial pink eye. For viral pink eye, a child can return to school upon written permission from the doctor.
- Coxsackie virus (hand, foot and mouth)
- Fifth disease
- Chicken pox
- Head lice
- Influenza

The school will notify the parents of children who may have been exposed, without identifying the child who is ill. Children and adults who contract a contagious illness cannot return to school until the contagious period has ended. In some cases, a note from the doctor will be required before the child or adult can return.

In addition to these named illnesses, children must stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- A temperature of 100.4 or above. Children can return to school following a fever after being fever-free for a full 24 hours without fever reducing medication. A child who leaves school in the middle of the day due to a fever must therefore stay home at least the following day.
- Heavy nasal discharge.
- A constant cough caused by illness (as opposed to Asthma).
- Symptoms of a possible communicable disease – for example: sniffles, reddened eyes, any unusual rash or sores, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, plus a fever.
- Vomiting or diarrhea. Children can return to school after vomiting or diarrhea after being completely free of these symptoms for a full 24 hours.
- Clearly not feeling well based on demeanor.

If a family suspects a child might be coming down with a communicable disease, the child should be taken to the doctor before returning to school. If faculty suspect a child might be coming down with a communicable disease, or might be suffering from a non-communicable disease which is interfering with the child's ability to have a successful day, faculty will contact the family who are then required to come pick up their child as soon as possible, preferably within 30 minutes. In the event that a parent will not be able to pick up a sick child within a reasonable amount of time, parents are asked to arrange for a backup authorized pick up person come instead. If needed, SSDS will contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration forms. A sick child will be kept isolated from the other children in a comfortable setting with a familiar adult. It is always our goal to keep all of the children safe, healthy, and comfortable.

[Administration of Medication](#)

Whenever possible, treatment schedules that allow medicine to be given by families outside of school hours are requested and encouraged. Family members and caregivers are welcome to come in to administer medication if needed during school hours. Only faculty who have been trained in Medication Administration can administer approved medication to children.

Emergency medication, such as EpiPens for children with life threatening allergies, inhalers for asthma, insulin for diabetes, and ibuprofen for children who suffer from febrile seizures, will be administered by trained staff if needed. In such cases, the medication must be in its original packaging, must be labeled with the child's first and last name, and must be accompanied by the state Medication Administration Authorization Form signed by the child's physician detailing the precise dosage, timing and circumstances under which the medication is to be administered. Unless otherwise directed by the child's physician, all children with EpiPens must provide the school with **two** current EpiPens to store on site at all times.

By providing medicine for SSDS staff to administer to a child, the parents expressly and without reservation grant SSDS, as well as its officers, agents, and employees, permission to administer said medication to their child under the circumstances enumerated in the Medication Administration Authorization Form. For the administration of medication in accordance with the Medication Administration Authorization Form, parents, on behalf of themselves as well as their heirs, administrators, executors, and assigns, release and forever discharge SSDS, as well as its officers, agents, and employees, from any and all claims, demands, and causes of action of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity, arising from or in any way connected with, injuries or other causes of action caused by the provision of medication to their child.

SSDS requests that any children who take life-supporting medication (ex: insulin) keep a 3-day supply in the school office. This is part of our emergency plan, alongside the 3-day supply of food requested in our food policies. In the unlikely event that we had to stay in the school with the children for multiple days, we want to make sure we have the supplies to keep everyone as healthy as possible.

At SSDS, the safety of our students is our top priority. With this in mind, SSDS requests permission to post information about allergies and specific medical conditions which may require treatment during the school day – including specifying the allergy/medical condition, listing symptoms, and describing appropriate treatment/response plan. This information is posted, visibly, in the classrooms so that any adults in the classroom or immediate vicinity of your child can see it and utilize it if needed. While it is our preference to take this precaution, it is a parent's prerogative to keep medical information private if so desired.

Prevention of Food Allergy Reactions

Faculty members familiarize themselves with the specific food allergies of children in their classes. In the event that an activity involving food is planned in the classroom, faculty will notify the parents of any children with allergies ahead of time and discuss an alternate menu if needed.

