



July 31, 2018

Dear First School Families,

I hope you are well and have had an opportunity to find your own kind of adventure so far this summer. Whether you have stayed close to home or wandered great distances, I think we can all agree that these summer months always feel fleeting. It is hard to imagine that in just a few weeks we will be starting another school year. Each member of the First School faculty and staff is looking forward to welcoming our families for the first day of school on Monday, August 27.

### **New Faculty 2018-2019**

There are some additions and changes to our faculty for the coming school year. We have three new faculty members joining us!

- **Sarah Bright - First School Music.** Sarah rejoins the Key School faculty after several years teaching in both Ohio and other Maryland schools including the Washington Conservatory, the Toledo Symphony of Music, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, and St. Martin's Lutheran School. She has earned a B.A. in English and literature from the University of Maryland as well as a B.A. in music from St. Mary's College of Maryland. With her varied experiences and particular passion for teaching very young students, it is terrific welcome Sarah back to Key School.
- **Danielle Kane - Pre-Kindergarten Assistant.** Danielle will work with Susan Fritz this school year. She currently owns and operates Broadneck Peninsula Child Care where she is responsible for the care of children after school hours. Additionally Danielle's previous work with young children includes assistant teaching at both Chesapeake Academy and Bright Beginnings Children's Learning Center. Danielle has studied early childhood development at Anne Arundel Community College. We are so pleased to have Danielle joining our community.
- **Jeannette Seipp - Pre-Kindergarten Teacher.** As another new team member in Pre-Kindergarten, Jeanette will team up with Alice Lerner this year. She joins Key School with many years of early childhood education experience. Most recently a second grade teacher in Prince George's County Public Schools, Jeannette also taught Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten at St. Andrew's United Methodist Day School and Chesapeake Academy, respectively. She earned a B.S. in history and an M.Ed in early childhood education from Towson University. Jeannette's experience and insights will add so much to our Pre-Kindergarten.

In addition to new faculty, there are some other changes, too. Vicki Bushmann moves from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten to partner with Ronnie Blackstone. Wendy Waymouth, a former Kindergarten teacher, remains a vital member of our faculty and will be joining both the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten teams a few times a week to offer language arts support and enrichment.

With new faculty and a few reorganized teaching partners, here are the homeroom teaching teams for 2018-2019:

Key-Wee:	Mary Mix and Meeghan Lewis
Pre-School:	Enita Moore and Roni James Jackie Olson and Carol Churches
Pre-Kindergarten:	Susan Fritz and Danielle Kane Jeannette Seipp and Alice Lerner
Kindergarten:	Vicki Bushmann and Ronnie Blackstone Karin Walsh and Bethani DaGrossa

### **Summer Professional Development**

With new teachers joining the faculty and others shifting to new roles, a significant portion of the professional development time was devoted to review and enhancement of the curricular program.

- Vicki Bushmann worked with both Karin Walsh and Ronnie Blackstone to learn the tenants of the Kindergarten program as well as the daily routines and units of study that engage students in their learning.
- Taking a deeper dive into the specifics of the Kindergarten program, the teachers also partnered with Sharon Kraynak, First School science teacher, to consider ways to more deeply integrate their units of study with the science program.
- The team also joined with Ellie Young, First and Lower School Math Coordinator, to refresh materials and consider the scope and sequence of Kindergarten math.
- The new faculty on the Pre-Kindergarten team, Jeannette Seipp and Danielle Kane, also worked with Susan Fritz and Alice Lerner to learn in greater detail the components of the Pre-Kindergarten program and establish important routines.
- Carol Churches, who in addition to her role as a Pre-School Assistant, also oversees our outdoor space, attended the annual Nature Explorer conference where she continued to

learn about the program and has brought back fresh ideas for a our play space and ways to engage our students in our outdoor areas.

- Enita Moore attended a local workshop about practicing yoga and mindfulness with young children and is eager to bring her practice into the Pre-School program.

### **Classroom Placement**

I am sure your child, and probably you, too, are eager to hear from your upcoming homeroom teacher. Notes from the teachers will be mailed on Monday, August 6. If your child does not receive news by Monday, August 13, please contact Bridgette Michaels, the First School Administrative Assistant at 443-321-7866.

### **Start of School Conferences**

As we turn our attention to the start of the school year, teachers are eager to get to know their students and to begin to develop important partnerships with families. To allow time for these relationships to begin, First School homeroom teachers will be holding parent conferences on Monday, August 20 and Tuesday, August 21. On August 10 you will receive an email with a link to a sign-up sheet through which you can schedule your conference time.

### **Orientation Day**

Please plan to join us on Friday, August 24 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. for the First School Orientation. This is a terrific way for your child to visit his or her classroom, meet teachers, and connect with peers prior to the first day of school. Each classroom has an outdoor entrance that you can use at arrival time each day. First School staff will be available to help guide you to the appropriate classroom(s).

### **Lunch: We have a delivery option this year!**

We are excited to tell you that students will have the option of buying pre-made healthy lunches starting this school year. Families will have the opportunity to sign up monthly for a box lunch with the catering service. Menus will be listed on their website, which will be accessible through the Parent Portal. Each child's box lunch will be delivered directly to their homeroom. The foods are all nut-free and prepared in a nut-free kitchen. More information about signing up will be forthcoming. If you decide on this option, please make sure to send your child to school with a morning snack. You will receive an email with the details by mid-August. We anticipate the lunch delivery to begin September 5.

### **Family Photo**

The main hallway in the First School has traditionally held a bulletin board featuring all of the families in our community. We asked that you select a 4x6 photo of your family for 2018-2019 display. Please email your photos to Bridgette Michaels ([bomichaels@keyschool.org](mailto:bomichaels@keyschool.org)) so we can get your family's photo posted soon. The young children love seeing themselves, their families and friends on the wall.

## **Parent Portal**

Located under the “Parents” link found on the top of the website’s landing page, Key's Parent Portal comprises important resources you can refer to throughout the year, including all links in my letter below. First School specific information is found under the "Forms, Letters, Lists, & Resources" box.

## **2018-2019 Student/Parent Handbook**

The [Key School Student/Parent Handbook](#) is a great resource for information, policies and procedures. An important section to review highlights the arrival, dismissal and parking procedures. Here are a few important details:

- The First School day begins at 8:20 a.m. Arriving a few minutes before 8:20 allows your child to unpack, greet teachers and friends, and settle into morning routines. Teachers are ready to welcome students at 8:00 a.m.
- Dismissal is either 12:00 noon or 3:10 p.m. Teachers will open the outside classroom doors when they are ready to dismiss students.
- For children in Kindergarten through Grade 4 Before Care is available beginning at 7:30 a.m. Click on the link or more information or to register your child for [Before Care](#).

As we near the start of school, I will send a more detailed message about drop-off and pick up procedures.

## **First School Policies and Procedures**

In addition to Key School’s Handbook, our Division has a document outlining specific procedures that will help you and your child as you transition to the school year. Read more about [First School Policies and Procedures](#).

As you prepare for the start of school, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to greeting all of you soon.

All the best,

Becky Fetters  
First School Division Head