

Saints Constantine & Helen Preschool



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome

Welcome to Ss. Constantine & Helen Preschool! We are honored that you have chosen us to help you in providing excellent care and foundational academic training for your child. We take our responsibilities seriously and will do everything possible to ensure that your experience here is positive.

Our school staff is dedicated, loving, and well-trained. They look forward to greeting your child each day and teaching them valuable skills they will need to be successful in school. Socially, emotionally, and academically we strive to implement our superior preschool programs into every activity. We always welcome your presence and encourage you to come and watch us in action. We also welcome any knowledge or skills that you would like to offer for the advancement of our children.

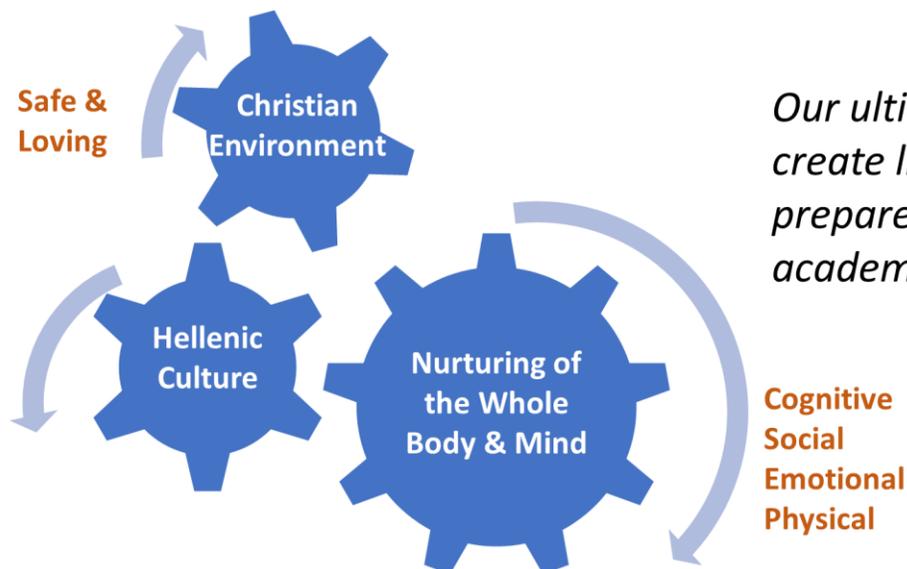
We look forward to a happy and exciting year with your child. And, we thank you again for allowing us to be part of your child's school experience!

Mission

Our mission is to provide a preschool that fosters a safe and loving Christian environment where children can grow and develop. We strive to nurture the whole child through a curriculum that develops the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills of the children.

An important part of our preschool identity is our Hellenic culture. SSCH is built upon the fundamental Hellenic idea that to be fully educated is to have both a fit body and mind. To do this, we explore the children's environment and interests through hands-on participation.

Ultimately, our goal is to create lifelong learners prepared with the skills necessary for success at the next academic level.



Our ultimate goal is to create life-long learners prepared for the next academic level.

Parent Involvement

Under Normal Operations

We encourage the participation of volunteers to assist the children during our school events. We also encourage parents and grandparents to come to the school to read to the children, do an art project, or share the many talents and interests of our wonderful preschool family. We also welcome you to come to the school at any time to see your children in their classroom environment.

Under Covid-19 Protocols

Please see our Covid-19 Response & Preparedness Plan.