Immunization Requirements

In accordance with the Maryland COMAR sections 10.06.04.03, 10.06.04.04, and 10.06.04.06, SSDS will not allow children to attend SSDS who have not received all vaccinations required by the state of Maryland for children enrolled in preschool programs. Parents must provide SSDS documentation of full immunization, signed by the child's pediatrician. The only exceptions to this rule are those stated in the above mentioned COMAR sections, as follows:

- If a family presents SSDS with a licensed physician's or health officer's written statement that the student's immunization against a disease is medically contraindicated, SSDS will admit the child. This statement must indicate whether the contraindication is permanent or temporary. If the contraindication is temporary, the physician must estimate in the statement when the immunization may be obtained. The child must receive the vaccine as soon as the physician deems it medically appropriate, and the family must provide SSDS with evidence of the immunization completion at that time.
- If the student's parent or guardian is unable to provide proof of immunization pursuant to the requirements, the student may be temporarily admitted, or may temporarily remain enrolled, if the student's parent or guardian presents evidence of the student's appointment with a health care provider to receive any missing immunizations. The date of the appointment to receive the missing vaccination may not be later than 20 calendar days following the date the student was temporarily admitted or retained. The parents must provide an updated immunization record, signed by the child's health provider no later than the day following the scheduled appointment date. If the child fails to receive the required vaccine on the scheduled date, or if the parents fail to provide the signed, updated immunization record documenting that the child received the

required vaccine, the child will not be allowed to return to school until the immunization has been received and the signed, updated immunization record is turned into the school as evidence that the child is now current with all required vaccinations.

- In the event that a child is un-immunized or under-immunized in accordance with either of the above stated clauses, and a local outbreak or epidemic occurs of the diseases for which the child is un-immunized or under immunized, the child may be asked not to attend SSDS until the outbreak or epidemic has been declared over.

SSDS does not accept Religious Exemptions for immunizations.

Rest Time

In accordance with MSDE's Office of Child Care, all children who remain at SSDS for our 3:30 pick up or Extended Day must be provided a rest time. Children who need to nap will be provided a quiet space to do so. Children who do not nap, must be provided a quiet space in which to rest for at least 20 minutes.

Saying Good-Bye / Open-Door Policy

SSDS values the participation of parents in our school, both formally and informally. SSDS therefore has an open-door policy, meaning that parents are always welcome in their child's classroom.

SSDS does ask that parents and faculty work together to ensure that a parent's time in the classroom works towards their individual child's success. For example, if a child is struggling with separation in the morning, the teachers may recommend that the parents stay for a brief period to help the child get settled, or they may recommend that the parents say a quick good-bye and a hasty departure. Close collaboration between parents and faculty is often the key to a successful transition.

Another key to success is honesty with children. While it may be tempting for parents to sneak out the door when a child is having a hard time separating, doing so is a violation of trust for the child. SSDS advises families to always be honest with their children, telling them when the adults are leaving, and reassuring them that someone will be back at the end of the day. Being on time to pick up children at the end of the day supports that trust.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

All children who attend SSDS must be escorted by an adult to their assigned drop off point, whether it be a classroom or the playground. Families are required to sign their children in and out every day, noting the time of drop off and pick up on the SSDS attendance sheet.

Pre-K students are dropped off and picked up on the playground every day, except on inclement weather days. Parents are asked to stop at the gate to drop off or pick up their child, rather than coming onto the playground whenever possible.

Children in our 2s and 3s classes are to be dropped off and picked up at their classrooms, unless the classroom teachers instruct families to pick up from the playground. Families are to enter the building through the main entrance at the SW corner of the building, at the intersection of Colesville Road and University Blvd East.

Families picking up children from Extended Day should first check the playground, and then go to their child's Extended Day classroom if needed. Parents are asked to stop at the gate to drop off or pick up their child, rather than coming onto the playground whenever possible.

Children who are not currently attending SSDS are not allowed on the playground during school hours, from 7:30am until 5:30pm when all students have been dismissed. This includes SSDS students who are waiting to be dropped off or have already picked up from their program.

Authorized Pick-Up Policy

SSDS will only release a child to adults listed on the child's Authorized Pick-Up list, located in the child's online registration form. In the event that a family wishes to add an adult to the authorized pick up list, either for a one time pick up or as a standard addition, the family must notify the office in writing.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Our faculty all have school related commitments after their teaching time ends and deserve to go home to their families on time at the end of their day. SSDS will never leave a child unattended and so when a child is picked up late it means that a faculty or staff member's schedule is impacted. Equally important, young children depend upon their families to arrive on time to pick them up, and it can be upsetting for them when that does not happen.

