

# **Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church Hellenic Education Center**



## **Parents' Handbook**



The **azure background** harkens to the Mediterranean Sea which fueled ancient Greece's commerce and development. The **gold chevron** symbolizes the academic excellence required of our students and faculty. The major elements of the crest include the **Holy Crucifix**, symbolic of our Orthodox Christian faith. The **wheel of Saint Katherine** is testament to our patron saint's martyrdom and her unswerving devotion to her principles of faith. The **Athenian Owl** is the universally recognized symbol of knowledge, wisdom, perspicacity and erudition throughout the Western world.

The **motto** is αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν, or "Ever to Excel" and is intended to serve as an inspiration to all students in search of knowledge. The source is the sixth book of Homer's *Iliad*, (Iliad 6. 208) in a speech Glaucus delivers to Diomedes: "Hippolocus begat me. I claim to be his son, and he sent me to Troy with strict instructions: *Ever to excel, to do better than others, and to bring glory to your forebears, who indeed were very great ... This is my ancestry; this is the blood I am proud to inherit.*"

Thank you for choosing to enroll your child in one of our educational programs. We're thrilled to welcome you to the HEC family! This handbook is designed to help you feel at home by explaining our policies, guidelines, and sharing important information like school calendars.

Unless you receive an official update via email, this will be your go-to resource for all school-related matters. We're committed to building strong, supportive partnerships with both our students and their families. We encourage you to take some time to review the information inside, and please don't hesitate to reach out to the Principal or your child's teachers if you have any questions or need further clarification. We're excited to be on this journey with you! Have a great school year!

**Committee:**

<b>Priest:</b>	Rev. Michael Diamond
<b>Parish Council President:</b>	George Moratis
<b>HEC Committee Chair:</b>	Chris Christou
<b>HEC Committee:</b>	Andri Orphanides
<b>HEC Committee:</b>	Olympia Carranza
<b>HEC Committee:</b>	Anna Yortzidis
<b>HEC Committee:</b>	Irene Sakkas
<b>Paideia Preschool Principal:</b>	Evi Tzanavara
<b>Greek School Principal:</b>	Stavroula Skrepetou
<b>Byzantine Music Director:</b>	Spiros Perivolaris
<b>Paideia PTA:</b>	Eva Vassiliadis & Louisa Tavlas
<b>Greek School PTA:</b>	Andri Orphanides

**Saint Katherine Hellenic Education Center**  
3149 Glen Carlyn Road ♦ Falls Church, VA 22041  
HEC Office 703-671-7715 ♦ Church Office 703-671-1515 ♦ FAX 703-671-1385

**Hours of Operation**

**PAIDEIA Preschool**

Monday – Friday  
7:30 am to 6:00pm

**Greek School**

Adult Class – Tues 7-9:00pm  
Adult Class – Thurs 7-9:00pm  
Friday Youth Classes – 5pm to 7pm  
Saturday Youth Classes – 9:30am to 1:30pm

*“The mind is not a vessel to be filled,  
but a fire to be kindled...”*  
– Plutarch

## HELLENIC EDUCATION CENTER (HEC) MISSION

At Saint Katherine HEC, our mission is to inspire and educate children and adults within our community and beyond by upholding three core pillars of learning:

1. Comprehensive teaching of the Hellenic language
2. Immersion in Hellenic culture, history, and heritage
3. Faith-Based Education in the Greek Orthodox Tradition, including beliefs, holidays, teachings and spiritual practices.

Our vision is to be a pre-eminent Hellenic educational institution in the United States. We achieve our goals through an innovative and stimulating curriculum, using traditional as well as technologically enhanced instructional methods. Student achievements are quantifiable and teaching methodologies are consistent with national and internationally accepted standards for language instruction and competency. Guided by the enduring values of Hellenism and Orthodoxy, we promote personal growth, family unity, academic achievement, and unwavering dedication to our Orthodox Christian faith. These values are an integral part of our culture and provide the framework for our decision-making.

## HEC EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

To achieve our mission, the HEC offers a dynamic and multi-faceted educational system devoted to furthering our Orthodoxy and Hellenism through educational achievement and is comprised of the following components:

- **Greek Language School:** Our Greek Language School incorporates three offerings:
  1. A youth Greek School (preschool – high school): provides innovative teaching and a standards-based curriculum that teaches Greek as a second or heritage language.
  2. Adult Language School: offers evening classes for adults interested in learning Modern Greek (beginner to advanced).
- **Paideia Preschool:** Our bilingual preschool offers a loving, family-oriented environment for 2-5 year olds grounded in the teaching of the Hellenic language/customs, Greek Orthodox faith, and preparation for the American school system. The preschool has a year-round program that offers summer camp options in a relaxed fun environment.
- **Community Education:** Our Community education offerings plan to include short courses/seminars in subjects such as Greek Cooking, Ecclesiastical Greek, Byzantine Chanting, and Introduction to Greek Language and Customs. Online education may also be implemented for some of these offerings.

## HEC EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND GOALS

The Saint Katherine HEC commits to three key educational goals:

1. Offer high quality education, in a climate of trust and collaboration, acting on the belief that each student brings unique talents and deserves our best efforts.
2. Provide Greek language as well as cultural and religious instruction by developing new programs that match our community's needs and interests.
3. Build a strong, positive relationship with students, teachers, parents and the community.

In establishing an institution that offers high quality education, we have adopted our standards of learning, curricula, and best practices from several key sources:

1. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Greek School curriculum guidelines described in “The Modern Greek Language Curriculum – Checkpoint A” [used primarily for the Greek School curriculum]
2. Virginia state standards of learning for Early Childhood Education and Foreign Language teaching to ensure our Paideia curriculum meets/exceeds the standards set locally for other day schools and that our Greek School curriculum meets/exceeds the standards for teaching Greek as a second/foreign language
3. Greek language curriculum and goals defined by *Ellinomatheia* proficiency examinations, ACTFL (American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages), and New York State Regents examinations for the instruction of Greek as a second/foreign language.