Programs

Our school is comprised of children aged 2 through 5. All students must be fully potty trained. SSCH Preschool offers the following programs:

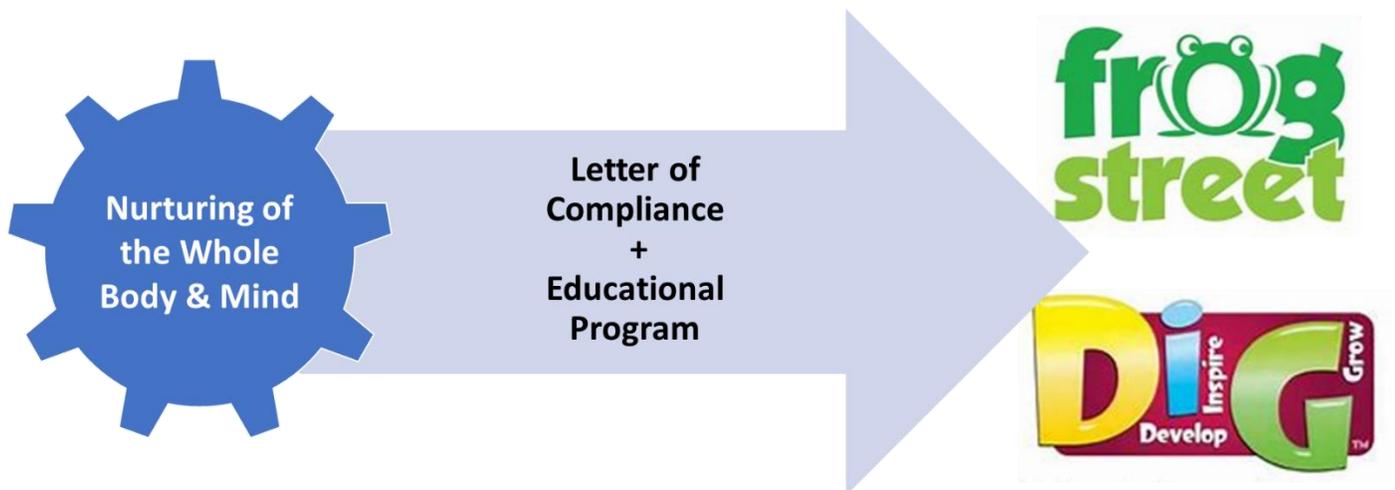
- Before Care (8:00 – 9:00 am)
- Half Day (9:00 – 12:00 pm) Core academics
- Lunch Bunch (12:00 pm – 12:30 pm for Half Day students only)
- Full Day (9:00 am – 3:00 pm) Core academics followed by lunch, rest, and additional instructional/playtime
- After Care (3:00 – 4:00 pm)

Note: Use of Before/After Care and Lunch Bunch must be arranged in advance to ensure the proper staffing of the program.

Curriculum

SSCH Preschool is licensed by the State of Maryland as a Letter of Compliance (LOC) center with an educational program. As such, we are required to provide an educational program where the children learn language arts, math, writing, social studies, science, health habits, and social skills at their appropriate age and ability level.

To accomplish these objectives, we employ two curriculums: Frog Street and DIG. Both these programs are research-based and state-approved to meet our state licensing requirements.



Frog Street – Preschool 2/3s

The hallmark of Frog Street is to provide developmentally appropriate, intentional curriculum based on the latest brain-research. It provides intentional, foundational instruction in literacy, math, and social-emotional domains.

Frog Street Threes meets the specific needs of three-year-olds in key areas of development:

SOCIAL BRIDGE

- Interactive play
- Sharing
- Caring
- Following through on commitments

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

- Engaging read-alouds
- Vocabulary development
- Formal introduction to the alphabet
- Phonological awareness
- Writing and fine motor skills

FOUNDATIONAL MATH

- Attributes
- Classification
- Patterns
- One-to-one correspondence
- Order
- Numeration
- STEAM
- Logical reasoning & problem solving

DIG - Pre-K 4/5

DIG stands for develop, inspire, grow. It is a comprehensive curriculum that inspires curiosity and exploration through active, hands-on learning. The hallmark of DIG is its center-based programming. Daily schedules include morning and closing circle time, whole-group lessons, and small group practice. The DIG curriculum balances developmentally appropriate learning and purposeful play in key areas: social-emotional, oral language, math, literacy.