SSDS staff recognize that parents are busy and traffic can be unpredictable. In the rare event that a family is running late for pick up, the family must notify the office as soon as possible so the child can be prepared and staffing coverage can be arranged.

In joining our school, parents agree to consistently arrive on time.

Code of Conduct

With regard to standards of conduct, all adults in the SSDS community are bound by the policies stated below.

All adults at SSDS must:

- Protect the physical and emotional safety of all members of the SSDS community.
- Treat all members of the SSDS community, including but not limited to children, families, faculty, contractors, and staff, with dignity and respect. Professionalism is required at all times.
- Appropriately implement as necessary all security protocols, following the direction of SSDS employees.
- Maintain appropriate calm and professionalism at all times.
- Model appropriate, respectful behavior and social interactions (including but not limited to problem solving) at all times.

All adults at SSDS may not:

- Discriminate against students or families based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, gender, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical attributes, physical or mental disability, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law
- Bully, harass, or intimidate students, staff, or other parents
- Engage in abuse or neglect of any child or adult, including grooming behaviors through which an adult or a person in a position of authority builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of exploitation or other abuse
- Violate the school's One on One Policy, as stated in this Handbook
- Introduce, view or involve children in child pornography
- Engage in inappropriate physical interactions with students or adults such as—
 - hitting
 - fondling any part of a student's body
- NOTE: certain touches may be appropriate in particular circumstances, such as a pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, high fives, or holding the hands of children to guide or escort them.

- Utilize physical punishment, emotional abuse, time outs in any form, withholding of food, or any other harmful methods of discipline, such as
 - shaking
 - slapping
 - shoving
 - pinching
 - ostracizing
 - physical restraints
 - withholding light, or
 - withholding medical care
- Engage in inappropriate verbal interactions with students, parents, or staff members such as—
 - name-calling or cursing
 - encouraging students to keep secrets from other adults
 - sexual or offensive humor
 - shaming, belittling, or derogatory remarks including negative comments about physique, body development, dress, or family
 - harsh language, harsh tones, or raised voices that may threaten, degrade, or humiliate

Because maintaining the emotional and physical safety of all members of the SSDS community is an essential value at SSDS, failure to follow this Code of Conduct, or engaging in any other behaviors which are deemed to threaten the emotional or physical safety of a member of the SSDS community, may result in a family's termination from the school. In such cases, no refunds of tuition or fees will be granted.

The decision to terminate a family from the school for any reason is at the sole discretion of the Executive Director. In such event, SSDS will follow its no-refund policy, with no exceptions.

Parent Support Committee

The Parent Support Committee (PSC) is made up of Homeroom Parents, Schedulers, and the PSC Chairs. The PSC holds quarterly meetings to discuss upcoming events, school happenings, and/or any other topics related to the school on the minds of PSC members or parents in their class. PSC meetings are intended to discuss school-wide issues, not issues related to a specific child, teacher, or class. At least one member of the Administrative Team will attend the PSC meetings as a representative of the school.

Dress For Fun

Children should wear clothes that are comfortable and can get dirty. Shoes and boots should be appropriate for active play including running and climbing, and should keep the children's feet warm and dry for outdoor play.

Per our Outdoor Play Policy, we do go outside when it is wet, snowy, cold and warm, so children should bring seasonally appropriate outer wear to keep them comfortable.

LABEL! LABEL! LABEL! Please label all items that belongs to your child. SSDS maintains a lost and found. After a period of time, all unclaimed items are donated to a local charity.

Parents should always pack an extra set of clothing, underwear and shoes for their child to have available at school.

Photography / Social Media Guidelines

SSDS faculty and staff routinely take photographs and videos of enrolled students as a part of our curriculum. These images are used in internal SSDS communications, such as class communications and Snippets, and may be displayed in SSDS classrooms and the hallways which are designated solely

for use by SSDS. SSDS will only use a child's image for marketing purposes – for example: in printed materials, on our website, or on our social media accounts – with permission from the child's parent or legal guardian, granted in writing in the child's online registration form. SSDS will never include a child's name in any marketing materials. SSDS Faculty and Staff are prohibited from posting images of or information about SSDS students, other than their own, on their personal social media accounts.