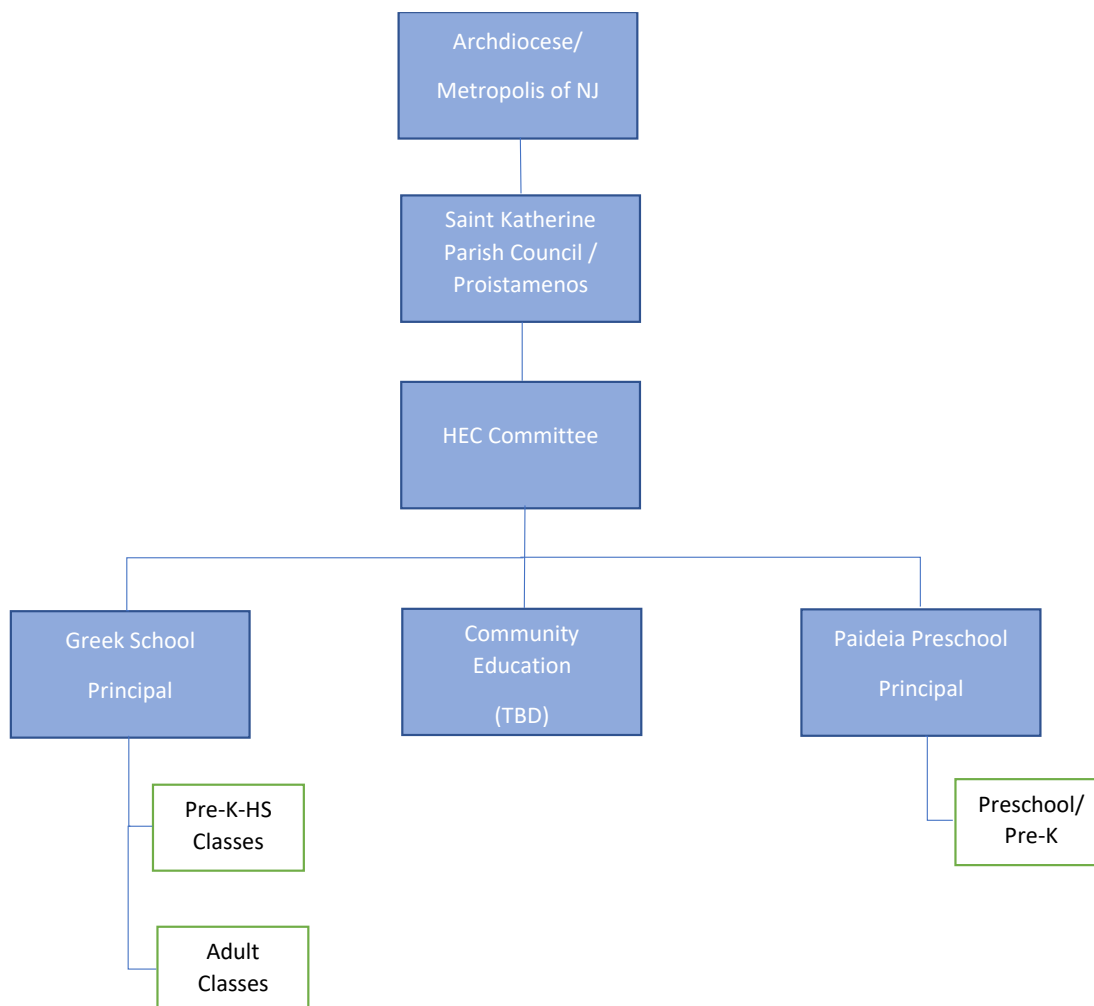
The HEC continuously seeks input from educational scholars to enhance how we teach the Greek language and the Greek Orthodox faith, culture, and customs to the community. Most importantly, our curriculum and educational programs continues to evolve as we incorporate new forms of instruction into our schools.

In addition to adhering to a rigorous and well defined curriculum, the HEC leverages technology to encourage educational innovation and remote learning into our offerings. The technologies we incorporate include video/web conferencing technology for remote learning and meetings (when applicable), collaboration technology to more efficiently and clearly distribute homework assignments, and computer aided classroom instruction to enhance instructional methods during class time.

## HEC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Saint Katherine **HEC Committee** manages the HEC under the auspices of the Saint Katherine Parish Council and the church. The church functions under the jurisdiction of the Holy Greek Orthodox Church of America, Metropolis of New Jersey. The schools have two principals- one for the Preschool and one for the Greek School.

**Figure 1. Saint Katherine HEC Organizational Structure**



## **Saint Katherine HEC**



### **PAIDEIA PRESCHOOL POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

#### **VISION AND GOALS**

PAIDEIA Bilingual Preschool (PAIDEIA) was created to support the families of our community by providing the best possible daycare and Preschool education for our children. PAIDEIA (from *Paidos* meaning “child”) is the Greek word for “education.” The Ancient Greeks have taught us the importance of learning in all aspects of life. While we owe our very existence – or *psyche* to our God, the contents of consciousness and what children learn about the world, and their place in it, is the work of the educator and of each parent.

PAIDEIA is a year round program offering a loving and safe setting, an enriching and challenging curriculum that prepares students two to five years old for their next developmental level, and also enhances their moral and spiritual growth. The PAIDEIA Bilingual Preschool Program is open to all families who wish to enrich their children’s education by introducing them to the Greek language, Hellenic culture and the Greek Orthodox faith. PAIDEIA aims to help the child develop an appreciation for learning. Our goals are to promote the **physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual** development of our children. We encourage the unique growth of each child using a Greek/English bilingual curriculum through music, fun and play.

- **Physical:** Developing fine and gross motor and sensory skills.
- **Emotional:** Developing positive self-concept and skills to communicate effectively.
- **Cognitive:** Developing speaking and early reading skills in English and Greek, as well as skills to think creatively.
- **Spiritual:** Acquire the knowledge to celebrate the Greek Orthodox religion.

PAIDEIA is committed to continuing the long tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church to support and maintain the Hellenic culture and language while also preparing children for their American education.

PAIDEIA incorporates the ancient Hellenistic Paideia emphasis on instilling a love of learning and in educating the “whole” person. We encourage children to learn in different ways, from each other, and to become self-motivated, independent and life-long learners. Using a holistic approach to early education, PAIDEIA strives to help every child achieve their educational potential while instilling a belief in their individual exceptional spirit.

## STAFF

Our teachers genuinely care about our students have the knowledge and experience to understand a child’s individual developmental needs and learning styles. Our teachers have degrees in education, experience in the field, and in early childhood development programs. The HEC conducts background checks of all staff. Our staff members are CPR and first aid certified. In addition, all staff members attend regular training sessions to enhance their teaching abilities, including Youth Worker Training sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

## CURRICULUM

Children are offered a preschool program with age-appropriate learning opportunities. They learn letters, colors, shapes, numbers and writing while singing, cooking, dancing, drawing and painting. Additionally, we offer instruction in both Music and Religion.