For Students	For Teachers
 <p>DIG develops the whole child! With a focus on foundational skills, <i>DIG</i> gives Pre-K learners a strong skills base across all learning domains.</p>	<p>DIG develops teachers! With point-of-use tips, clear instructional paths, and easy-to-manage resources, <i>DIG</i> helps teachers succeed every day.</p>
 <p>DIG inspires big learning! Delivered through predictable routines and purposeful play, <i>DIG</i> empowers children with the confidence to learn new things.</p>	<p>DIG inspires teachers! <i>DIG's</i> emphasis on creativity and flexibility allows teachers to fully customize and add their own flair to the program.</p>
 <p>DIG grows Pre-K learners toward Grade K! <i>DIG</i> delivers a research-based sequence of instruction in bite-sized chunks, providing multiple opportunities to reinforce concepts and solidify understanding.</p>	<p>DIG grows teachers! Through expert tips, on-demand training, and online demonstrations, <i>DIG</i> continually supports teachers—all year long!</p>

Music & Greek Language

Once a week, Ms. Vickie Glod donates her time to the children to teach them music and Greek language. There are three benefits of exposure to a second language at an early age:

- **Feeds Their Brains** - Research shows learning a second language can boost problem-solving, critical-thinking, and listening skills.
- **Boosts Their Academic Achievement** - The cognitive benefits of learning a language include improved reading, writing and math skills.
- **Nurtures Their Curiosity, Cultural Sensitivity, Empathy, and Tolerance**- The experience of learning a language introduces children to the world in new and inclusive ways.

(Source: Lead with Languages)



Developmental Screening



Developmental screening provides a quick, targeted snapshot of a child’s early learning and academic skills. This snapshot aids educators in assessing school readiness, identifying developmental delays and giftedness, and planning for interventions in the classroom.

At SSCH Preschool, we utilize the BRIGANCE early childhood screening tool. BRIGANCE screenings evaluate a child’s development in language, academic skills/cognitive, physical, self-help, and social-emotional domains of learning. Each screen takes approximately 10–15 minutes per child. The subsequent report includes your child’s results by domain and compares them to the average performance of same-age children.

The state requires that we test your child at least once each school year. Tests are administered in the January-February timeframe.

Teacher & Staff Qualifications

Our staff is chosen for their moral standards and desire to work with and nurture children. Each is dedicated to teaching good moral values, learning skills, and citizenship both in and out of the classroom. Importantly, our lead teachers must meet the state licensing requirements for a LOC with an educational program. These include holding a bachelor's degree or 120 college credits, along with 90 clock-hours of preschool childcare training.

In addition, we meet the Office of Childcare requirement that one staff member for every 20 children is certified in CPR and First Aid. SSCH Preschool also meets state requirements for the number of staff holding Medical Administration and Basic Health & Safety certifications. The director has also completed the state-required Emergency Preparedness course for childcare centers. Further, all staff members attend regular training sessions, professional study clinics/workshops, and pursue advanced studies to enhance their own teaching abilities.

Class size & Child-to-Staff Ratios

SSCH Preschool serves up to 49 children in total each day across four classrooms. The classrooms capacities range from 8 to 16.

To provide quality attention to our students, the school staffs a director, lead teachers, and qualified teaching assistance/aides. The staff/child ratio meets the standards of the MSDE governing of private centers:

- Two's Program: 1 to 6 staff/child ratio
- Three's Program: 1 to 10 staff/child ratio
- Four's Program: 1 to 15 staff/child ratio

Enrollment

To enroll in the preschool, parents submit a registration form, registration fee, and first month's tuition. The following additional paperwork must be returned to SSCH Preschool no later than the first day the student starts school:

- Health Inventory
 - Part I Health Assessment (*completed by parents*)
 - Part II Child Health Assessment (*completed by pediatrician*)
 - Record of Immunizations
 - Blood Lead Testing Certificate
- Emergency Form
- Media Release Form
- Covid Waiver Form

Tuition

Students may enroll for full or half day programs and choose two to five days a week. The tuition rates for each year are published on our website, www.sschoool.org. For ease of accounting, SSCH Preschool divides the yearly cost for tuition into 10 equal, monthly payments (September – June).