Members of the SSDS Parent Photography Committee are tasked with photographing SSDS events, including the adults and children participating in the events, and sharing these photographs privately with SSDS. SSDS asks that families, both on and off the Photography Committee, respect the privacy of other families and not post images of or information about children other than their own on social media without approval from the other child's parents. SSDS does not take any responsibility for preventing families from photographing and/or sharing images of or information about children enrolled in SSDS, nor will SSDS enforce the request that parents get permission from other parents before posting.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is a very individualized experience for each child and each family. SSDS will collaborate with families to support their children through this process and set them up for success! This is one arena in which the children have much more control than their adults. If a child is not ready, it is not the right time to toilet train, even if the parents are ready. SSDS respects the individual needs of our students and will never force a child who is unwilling to use the toilet to do so.

While a child is toilet training, parents should send additional underwear, bottoms and shoes just in case. Accidents happen, and it's ok.

Parking Lot Etiquette

All adults in the SSDS community are asked not to utilize their cell phones while driving in the SSDS parking lot, or while walking in the SSDS parking lot with their children. With so many young children around, a momentary glance at a phone could cause an accident which all of us wish to avoid.

All cars entering the big parking lot must do so using the second entrance off of University Blvd. Cars follow the arrows around the parking lot circle and then drive past the front entrance of the building. All cars must exit using the driveway closest to Colesville Road.

Class Placement

Each year the teaching staff, with support from the Executive Director, determines the make-up of each class. Careful thought is given to forming each class and a variety of criteria is used but not limited to in-classroom participation option, gender balance, ages of the children, and each child's learning style. SSDS does not accept specific teacher requests from families. However, parents can submit a statement describing their child's learning style directly to the Executive Director, who in turn, will share the statement with the teaching staff for consideration while determining a child's placement. SSDS does not promise to implement these requests if faculty and staff feel that they do not align with the placement needs of specific children or the class overall. SSDS will work closely with the parents of twins to determine if it is in the best interest of the children to be placed in the same class or separated.

Visitors Policy

All adults who enter the SSDS wing at times other than drop off or pick up must stop at the school office, sign our visitor's log, and wear a nametag for the entire time they are in the building. Parent participants do not need to sign in at the office on their assigned days, and will instead receive their Parent Participant badge upon arrival in the classroom.

Parent Substitutes

Parents who are approved to participate in the classroom are also approved to be hired as substitutes. If a parent would like to become a substitute at SSDS, the parent should notify the office so that his or her name can be added to our substitute list. Substitutes must sign our Substitute Agreement, specifying the standard SSDS Substitute Rate. Substitutes must be generally available for SSDS to contact with little or no notice with a request to substitute.

Supervision of Children Policy

Children must be supervised **at all times** and in all areas while they are at SSDS, from the time they are dropped off until they are picked up by an authorized adult. Faculty members must coordinate to ensure that they remain within the legal ratios and group sizes for their class at all times as specified by MD COMAR Licensing Regulations:

Maryland Ratio Requirements

Age of Children	Staff/Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
2 years old	1 to 6	12
3 or 4 years old	1 to 12	24
5 years old or older	1 to 15	30

Maryland Ratio Requirements for Mixed Age Groups

Group Composition	Group Size	Minimum Staffing Level
Group includes one to three 2 year old children	7 to 10	1 staff member
Group includes four or more 2 year old children	7 to 10	2 staff members
Group includes one to three 2 year old children	13 to 20	2 staff members
Group includes four to six 2 year old children	13 to 20	3 staff members

Faculty members must be aware of where their colleagues and students are, and must strategically space themselves among the children so that they can, as a team, both safely supervise all children and productively interact with them.

It is the responsibility of all faculty members to not only supervise the children to ensure their safety, but also to be active participants in the play, wonder, and discovery that occurs throughout the day, including on the playground. Faculty should help children figure out how to utilize playground equipment, rather than placing or removing children on the equipment, and should closely monitor them while on any climbing equipment.