The daily schedule provides a balance of activities with attention to the following:

- Daily outdoor play (weather permitting)
- Alternating periods of quiet time and active play
- A balance of large muscle and small muscle activities
- Various small group and large group activities

The goal of the school is to emphasize concrete experiential learning. Some highlights of our curriculum include the following:

- Immersion in the Greek and English languages.
- Use of an approved English curriculum by the VA Department of Education
- Creating a cultural awareness of both American and Greek customs and traditions.
- Church (Scheduled visits for Divine Liturgy on Major Feast Days)
- Weekly enrichment (e.g., music)

- Field trips (For example, field trips in the Fall and/or Spring, plus additional trips that may be scheduled throughout the year.)
- Theater (children participate in various age-appropriate plays for school programs.)
- Science experiments and art projects

### **Curriculum Goals and Objectives**

PAIDEIA Preschool has developed its curriculum objectives based on the Virginia Department of Education's *Early Learning and Development Standards*, which provide minimum standards in literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, physical and motor development, and social and emotional development to preschool programs throughout the state. These are aligned with the Kindergarten Standards of Learning in Virginia and provide the necessary continuity of learning as children progress from preschool to Kindergarten. Your child's teacher will update you on your child's progress and developmental milestones regularly throughout the school year.

In addition, the preschool's Greek and English curricula are consistent with the Pre-K objectives recommended by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) so that our children are duly prepared for their entry into Kindergarten. Greek culture, history and the Greek Orthodox faith will also be incorporated in both the Greek and English schedules. An added dimension of our program includes bilingual education. Academic achievement is enhanced because the curriculum is taught in and through both languages. Students are encouraged to operate at their highest cognitive level, regardless of language ability.

### **Religious and Character Development**

PAIDEIA Preschool is a parochial school of the Greek Orthodox Church. Students are introduced to the fundamental religious beliefs and principles of the Christian Orthodox Faith (in Greek and English). Prayer is a part of the children's daily routine. The children recite a prayer at the beginning of the day and before meals. They learn about the life of important saints, sing simple hymns, and participate in the celebration of religious events. Their beliefs are strengthened by visits to the church and receiving Holy Communion. Students who are not of the Orthodox faith may opt out of religious activities. Students and parents are also given the opportunity to participate in various philanthropic opportunities throughout the year. This includes helping Philoptochos bake, collecting coats for coats drives, and canned food drives.

### **ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION**

PAIDEIA Bilingual Preschool welcomes diversity in both the student body and staff. We enroll students and hire staff without regard to race, color, religion, gender or national origin.

Prior to registering your child, you must contact the Principal to begin the application process. Once the application has been reviewed and a spot has been designated for your child, the registration process will begin.

There are a limited number of openings for full and part-time enrollment. We are currently accepting rolling enrollment throughout the year. New students may enroll at any time, subject to availability (those unable to be placed immediately will be put on our waiting list). Admission to the school is based on the following:

- The student's readiness and willingness to learn.
- The parents' understanding and acceptance of school policies and beliefs.
- Students that are 3 years of age, should be potty trained or working towards potty training.
- Priority is given in this order:
  - Returning students
  - Siblings of current students
  - Children of parishioners
  - All others

All students attending the 3-year old class and above must be fully toilet trained. However, we understand some of the younger children may not be fully trained. We are willing to work with the parents to successfully complete this process.



Factors resulting in a child not being accepted for enrollment will be communicated to the parents. Our staff is not trained to deal with severe learning or emotional disorders. We can provide individualized instruction to meet the developmental needs of most children. All new enrollments are provisional, subject to the student's reactions to the program during the first month.

**Supplies and Materials:** The school provides supplies for preschool classes. Individual teachers may request specific items to be provided by parents.

## **TUITION AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Tuition:** Invoices will be sent to each family on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month with tuition charges for the coming month. Tuition must be paid by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. If payments are received after this date, a late fee of 15% of your child's tuition will be charged to your account. Tuition payments are non-refundable and will not be pro-rated. If you choose to keep your child out of school for a particular length of time, you will still be responsible for paying that month's tuition. If you withdraw, you will need to re-enroll at a later date.

**Registration/Supply Fees:** The Registration Fee is an annual fee that is applicable to all students. There is also a supply fee that is assessed quarterly.

**Off-Schedule Days:** It is important to abide by the days and times you have registered to bring your child to school. We base our staff schedule on the number of children that we have coming on any given day. The school reserves the right to refuse to accommodate "off schedule" requests should they lead to over capacity or there is insufficient staff on-site. Should we accommodate the request; a fee of \$50 may be applied to your account.

**Late Pick-Up:** If you are more than five minutes late, a fee will be posted to your account. Please see the section on Late Pick-Up below.

**Late Pick-Up (After 6:00 PM):** The school closes at 6:00 PM. A late fee of \$15 dollars per child every 15 minutes after closing until the child is picked up. The late fee will be included in the following month's tuition invoice. If instances of late pick-up occur more than three times, enrollment of the child will be reassessed.

**Returned Checks:** All returned checks will be assessed a processing fee of \$90.

**Refunds:** There is no reduction or refund of tuition for ANY time (days/weeks/months) missed due to illness, snow, vacation, holidays, withdrawal, etc. within any tuition period. There are NO make-up days. Any weather related make-up days, will be announced by the principal as they are announced by Arlington Public Schools.

**Changes in Fees:** Tuition and fees are reviewed periodically. A thirty-day notice will be given if there is a change in your monthly tuition.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

**Voluntary Withdrawal:** When a child is voluntarily withdrawn from the program, a written notice is required. The principal must receive this notice at least thirty (30) days prior to your child's last day. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a charge of one month's tuition, unless extraordinary circumstances prevail, which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If you choose to re-enroll at a later date, you may do so subject to availability and will be placed on a waiting list.

**Involuntary Withdrawal:** Paideia Preschool does its best to provide a safe environment for all of our students and staff. While the majority of students adapt to our program, some children may have difficulties. Should a student display inappropriate behavior or an unwillingness to participate in classroom activities, a conference will be scheduled with the parents, teacher(s), and principal to decide on an action plan. The action plan will be signed by all present at the conference. If there is no success two weeks after the plan is implemented, the child will be asked to be withdrawn from the program.

As our staff is not trained to deal with behavioral patterns that stem from severe learning or emotional disorders, or special needs, or otherwise require the assessment or intervention of a specialist (e.g., psychologist, counselor, social worker), we reserve the right to dismiss the child in these instances.

## CLASS PLACEMENT

It is not school policy to distribute the names of children and their classroom placement. Children and their parents are informed of the class placement shortly after enrollment. Placements are ultimately the responsibility of the school administration. Information about each child is used to make up the most productive classes possible. Educators take many factors into account to ensure productive classes. Specific concerns of parents will be taken into consideration if submitted in writing. Any information provided by parents is shared with the team working on class lists and a copy is placed in the student's cumulative file for future reference.