Discount Courtesies

A 5% tuition discount is available for the following families. Families must meet at least one of the following to qualify:

- Stewards in good standing of Ss. Constantine & Helen. The church accountant must verify stewardship discounts to qualify
- Active military, law enforcement, and first responders (ID Required) 
- Families with more than one child at the preschool (siblings) 

An additional 5% is available for families who pay the entire year's tuition in one payment at the beginning of the year.

Tuition Payment Plans

School year tuition rates (September – June) are divided into 10 installments for ease of accounting. Families may choose a monthly or yearly payment schedule. Full tuition is due regardless of attendance. All tuition payments are due in advance of service and are non-refundable.

Tuition payments are made via our online app, HiMama. Families may pay via bank transfer or credit card. A 2.9% transaction fee will be added to all credit card charges.

- Monthly Tuition Payment Plan - Monthly payments are due the 15th day of the month prior to month due (e.g., September 15th for October's tuition).
- Yearly Tuition Payment Plan – First month's tuition is paid upon registration. The balance is due September 15th. A 5% discount is applied for this option.

Tuition Policy for Covid-19 Closures

SHORT-TERM CLOSURE - Covid-19 Cases at SSCH Preschool

Two or more confirmed cases of Covid-19 at a facility is considered an outbreak, and will result in a short-term closure of our program/classroom for 10 days. The length of time for closure is determined by the local health department in consultation with our State of Maryland licensing specialist, and is made on a case-by-case basis. Full tuition will continue to be charged during these short-term closures; no refunds will be issued.

LONG-TERM CLOSURE - Greater Community Outbreak

Should an outbreak of Covid-19 result in a federal, state, or local mandate to close child care facilities, SSCH Preschool will close. Tuition will NOT be charged for program closure longer than the "current month" during which the closure begins. No refunds will be issued for the "current month" that we close. Tuition charges will resume upon reopening of the school. If the reopening occurs in the middle of the month, then tuition will be prorated for that month.

Before/After Care & Lunch Bunch

Pre-registration is required for Before Care, Lunch Bunch, and After Care. Payment for these additional services is added to the monthly tuition. The rates are published on our website, www.sschschoo.org.

Registration Fee

A registration fee is due with enrollment and must be received, along with one month's tuition, in order to secure a spot for your child.

This registration fee of \$135 is non-refundable and is not applied towards tuition. After initial term enrolled, the registration fee is reduced to \$85, if the child has been continuously enrolled in the school. The fee is also reduced to \$85 for any subsequent children.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Late pick-up fees will be charged at \$1 per minute beginning after a fifteen-minute grace period. Payment of fees must be made at the time of pickup.

THE DAILY ROUTINE

Arrival/Dismissal

Parents/guardians will drop off and pick up their children via a carline at the door of the preschool.

Arrival

The preschool doors will unlock at 8:50 am and close at 9:10 am. After this time, parents will ring the school doorbell. A staff member will greet your child and escort him or her into the building and up to the classroom. The staff member will also sign your child into school using our HiMama app.

Dismissal

For half day students, the doors unlock at 12:00 pm. For full day students, the doors to the school will be unlocked at 3:00 pm. Parents picking their children up early will ring the school doorbell. Staff members will check your student out of school using the HiMama app.

Students will only be released to a parent/guardian or other authorized adult(s) who is listed on the child's emergency form. Please notify the Director and provide written permission for anyone picking up your child who is not listed on the emergency form. Photo identification will be required. If there are any court ordered visitation/custody rights and conditions, they must be provided to the school for our records.

Attendance

Students are required to attend the program for which they are registered and will be charged whether or not they are in attendance. Please notify the school if your child will be absent on his/her regularly scheduled day.