Despite the best efforts of our staff, occasionally accidents occur. In such unfortunate incidents, SSDS does not assume any liability for injuries incurred. As a condition of admittance to the playground, families waive all claims of liability against SSDS for injuries incurred by their children.

One on One Policy

SSDS requires at least two adults to be with children whenever possible, and that at least two adults be assigned to a classroom whenever children are present. Should an adult ever be alone with a child or children for any amount of time, the door to the hallway must remain fully open and the lights must be on. During naptime, one adult may be in the napping room with the lights off and door closed so long as at least two children are present and other adults check in randomly every few minutes.

When taking a child or children to the bathroom, adults must inform other adults where they will be so that they can check in periodically. Exterior doors to the bathrooms and changing areas must be left open whenever children are in the bathroom or being changed, and adults must remain visible from the hallway. If an adult must step into a stall to help a child, the stall door must remain open and the adult must step out as quickly as possible. Only SSDS bathrooms should be used (not church bathrooms).

If any adult witnesses behavior on the part of any other adult at SSDS which they find concerning, they must immediately report it to the Executive Director and/or the Director of Administration and Training so that action can be taken and reports made if appropriate. All employees of SSDS are Mandated Reporters, meaning that SSDS employees are required to report any suspicions of child abuse to protective services. Employees do not need permission from the Director or anyone else to make such a report if the employee feels it is warranted.

Hand Washing Policy

Hand washing is the best defense against disease. Faculty teach children to wash their hands by modeling washing all surfaces of the hands for a period of at least 20 seconds (long enough to sing ABC's twice). Children, faculty, and participants must wash their hands after using the toilet, upon entering the building, after sneezing or coughing into their hands, before eating, and at other appropriate times.

All faculty and participants must wash hands before preparing and serving food, after helping children with toileting, and after changing diapers. Disposable gloves must be used when changing diapers or attending to any injury.

Faculty and participants may not use hand sanitizer on children. Faculty and participants may use hand sanitizer on their own hands if they so desire, but the hand sanitizer must be stored out of the reach of children.

Diapering Policy

All activities during the day provide opportunities for meaningful communication between adults and children. This includes changing diapers. While changing a child's diaper, faculty should interact with the child in a positive manner. Faculty may discuss the diapering process, but should be mindful to never make statements which might embarrass the child.

All diapers must be changed in the bathroom using the following procedure:

- Bring all necessary supplies to the diapering areas
- Be sure there is a trash can within arm's reach
- Place the child on the diapering surface and unfasten the diaper
- Clean the child's diaper area with disposable wipes. Always wipe from front to back
- Keep soiled diaper / clothing away from any surfaces which cannot be easily cleaned
- Secure any soiled clothing in a bag
- Discard all trash in the trash can
- Remove and discard gloves in the trash can if soiled
- Put on new gloves if you removed the first pair
- Apply a fresh diaper
- Apply diaper cream, if needed (and written parent permission has been granted) In the event that diaper cream is applied, faculty must note it on the diaper cream record
- Fasten the new diaper and dress the child
- Both the child and the faculty member must wash their hands in accordance with our hand washing policy
- Clean the entire surface with disinfectant

Faculty are responsible for notifying the school office as soon as possible if any school diapering supplies are running low. Faculty are responsible for notifying families as soon as possible if a child's personal diapering supplies are running low.

Outdoor Play Policy

SSDS understands the importance of outdoor play and schedules at least an hour a day for each class to be on our playground. In the event that the wind-chill or the heat-index represent a health risk, SSDS will limit or cancel time outdoors as needed for the given day. Classes should play outside in all other weather conditions except heavy rain or other weather emergencies.

Food Policies

No Nuts

SSDS community members are prohibited from bringing food containing tree nuts or peanuts into the school.

Snacks and Meals

Families in our core program are solely responsible for providing snacks and lunches for their own children. SSDS will refrigerate perishables but does not microwave or otherwise heat food for children, so parents must provide food that is ready to eat.

SSDS will provide afternoon snacks for all children who stay for our afternoon programs – both Extended Day and our 3:30 dismissal classes. Snacks will be provided in accordance with a monthly schedule that is set by the Director of Ancillary Programs. Children may only be given SSDS food if their parents have provided permission in their online registration forms.