It is highly recommended that students in Pre-Kindergarten attend PAIDEIA for the full schedule so that they may benefit from the entire instructional program in both Greek and English. We believe the experience of being in school full-time and receiving complete instruction in both Greek and English is the best strategy to prepare our students for Kindergarten.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

### Parent Teacher Association

The purpose of the Paideia PTA is to promote a cooperative effort among the parents, teachers, and the greater church community, as well as to assist in meeting the needs of our school and students. Our preschool has varying opportunities for participation in this regard, including various social and fundraising events planned throughout the year. Fundraisers are a significant source of revenue for the school and require everyone's active support and participation. The proceeds of our fundraisers will go toward the needs of the school that are otherwise not covered by tuition (e.g., technology, playground equipment, art supplies, special events, etc.). Additionally and importantly, the PTA provides a platform for parents to respectfully articulate their values and expectations regarding the school. Your continued support is essential in creating a positive learning atmosphere for your child.

### Parent Communication

PAIDEIA encourages open lines of communication for parents or legal guardians to communicate with the school regarding their children. Parents should call or email the principal with any questions or concerns at 703-671-7715 or [hec-administration@stkchurch.com](mailto:hec-administration@stkchurch.com), respectively. If a pressing issue arises, parents are encouraged to address it immediately with either the teacher or principal.

Parent-Teacher conferences may be scheduled during the school year at which time teachers will share with parents/guardians their observations on individual child's progress. Please talk with your child's teacher to schedule a mutually convenient meeting.

### Communication Emails

Regular school wide emails will be sent by the Principal and as needed to relay important information.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For safety reasons, emergency contact information must be kept up to date. The principal must be notified in writing of any changes in your address and phone numbers, including the addresses and phone numbers of people who should be called if you cannot be reached

## STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### Morning Arrivals

Your child's safety is our highest priority. **All children must be signed in and out daily in the log at the front of the entrance. They must be escorted to the classroom door by a teacher or the caregiver.** Please do not accompany your child into the classroom. Drop-off for the Preschool program is between 7:30am to 9:00am.

**School closes at 6:00pm.** Any child picked up after that time, is subject to a late fee.

Parents are asked to call if they are going to be late picking up their child, however, this will not relieve them from the responsibility to pay the late fee. If we do not hear from parents five minutes after their scheduled pick-up time, we will begin calling the contacts on their emergency contact list.

## CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Children are expected to:

- Be truthful
- Be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults
- Refrain from harassment of any kind
- Use appropriate language
- Speak respectfully to and about others
- Respect all school and personal property

Our approach to discipline is to solve behavior concerns using redirection and positive reinforcement. The children are made aware of the rules of their classroom and what is expected of them. We reinforce positive behavior through attention, praise and recognition.

When behavior is an issue in the classroom, the teacher discusses the behavior with the child and alternative solutions are explored. When necessary, we work with parents to resolve behavioral issues.

For behavioral concerns that cannot be resolved, we reserve the right to dismiss or suspend a child for unsatisfactory behavior. As our staff is not trained to deal with behavioral patterns that stem from severe learning or emotional disorders, or special needs, or otherwise require the assessment or intervention of a specialist (*e.g.*, psychologist, counselor, social worker), we reserve the right to dismiss the child in these instances.

In the event that an incident or injury has occurred during class time, an injury/incident report will be prepared and the parent will be notified.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The safety and well-being of the children is the highest priority at PAIDEIA. To help ensure their safety, the building is secured at all times and some areas are monitored by video cameras. Visitor access to the building is obtained by ringing the doorbell; the PAIDEIA Principal will provide parents necessary access code. The playground is fenced in and adequate staff remains with the children at all times.

### Sick Policy

The purpose of our sick policy is to reduce the spread of illness among children and to encourage full recuperation of sick children before they return to school. We depend on parents to assist us in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all of our children.

Children may not attend school with any illness that threatens the health of other children or staff, or that prevents their participation in their classroom's routine. Virginia Health Department regulations governing periods of infection will be enforced and you agree to abide by all illness policies set forth in a written notice or in the Parents' Handbook. Further, we reserve the right to send home any student who shows signs of illness at school. Any student who becomes ill at school will be made comfortable until his/her parent can be notified and the student is picked up from school. A parent must pick up the ill child normally within one hour of notification.

**A sick child must stay home where he/she is most comfortable. Children may be sent home if they have any specific symptoms as listed below. In addition, a child must be free of all of these specified symptoms for at least 24 hours before he/she can be returned to school.**

These symptoms are as follows:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more

- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period (including recurring episodes of diarrhea at school)
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- A constant cough or sore throat
- Fussy, cranky behavior and generally not himself/herself
- A skin rash, excluding diaper rash
- Head lice
- Symptoms of a communicable disease

Following an illness, a child may return to school once he/she has either been seen by a doctor or it has been determined that the illness is not contagious. (A doctor's clearance should always be requested and brought to school with the child.) Additionally, if a child is absent over a prolonged period of time due to an illness, please bring a doctor's note to the school stating the reason for his/her absence.

**Pandemic (e.g., COVID-19) conditions continue to evolve. The school will follow state guidelines regarding notification of parents of pandemic related infections, testing requirements, the wearing of mask and other protective gear, and the closure of classes. The principal will notify parents in as timely manner as possible regarding any changes to the school's policies.**

### **Chronic medical conditions**

The parent of any child on a continuing regimen for any chronic medical condition shall inform the school Principal and identify in writing the child's supervising physician.

### **Lice**

The school has a "NO NIT" policy for head lice. The child must be treated and free of nits for at least 24 hours before returning to school, at which time they must bring with them proof of treatment.

### **Reportable Communicable Disease**

**Parents must notify the school as soon as possible (at least within 24 hours or the next business day) after their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.**

### **Immunizations**

All students are required by state law to have updated immunization and health forms on file. For new students, these health forms must be submitted by the start of the school year. For re-enrolled students, the forms must be updated yearly, typically on the student's birthday/annual doctor's visit.

### **Medical and Developmental Assessments**

In order to better enable our staff to meet the needs of your child, parents **MUST** disclose any medical/developmental evaluation and also provide all healthcare provider reports and/or evaluations.

### **Medication/Allergies**

PAIDEIA will make reasonable efforts to work with individual families regarding allergies, intolerance to food, and medications.

The school will maintain emergency medications (Epi-Pen) for severe allergic reactions if provided by the parent(s) to the principal with written authorization from the family physician. Parents will be responsible for ensuring that all medications are current and will not expire during the course of the school year. Parents are responsible to provide a safe snack alternative for a child with food allergies.