Attendance is recorded in the online app, HiMama.

Snacks & Lunch

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide snacks, lunch, and a water bottle for their children each day, as applicable for their program. The daily schedule includes time for both a morning and afternoon snack, as well as lunch. Per MSDE regulations, SSCH will provide fat-free milk to the students at all mealtimes. A refrigerator is provided in each classroom.

We ask that snacks and lunches be nutritious. Soda, candy, and gum are prohibited. We are NOT a nut-free school, however, should your child have a nut allergy, we will take all precautions and appropriate measures.

If your child will attend either Before or After Care, please provide additional snacks as needed.

Recess

Children will play at recess each day for approximately 30-45 minutes, either outside on our playground or inside the church gym. Each class has its own designated recess time. Children will play outside, weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

Rest Period

As required by MSDE, we provide a rest period for all students attending the full day program. The Preschool provides sleeping cots, while we ask each child to bring to school a cot mat and “lovie” (as needed). These will be sent home each week for cleaning.

Clothing

Uniforms shirts with the school’s logo are required and may be purchased through the Director. Shirts are either short or long sleeve, white or blue.

Outdoor play is an important part of early learning and physical development. Please dress your child appropriately with shoes that are meant for climbing, running, and bicycling. Closed toed shoes are required for the safety of your child’s feet. Flip flops, clogs, crocs, and sandals are not acceptable.

Please maintain an extra set of weather-appropriate clothing in your child’s backpack. This includes shirts, pants, underwear, and socks. As always, please clearly label your child’s belongings.

Discipline Policy

At SSCH Preschool, we believe that each child is a beautiful and unique individual. We understand that each child will come to us with different emotional, developmental, and educational needs that we will strive to meet with love, kindness, patience, and support. SSCH Preschool staff and school board believe that the goal of discipline is to assist in the development of each child’s internal controls, and therefore focuses its discipline on teaching and guiding versus punishing.

Inappropriate or unacceptable behavior is dealt with immediately and on an individual basis. Respect for the children and their feelings are of the utmost importance. Clear, concise, consistent, and age-appropriate class rules and routines are established to give the children a sense of safety and security and a clear idea of what is expected of them. The staff will also utilize a variety of techniques including redirection, modeling, rewards and reinforcements, encouragement, and praise of good behavior to assist children in making appropriate choices.

It is extremely important that the lines of communication between the school and parents remain open. Staff will keep parents apprised of situations that occur during school hours, either in-person, or through email. There is a “Zero Tolerance” policy regarding children who strike, hit, kick, pinch, or bite another child or adult. The staff will do everything possible to deal with these difficult situations in school; however, parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick up their child should the child be in danger of hurting himself or others.

Sick Policy & Medication Administration

Sick Policy

Under Normal Operations

For the safety of all children in our program, please do not send a sick child to school. Should your child become ill at school, his/her parent/guardian will be contacted to come and pick up the child.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- Has begun antibiotics within the last 24 hours
- Has a persistent cough
- Has symptoms of a communicable disease, such as fever, runny nose, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain. Conjunctivitis, chicken pox, etc.
- Has diarrhea/vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Has a rash

Your child may return to school after they are free from fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours. Please make the school aware if your child has a contagious disease, so that all parents may be notified to watch for symptoms.

Under Covid-19 Protocols

Please see our Covid-19 Response & Preparedness Plan.

LICE

SSCH Preschool has a No NIT policy for head lice. If a child is found to have lice in school, the parent/guardian will be notified and asked to take the child home. The child must be treated and free of lice and nits for at least 24 hours before returning to school, at which time they must bring proof of treatment. All parents will be notified if lice has been found on a child at school.

Medication Administration

Medication may not be dispensed without a medical order form that has been completed, signed, and dated by the child's pediatrician. The first day of any medication must be administered at home, in order to check for any adverse reactions. Any medication given during the school day must be in its original container affixed with the prescription label and given to the Director of the school.