Emergency Food Supply

Families are responsible for providing a 3-day supply of non-perishable food to keep at SSDS in case of an emergency which necessitates keeping the children in the building for an extended period of time. At the beginning of the year, faculty will provide parents with a large plastic bag with their child's name on it to fill. All food which is not used will be returned at the end of the year or donated upon request.

Milk

Families are responsible for providing 1% organic milk for their child's class on a scheduled, rotating basis. The class Scheduler will include the milk schedule on both the online and the printed versions of the class participation schedule. If an individual child does not drink milk, the family must provide an alternative beverage for their child.

Field Trips

Field trips are encouraged in our three-year-old and Pre-K classes as a means of conducting field research related to class investigations. Such trips are intended to be a meaningful curriculum resource.

Parents must return a signed permission slip to the field trip coordinator in order for their child to participate in any trip. Any children who do not have a signed permission slip will not be allowed to attend the field trip or to remain at school while the rest of the class is on the trip.

Adults who volunteer to chaperone or drive children other than their own must be approved to take responsibility for children, as stated in our Parent Participation Policies. All field trip drivers must provide copies of proof of auto insurance and valid driver's license to the administrative office before they will be allowed to take children other than their own into their car. Each SSDS student must travel in a properly installed car seat as required by law. It is the sole responsibility of a child's parents to ensure that the proper car seat is provided and that it is properly installed and utilized. SSDS faculty

and staff may not install car seats, buckle children other than their own into car seats, or drive any SSDS children.

Weather Related Closures

SSDS follows the Montgomery County Public School (“MCPS”) policy weather-related school closures and delayed openings. When MCPS is closed due to inclement weather, SSDS will also be closed. When MCPS opens one hour late, SSDS will also open one hour late. When MCPS opens two hours late, SSDS will open two hours late.

When MCPS closes early due to the weather, SSDS will monitor the situation and make an independent decision on a case-by-case basis as to if and when to close Core classes early. In cases where MCPS closes school early due to inclement weather, all 3:30 classes will dismiss at 1:15 for pre-k and 1:30 for 2s and 3s. All Extended Day classes will also be cancelled for the afternoon. Families are required to pick up their children at the determined dismissal time, although SSDS reserves the right to make slight allowances when weather/road conditions warrant flexibility.

SSDS reserves the right to close on days when MCPS remains open if there are weather-related concerns related to the SSDS facilities and/or property.

In the event of the failure of the heat during cold weather or the air conditioning during hot weather, SSDS has full discretion to cancel school if the Director determines that conditions inside the building are not suitable for children and/or adults.

SSDS will send announcements about unanticipated closures, delays and/or early dismissal via text and email, as well as posting on social media and the SSDS website.

SSDS does not make up days missed due to inclement weather.

Smoking Policy

To protect the health and safety of all employees, parents, and students, smoking is prohibited within the confines of SSDS, including the playground and the parking lot, during school hours or at school-sponsored events.

Security / Emergency Procedures

All doors leading to SSDS, both external and between the SSDS wing and the rest of the church, are to remain closed and locked. These doors should never be propped open. Employees and families are not allowed to unlock or to hold the door for anyone who they do not know and recognize as a member of SSDS. Each door is activated by keypad code, which is given to each employee and family enrolled in the school. Employees and families are not permitted to give the code to anyone outside of the current SSDS community. Children are not allowed to use the keypads and families are requested not to share the code with their children. SSDS changes the code at least two times per year, and at additional times as needed.

SSDS faculty and staff practice Fire Drills on a regular basis with the children, and will practice Lockdown Drills on at least two occasions during the school year. Parents, staff and children will be notified before the first of each drill, and parents will be notified after each Lockdown Drill. These drills are explained to the children in a developmentally appropriate way and are never described by staff as scary. Rather we tell children that we practice different ways of staying safe in an emergency so that if there were an emergency, and we do not think there will be, we would be safe.

In addition to the three-day supply of food which all families must provide as stated in our Food Policies, each classroom is supplied with basic emergency supplies such as water and first aid kits.

In the event of an emergency, SSDS will first take all possible steps to ensure the safety of the children and the adults in the school. Once SSDS leadership determines that all possible steps have been taken to protect members of the SSDS community in attendance that day, families will be notified via text, email, social media, and/or phone calls depending upon the availability of communication devices.