The teachers are certified in first aid, CPR, and MAT. They have the certification to dispense most forms of medication. Should your child need medicine, related paperwork and a doctor's prescription is required.

## Sunscreen

Please apply the first dose of sunscreen before bringing your child to school. A second dose may be applied in the afternoon if parents agree to and adhere to the following criteria:

1. All sunscreen bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and kept with their teacher.
2. Parents provide written permission allowing any staff member to apply the sunscreen.

## Diaper Rash Cream

If your child is still wearing diapers, please make sure that we have diaper rash cream on hand should the need arise to use it on your child. Any cream/lotion sent to school must be clearly labeled with your child's name.

## Incidents

Staff members are trained in first aid and CPR and can tend to everyday bumps and bruises. If a child has an accident/incident during the day, parents will be provided an **incident report** at the time of pick-up. For any serious accident or incident, we will attempt to notify parents by telephone immediately.

In the event of an emergency, PAIDEIA staff is authorized to obtain immediate medical care for your child, based on the policy agreed upon in the registration packet.

## Safety

Children will be released only to authorized individuals. No child will be released to someone whose name is not on file. Only parents/guardians identified in the registration packet are authorized to pick up children unless additional names are provided in writing by parents.

In the event of serious emergency, the school will secure immediate medical attention. Every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians or authorized family members or friends as described in the "Student Illness/Emergency" section of the child's Tuition Agreement.

## Fire and Safety Drills

As required by law, the school holds regular fire and safety drills. Should these drills take place in inclement weather, all attempts will be made to assure that children are properly attired. Please take time to review and discuss the importance of such drills with your child and to be sure that he or she knows the routines.

## NATURAL DISASTERS OR OTHER DANGERS

The school has developed an emergency plan that deals with different situations and emergency management. The plan is designed to protect students and staff while at school or work. It includes procedures to respond to regional or national alerts, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other situations. Emergency drills are practiced by the staff and students regularly during the year.

In the event of an emergency, the school will keep apprised of the situation via radio, television and the web. Depending on the threat, we might evacuate the school, lock down or initiate a shelter-in-place. Our main goal is to protect the students and staff members.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

**Closing:** The Paideia Preschool will take into account multiple factors when closing the school to include the status of the Federal Government and Arlington County public schools. The Principal will promptly send an email/notification if the school will be closed. Families will be promptly notified of any changes to the best of our ability.

**Delays and Early Dismissal:** The Paideia Preschool will take into account multiple factors if there is a delay or early dismissal to include the status of the Federal Government and Arlington County public schools. The Principal will promptly send an email/notification if there is a delay or early dismissal.

**Disclaimer:** We reserve the right to make decisions in the best interest of the children, which may differ from the public schools' decision.

## FOOD AND NUTRITION

**Lunch and Snacks:** Parents are responsible for packing a lunch and ample snacks for their child. If your child is staying for after care, please ensure you provide enough food to sustain them until 6:00 pm.

Lunchboxes are kept in the classroom, so please make sure you provide ice packs to keep food cool or a thermos to keep it warm. To ensure the safety of our children, microwaving meals is not permitted at the preschool due to the risk of uneven heating, which can create hot spots and lead to burns.

To ensure the safety of all children, especially those with severe nut allergies, we kindly ask all parents and caregivers to follow these guidelines:

1. **No Peanuts or Tree Nuts** – Please do not send any food items containing peanuts, tree nuts (such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, pistachios, etc.), or nut-based products (e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, Nutella).
2. **Check Labels** – Packaged foods must be carefully checked to ensure they do not contain nuts or traces of nuts.
3. **No Shared Food** – To prevent accidental exposure, children are not allowed to share snacks or lunches.
4. **Handwashing & Cleanliness** – We encourage children to wash hands before and after eating to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
5. **Birthday & Special Treats** – If you wish to send treats for a celebration, they must be store-bought, labeled nut-free, and approved by the preschool staff in advance.
6. **Other Allergies** – While nuts are strictly prohibited, we recognize that some children may have additional allergies (e.g., dairy, eggs, gluten). Accommodations for other allergies will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents of children with specific allergies should notify the preschool administration and provide any necessary medical documentation or emergency action plans.

This policy is in place to protect children with life-threatening allergies. Your cooperation is essential in keeping our preschool a safe and inclusive environment for all.

**Sharing:** Children are instructed not to share food because of allergies or special diets of other children. If another child in the same class has a severe food allergy, we will notify the class parents and ask that you do not send your child to school with that food.

## BIRTHDAYS AND NAME DAYS

Parents are encouraged to celebrate their child's Birthday and Name Day. Please coordinate with your child's teacher. Children enjoy sharing special days with their friends at school.

## CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

While at school, children are asked to wear comfortable, washable clothing. They should also have outerwear and footwear that is suitable to the weather in order to allow for outdoor play.

All sweaters, hats, coats, mittens, boots, etc. must be labeled with the child's name.

**Extra Clothes:** We have a school supply of clean clothing that we can use in case a child does not have extras in his/her backpack. Should we send your child home with school items, please wash and return within a week. Also, should you have extra clothes at home, we will gladly accept donations.

For safety reasons, clogs, sandals, Crocs, open-toe, and slick-soled shoes may not be worn.

Candy, gum, war toys, toy weapons, jewelry and money are not allowed at school. This includes trading cards and pocket sized toys. While we encourage children to be creative and express their individuality, please refrain from sending your child to school in dress-up clothes. This includes any costume jewelry and toy shoes.

**Toys should be sent only when *Show and Tell* is scheduled for the class. Toys are not allowed at school at any other times.**

**Quiet time:** If your child is enrolled in the Full Day Program, you will need to pack a nap mat or blanket with a fitted crib sheet, and a small pillow for quiet time. The Preschool provides the cots. Regardless of your child's schedule, their nap mat is required to go home at the end of the week. Please wash the nap mat and send back to school with your child upon their return the following week. A stuffed animal or soft toy may be brought in if it helps with napping. **Toys that make noise or light-up are not allowed.**

## **PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE**

Virginia law imposes upon school personnel the legal responsibility of reporting to the local child protective services agency any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect.

In addition to background checks for preschool staff, all Greek Orthodox Archdiocese clergy and youth workers (including volunteers and staff) are required to complete background training and youth safety training as part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Youth Safety program.