Accidents & Injuries

SSCH Preschool includes staff who are certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff has also completed the required state courses in Basic Health & Safety and Covid-19 training.

Should your child suffer from a minor injury, staff members will clean the injury with water and soap and apply bandages and ice, as needed. No topical medications or ointments may be used, as stipulated by MSDE.

In the case of medical emergency (e.g., broken bone, severe allergic reaction or asthma attack, etc.), parents will be notified and an ambulance called. Should the child need transport to a hospital, a staff member will accompany the child until the parents arrive. Parents assume financial responsibility for these medical services.

In all cases of accidents or injuries, staff members update the school's injury log and complete an incident report. Two copies of the report are signed by the parent/guardian. One copy remains at SSCH, the other is given the parents to keep in their records. In the case of injuries that require outside medical attention (e.g., visit to doctor or hospital), SSCH completes a separate report to be submitted to MSDE's Office of Child Care.

Field Trips

Under Normal Operations

SSCH Preschool schedules two field trips each year. The fall field trip is to a local farm/garden center, and the spring field trip is to Pirates of the Chesapeake in Annapolis. Permission slips will be sent home detailing the date, time, place, and cost of each trip. Each participating student must be accompanied and transported by a parent or guardian. Families with more than one child in the school need only have one parent on the field tip.

There is no regularly scheduled school on field trip days.

Birthdays

Under Normal Operations

Parents are encouraged to celebrate their child's birthday with their friends at school. Students celebrate within their own classroom. Parents may provide a special snack, but we ask that presents and balloons not be brought to school.

Invitations to birthday parties outside of school will be distributed through the students' daily folders by the classroom teacher.

Communication Methods

Communication plays a key role in creating and fostering strong, positive relationships between school and the home. Communication between SSCH Preschool and our parents takes several different forms, including phone, email, HiMama app, daily folders, Facebook, Instagram, and our school website (www.sschschoo.org).

- **HiMama Messages/Email** – The primary mode of communication between the Director, teachers, and parents will be the online app, HiMama. Emails directly from the office email (office@sschschoo.org) will also be used. Where applicable, information sent via HiMama/email will also be sent home in the students' daily folders (e.g., field trip forms, newsletters, etc.)
- **Daily Folders** – Throughout the week, students take home folders with their work, as well as other important information for parents from the teachers and Director. You will find this in the "HOME" pocket. Any communication back to the school can be placed in the "SCHOOL" pocket of the folder and returned in the student's backpack.
- **Facebook & Instagram** – Our school Facebook page and Instagram account are great tools to keep parents abreast of the happenings at our school each day. We also use social media to send reminders, provide links to helpful information, and communicate quickly during inclement weather or a crisis. SSCH maintains a public Facebook page.
- **SSCH Preschool Website** – Our website includes an online Resource Center that gives you 24-hour access to information busy parents need. For your convenience, we also post our most commonly used forms.

Media Release Policy

During the course of the school year, we will photograph or videotape our classes. Parents are asked to complete a media release form, indicating whether or not permission is given for their child's photograph to be used within the school (bulletin boards, classroom projects) or on our Facebook page or website. In addition, the media release policy allows parents to opt out of having their telephone and email included in a class list provided to the families at the start of school.

Video Surveillance

For your child's safety, the facility has closed-circuit video cameras at the school door and in each classroom.

Inclement Weather

We follow AACPS for all weather-related delays, closings, and early dismissals.

- There will be NO half day classes or Before Care when there is a two-hour delay. All full day students report at 11 am.
- There will be NO After Care when school close early.

Emergency Preparedness

SSCH Preschool has an approved Emergency Disaster and Preparedness Plan, and the Director has completed the MSDE required emergency preparedness training for early childhood centers.

In the event of an emergency, parents will be informed via HiMama/email, Facebook/Instagram, school website, and telephone.