## **Licensure**

**Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church has filed the required documentation for exemption as a child day center that is operated or conducted under the auspices of a religious institution pursuant to Section 63.2-1716 of the Code of Virginia.**

# **Saint Katherine HEC**



## **GREEK SCHOOL POLICIES and PROCEDURES**



## VISION AND GOALS

Greek Schools have served a critical role in Greek Orthodox Church communities across America since the birth of this republic. With the first Greek School founded in 1776 in St. Augustine, Florida, Greek immigrants across this country have made heroic efforts to establish Greek Schools that teach our children the Greek language and culture as well as the traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church. Likewise, within the Saint Katherine community, the initial members of our Parish founded the Saint Katherine Greek School in 1962, initially holding classes in a local motel until our first community center was built. The successful operation of our Greek School over the last 50 years has been a proud achievement for our community; not only has the school played a critical role in teaching multiple generations of our community the Greek language, but it is also recognized as one of the leading Greek Schools in the DC-Baltimore region.

The Saint Katherine HEC seeks to build upon this strong foundation to evolve the Greek School into one of the leading Greek language institutions in the US. Recognizing the challenges that Greek Schools face due to the demands on children's time and the need to teach Greek as a second language to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Greek-Americans, the Saint Katherine HEC's goal over the last several years has been to offer enhanced teaching methods and institute technology into the classroom. By doing so, we have been developing a strong academic curriculum that will provide your child the academic preparations necessary to pass the various levels of the Certificate of Attainment in Greek/Ellinomatheia exam, which is the only certificate offered by the Greek State and recognized globally. We appreciate your dedication to our Greek School and look forward to a rewarding experience for your child.

## STAFF

Our teachers are dedicated to instilling a love for learning. They genuinely care about children, and have the knowledge and experience to understand a child's individual developmental needs and learning styles. Our teachers are native Greek speakers, have relevant degrees and certifications, and experience teaching Greek in the US and/or Greece. The HEC conducts background checks of all staff. Our staff members are CPR and first aid certified. In addition, all staff members attend regular training sessions to enhance their teaching abilities, including Youth Worker Training sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

## CURRICULUM

Our HEC Greek School has moved from traditional grade to levels to a proficiency-based level system. Therefore, students will be placed in a level according to their speaking skills, and their knowledge of Greek vocabulary and grammar. Placement tests may be needed. By the end of September, we will be able to assess if your child is in a level that is most conducive to their learning.

For the lower ages, our school bases its program on the Papaloizos levels and textbooks. Students, ages 3+, begin in our Pre-K class. From there, they will advance to kindergarten typically when they are in Kindergarten in their Day School but up to the discretion of the teacher/Principal. After Kindergarten, the students will then proceed to levels 1-4, advancing to the next level once they have successfully mastered the concepts outlined by our program. After level 4, the students will then proceed to upper levels which are currently offered up to Advanced III (Gamma 2) where, as part of teaching the language and culture, each level helps prepare students for the different levels of the Ellinomatheia exam (A1, A2, B1, B2, G1, G2). Students new to the community will be assessed of their language proficiency prior to being assigned to a level.

Our Greek School curriculum has been designed with an emphasis on authentic communication for today's generation of students. We use games, technology, literature, and real-world experiences to increase student motivation and success. The curriculum builds incrementally to prepare students to take proficiency exams such as Ellinomatheia and NY Regent as early as the age of 8 and throughout the middle school and high school years.

**In addition to Greek language and culture instruction, this curriculum enables the student ultimately to achieve foreign language credits in high school (e.g., credits by examination, Seal of Biliteracy).**

## Religious and Ethical Education

Our Greek School is a parochial school of the Greek Orthodox Church. Students are introduced to the fundamental religious beliefs and principles of the Christian Orthodox Faith (in Greek). The children recite a prayer at the

beginning of class. They learn about the life of important saints and participate in the celebration of religious events. The children learn the rules of ethical conduct and behavior and are encouraged to do good deeds and help their fellow human beings by participating in clothing drives, etc.

## ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

The Saint Katherine Greek School accepts all children who are interested in learning the Greek Language, regardless of their Greek language proficiency (or that of their parents). We cater to the needs of all children—from those who have just arrived from Greece to those children who have yet to speak, hear, or read the Greek language.

To enroll a child, an Enrollment Form must be submitted. Enrollment for the following school year begins in the Spring and once registration opens, an e-mail will be sent to all parents whose children are currently enrolled. We ask that all current students submit their registration form by the early registration date. Early enrollment allows us to more effectively plan, hire staff and manage our budget.

Upon enrollment, the parent or legal guardian must disclose information regarding learning disabilities or participation in specialized classes, along with the appropriate documentation (e.g., IEP, emotional/behavioral assessment, academic action plan). Even though our staff will make an effort to provide individualized instruction to meet the developmental needs of most children, it is not trained to deal with severe learning or emotional disorders, or special needs. All new enrollments are provisional, subject to the student's reactions to the program during the first month. Once a child becomes a part of our program, the participation and support of the parents is essential. The parents' involvement helps us to be more effective.

## TUITION AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

**Tuition:** A discount is available for students/families paying their tuition by the deadline. A penalty applies for payments received after the late payment deadline date. We have transitioned to online registration and payments—tuition is encouraged to be paid online via credit card or ACH payment. If paid by credit card, service fees may apply. Tuition payments are non-refundable and will not be pro-rated. Financial assistance is available on a case by case basis.

**Returned Checks:** All returned checks will be assessed a processing fee of \$50.

**Refunds:** There is no reduction or refund of tuition for **ANY** time (days/weeks/months) missed due to illness, snow, vacation, holidays, withdrawal, etc. within any tuition period. There are **NO** make-up days. Any weather related make-up days, will be announced by the principal as they are announced by FCPS.

**Stewardship:** HEC offers a discounted rate for stewards of St. Katherine. Your stewardship pledge is good for the calendar year (Jan-Dec). In order to receive this discount, you must be a steward in good standing (*i.e.*, current for that year).

## WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

**Involuntary Withdrawal:** While the majority of students adapt to our program, some children may have difficulties. Should a student display inappropriate behavior or an unwillingness/inability to participate in classroom activities, a conference will be scheduled with the parents, teacher(s), and the principal to decide on an action plan. The action plan will be signed by all present at the conference. If there is no success two weeks after the plan is implemented, the child will be withdrawn from the program. Tuition is not refundable in such instances.

Attendance at the Greek School is critical—**if a child misses one class, they miss the equivalent of a week of classes at a normal day school.** As a result, children are ***strongly*** encouraged to attend every week of class. **Excessive absences or habitual tardiness will significantly hamper a student's academic progress.** We expect our students to apply the same dedication to Greek School as they do to their normal day schools. Attendance and tardiness will be reflected on report cards.

The HEC recognizes that some absences will occur due to illness or scheduling conflicts. Parents are strongly encouraged to inform their teacher as early as possible regarding an upcoming absence. In addition, parents and students should work with their teacher (through Blackboard, email, etc.) to understand which material to review during the week and avoid the student falling behind.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION**

### **Parent Involvement**

The **purpose of the** Greek School PTA is to promote a cooperative effort at meeting the needs of our school and students. Our school has many opportunities for participation, including fundraisers which are a significant source of funding for special school activities and infrastructure projects. Additionally, the PTA provides a platform for parents to respectfully articulate their values and expectations regarding the school and opportunities for collaboration with the principal and teaching staff.

### **Parent Communication**

We encourage open lines of communication for parents or legal guardians to communicate with the school regarding their children. If a pressing issue arises, parents are encouraged to address it immediately with either the teacher or principal. Parents are welcome to visit the school any time during the day to meet with the principal. Please e-mail/contact the principal in advance to ensure availability.

A Parent-Teacher conference may be scheduled at which time teachers will share with parents/guardians their observations on individual child's progress. Please talk with your child's teacher to schedule a mutually convenient meeting. If you are not satisfied with the results of your meeting with the teacher, you may also communicate with the principal.

### **Communication Emails**

Emails containing important information about upcoming events and activities are issued periodically. Please consult the collaboration tool (e.g., the HEC Blackboard site, email) for homework and classroom-related information.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For safety reasons, emergency contact information must be kept up to date. The principal and the teacher must be notified of any changes in your address and phone numbers, including the addresses and phone numbers of the people who should be called if you cannot be reached.

## **STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

All children must be escorted to the classroom door. Please do not accompany your child into the classroom. Drop-off for Greek School is 4:45 – 5:00pm on Friday, and from 09:15 – 09:30am on Saturday. Late drop-offs disrupt the classroom environment and greatly impede all students' learning. Please make every effort to be on time!

Children are picked up at 7:00pm on Friday and at 1:30pm on Saturday. Parents are asked to send an email to the principal and the teacher if they are going to be late picking up their child or if someone else will be picking up his/her child. The safety and well-being of the children is the highest priority at Greek school. To help ensure their safety, the building is secured at all times and monitored by video cameras. The playground is fenced in and adequate staff remains with the children at all times.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

Each classroom should be viewed as a learning environment where everyone must contribute in order to succeed. As a result, from an academic perspective, students are expected to:

- Complete all class work and homework on time.
- Keep books neat and clean.
- Participate in class discussions and activities.

From a behavioral perspective, students are expected to:

- Respect their teachers
- Respect each other
- Respect the school and its procedures

Our approach to discipline is to solve behavior concerns using redirection and positive reinforcement. The children are made aware of the rules of their classroom and what is expected of them. We reinforce positive behavior through attention, praise and recognition.

We will escalate issues for Greek School students who choose not to follow the class expectations in the following order:

1. The student will first be given a warning by the teacher;
2. If the behavior continues after the second warning, the student will be asked to have a discussion with his/her teacher regarding class issues outside of the classroom; and
3. If the behavior cannot be corrected directly with the student, the teacher will arrange a meeting with the student, parents and principal. At this meeting, a plan of action will be created and all parties must adhere to the plan.

We reserve the right to dismiss or suspend a child if the behavioral concern cannot be resolved within two weeks of implementation of the action plan.

As our staff is not trained to deal with behavioral patterns that stem from severe learning or emotional disorders, or special needs, or otherwise require the assessment or intervention of a specialist (*e.g.*, psychologist, counselor, social worker), we reserve the right to dismiss the child.

All communications between and among the teacher, student, parent and principal will be documented and maintained in the student's file. A copy of such documentation will be provided to all parties concerned.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The safety and well-being of our students is the highest priority of the HEC. To help ensure their safety, the building is secured at all times and monitored by video cameras (both inside and outside the classroom). Visitor access to the building is restricted much of the time. The playground is fenced in and adequate staff remains with the children at all times. In the event that an incident or injury has occurred during class time, an injury/incident report will be prepared and the parent will be notified.

### Sick Policy

The purpose of our sick policy is to reduce the spread of illness among children and to encourage full recuperation of sick children before they return to school. We depend on parents to assist us in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all of our children.

Children may not attend school with any illness that threatens the health of other children or staff, or that prevents their participation in their classroom's routine. Virginia Health Department regulations governing periods of infection will be enforced and you agree to abide by all illness policies set forth in a written notice or in the Parents' Handbook. Further, we reserve the right to send home any student who shows signs of illness at school. Any student who becomes ill at school will be made comfortable until his/her parent can be notified and the student is picked up from school. A parent must pick up the ill child within one hour of notification.

**A sick child must stay home where he/she is most comfortable. Children may be sent home if they have any specific symptoms as listed below. In addition, a child must be free of all of these specified symptoms for at least 24 hours before he/she can be returned to school.**

These symptoms are as follows:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period (including recurring episodes of diarrhea at school)
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- A constant cough or sore throat
- Fussy, cranky behavior and generally not himself/herself
- A skin rash, excluding diaper rash
- Head lice
- Symptoms of a communicable disease

Following an illness, a child may return to school once he/she has either been seen by a doctor or it has been determined that the illness is not contagious. (A doctor's clearance should always be requested and brought to school with the child.) Additionally, if a child is absent over a prolonged period of time due to an illness, please bring a doctor's note to the school stating the reason for his/her absence.

**Pandemic (e.g., COVID-19) conditions continue to evolve. The school will follow state guidelines regarding notification to parents of pandemic related infections, testing requirements, the wearing of masks and other protective gear, and the closure of classes. The principal will notify parents in as timely manner as possible regarding any changes to the school's policies.**

### **Chronic medical conditions**

The parent of any child on a continuing regimen for a non-episodic condition shall inform the school principal and identify in writing the child's supervising physician. If necessary, and with parental written consent, there may be occasions when the school needs to communicate with the physician regarding possible effects on the pupil's behavior at school and special emergency procedures.

### **Lice**

The school has a "NO NIT" policy for head lice. The child must be treated and free of nits for at least 24 hours before returning to school, at which time they must bring with them proof of treatment.

### **Reportable Communicable Disease**

**Parents must notify the school within 24 hours or the next business day after their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease** as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.

### **Immunizations**

All students are required by state law to have updated immunization and health forms on file. For new students, these health forms must be submitted by the start of the school year. For re-enrolled students, the forms must be updated yearly, typically on the student's birthday/annual doctor's visit.

### **Medical and Developmental Assessments**

In order to better enable our staff to meet the needs of your child, parents **MUST** disclose any medical/developmental evaluation and also provide all healthcare provider reports and/or evaluations.

### **Medication/Allergies**

The Greek School staff will make reasonable efforts to work with individual families regarding allergies, intolerance to food, and medications.

The school will maintain emergency medications (Epi-Pen) for severe allergic reactions if provided by the parent(s) to the principal with written authorization from the family physician. Parents will be responsible for ensuring that

all medications are current and will not expire during the course of the school year. Parents are responsible to provide a safe snack alternative for a child with food allergies.

Aside from the Epi-Pen, no medication, including over the counter medicine will be sent to school. The teachers are certified in first aid and CPR, but do not have the certification required to dispense medicine. Should your child need medicine, a family member must come to school to provide the needed medicine.

## **Incidents**

Staff members are trained in first aid and CPR and can tend to everyday bumps and bruises. If a child has an accident/incident during the day, parents will be informed accordingly by the teacher or Principal at the time of pick-up. For any serious accident or incident, we will attempt to notify parents by telephone or email immediately. Therefore, parents are required to monitor telephone/email communications during class time.

In the event of an emergency, HEC staff is authorized to obtain immediate medical care for your child, based on the policy agreed upon in the registration packet.

## **Safety**

Children will be released only to authorized individuals. No child will be released to someone whose name and ID documents are not on file. Only parents/guardians identified in the registration packet are authorized to pick up children unless additional names are provided in writing by parents.

In the event of serious emergency, the school will secure immediate medical attention. Every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians or authorized family members or friends as described in the "Student Illness/Emergency" section of the child's Tuition Agreement.

## **Fire and Safety Drills**

As required by law, the school holds regular fire and safety drills. Should these drills take place in inclement weather, all attempts will be made to assure that children are properly attired. Please take time to review and discuss the importance of such drills with your child and to be sure that he or she knows the routines.

## **NATURAL DISASTERS OR OTHER DANGERS**

The school has developed an emergency plan that deals with different situations and emergency management. The plan is designed to protect students and staff while at school or work. It includes procedures to respond to regional or national alerts, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other situations. Emergency drills are practiced by the staff and students regularly during the year.

In the event of an emergency, the school will keep apprised of the situation via radio, television and the web. Depending on the threat, we might evacuate the school, lock down or initiate a shelter-in-place. Our main goal is to protect the students and staff members.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

**Closing:** The Greek School will take into account multiple factors when closing the school to include the status of Arlington County public schools and afternoon/weekend activities. The Principal will promptly send an email/notification if the school will be closed. Please work with the Principal and your teacher to participate in remote instruction on days that the school is closed.

**Delays and Early Dismissal:** The Greek School will take into account multiple factors if there is a delay or early dismissal to include the status of Arlington County schools and afternoon/weekend activities. The Principal will promptly send an email/notification if there is a delay or early dismissal.

**Disclaimer:** We reserve the right to make decisions in the best interest of the children, which may differ from the public schools' decision.

## FOOD AND NUTRITION

**Lunch and Snacks:** Parents are responsible for packing a snack (Friday) and lunch (Saturday) for your child. Lunchboxes are kept in the classroom, so please make sure you provide ice packs to keep food cool. We have access to a microwave, but please try to pack food that does not need heating.

**Sharing:** Children are instructed not to share food because of allergies or special diets of other children. If another child in the same class has a severe food allergy, we will notify the class parents and ask that you do not send your child to school with that food.

## BIRTHDAYS AND NAME DAYS

Parents are encouraged to celebrate their child's Birthday and Name Day. Please coordinate with your child's teacher. Children enjoy sharing special days with their friends at school.

Kindly do not distribute party invitations at school unless they are for all the children. This will avoid hurt feelings among the uninvited and will prevent unnecessary conflict between parents.

## CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

While at school, children are asked to wear comfortable, washable clothing. They should also have outerwear and footwear that is suitable to the weather in order to allow for outdoor play. All sweaters, hats, coats, mittens, boots, etc. must be labeled with the child's name. For safety reasons, clogs, sandals, Crocs, open-toe, and slick-soled shoes may not be worn. Personal items, including electronic devices, should be kept in the student's backpack, unless specifically requested by the teacher for instructional purposes..

## Lost & Found

There is a "lost & found" box outside th's office. Any items left in the classrooms or school building will be placed in this box. Periodically, any unclaimed items will be donated to local charities.

## Playground

Weather permitting and for certain grades, outdoor activities will be provided. Specific times are set aside for each age group to insure safety and variety.

## PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

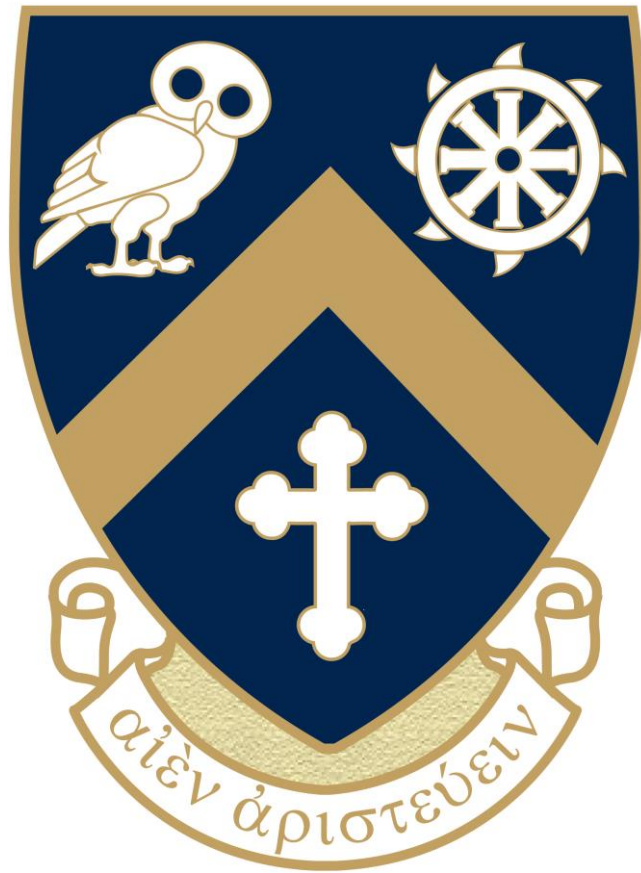
Virginia law imposes upon school personnel the legal responsibility of reporting to the local child protective services agency any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect.

All Greek Orthodox Archdiocese clergy and youth workers (including Greek School volunteers and staff) are required to complete background training and youth safety training as part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Youth Safety program.

**Notes:**



# **Saint Katherine Hellenic Education Center**



*~ Ever to Excel ~*