



SARAH DOOLEY CENTER FOR AUTISM

at ST. JOSEPH'S VILLA



Student-Parent Handbook 2024-2025

www.SarahDooleyCenter.org

Sarah Dooley Center for Autism Student-Parent Handbook

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Welcome Letter from the Senior Director

Hello, Sarah Dooley Parents, Caregivers & Guardians-

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! We are excited about the start of new year as we welcome new staff, new students and a newly opened classroom (our 12th!). This places us in a strong position to continue to serve our public-school partners in the Greater Central Virginia region by increasing the number of students we can serve.

We encourage you to take time to review our 2024-25 calendar as there have been substantial changes to it.

We made the decision to alter our calendar in response to the changes to the academic calendars of all of the public schools we serve. We tried to align it as closely as possible with the public school calendars to make things as easy as possible on our transportation partners and with our parents who have other children in public schools. Our observance of major holidays like Winter Break and Thanksgiving are unchanged. The main difference you'll see is in our June break (one week) and our August break (two weeks). We basically 'moved' those up two weeks to align with the decision by local schools to move up their end-of-year and beginning-of-year dates.

Please take a few minutes to read the new handbook and familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures.

We're looking forward to welcoming our students back on Monday, August 19th, 2024.

Educationally yours,



Adam Dreyfus, MA, LBA

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General Information

St. Joseph's Villa is one of the longest continuously operating children's nonprofits in the United States, founded in 1834. As community needs changed, the Villa transitioned to become a 501(c)(3) nonsectarian nonprofit organization in 1977. Today, operating under the Villa umbrella of services, the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism is uniquely positioned to take a collaborative approach to serving the whole student and their family, in partnership with our community. Our motto is *We never stop believing in children and their families* - and we mean it!

St. Joseph's Villa offers a variety of academic programs that meet the needs of elementary, middle and high school students who are experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulties, or are living with learning or developmental disabilities. The Sarah Dooley Center for Autism serves students primarily diagnosed on the autism spectrum. All Villa schools serve students in the Richmond metro area as well as other counties across Central Virginia. For more information, visit www.NeverStopBelieving.org.

Licensure and Accreditations

All of the schools of St. Joseph's Villa are fully licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Educational Facilities. Administrators and teachers meet licensing and endorsement standards of the Virginia Department of Education.

Parental Responsibilities and Involvement

It is the utmost importance for the staff and parent/guardian to communicate on a consistent basis. Studies have shown that your child's success greatly increases when the parent/guardian is involved with the day-to-day school activities. We highly encourage all parents/guardians to connect with our staff in a variety of ways, including: emails; calling; visiting our facility; and informing us of any changes such as medication or significant events that occur in your child's life that could impact his/her academic success. Please notify your child's teacher prior to visiting to ensure we are accessible and available to you upon arrival.

Talking with your child and reviewing his/her Home Log/Credit sheets daily is a great way to stay abreast of the events that occur here at school. Nine-week report cards and interim reports will be sent home for review. We conduct parent-teacher conferences and trainings throughout the school year at scheduled times.

Additionally, applying what your child is learning at school in the home environment will reinforce the knowledge gained and increase the chances of success. For further details on how to implement learned behavior at home, feel free to contact our staff for guidance.

Staff Qualifications & Trainings

A dedicated team comprised of a Senior Director, Program Director of Operations, Clinical Supervisor, Education Coordinators, Speech-Language Pathologists, Board Certified and Licensed Behavior Analysts, Education Specialists, Behavior Specialists, Treatment Specialists, Licensed Teachers, Crisis Counselors, and an Operations Coordinator all work with our students every day to assure quality services and academics are provided.

All staff receive mandatory trainings prior to assignment with annual refresher courses. Trainings include CPR, First Aid, Medication Management, Vehicle Training, Therapeutic Options, Emergency Management and St. Joseph's Villa Orientation as well an in-depth service orientation. In addition, weekly training is provided to the staff in specific instructional strategies and issues relevant to students served.

Hours of Operation

School hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., Monday-Friday except on Wednesdays. Students are dismissed at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday. The main office is open from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday each week. To ensure the safety of all students and staff, visitors are required to sign in and out when visiting the program.

Program Description and Philosophy

The Sarah Dooley Center for Autism provides educational, transitional and life skills training to students who are faced with significant challenges related to autism. The program includes several interrelated components, all designed to provide a successful transition into the community following the student's education.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are offered including seasonal parties and the Prom. All activities, including field trips are supervised by well trained teachers and staff.

Additional Services

Students have the opportunity to participate in a multitude of services offered by St. Joseph's Villa which include:

- Counseling
- Speech Services; The role of our speech language pathologist is to collaborate and consult with teachers and caregivers to create a functional system of communication for each student. Daily instruction is provided. Through a collaborative model, we use an integrated collaborative speech-language therapy model. This model emphasizes consultation, collaborative planning, and implantation between the speech-language pathologists and classroom teachers to meet the needs of students each day across all environmental settings.
- Art Classes
- Use of technology in instruction
- Library
- Career and Transitional Services - Students participate in a variety of activities to develop their career and transition skills. This includes the chance to experience training locations on and off the campus of St. Joseph's Villa associated with the Career and Transition Services program, either through a campus internship or through Work Adjustment Training opportunities.
- Vocational opportunities

Admissions Criteria

Students range in age from ages 5-22 and have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disability, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Other Health Impairments and/or Speech/Language Impairment. Students are working on a special (IEP) diploma or certificate of completion. Student face-to-face tours will be scheduled through centralized admissions. All visitors will be subject to our campus protocols.

Admission Procedure

1. All referral calls will be received by or directed to the Centralized Admissions Office and documented on the initial referral screening form.
2. Centralized Admissions staff will collect the required screening information and record it in the electronic client database system.
3. Admissions staff will confirm service specific eligibility and funding.
4. Admission staff will obtain copies of the social history, psychological report, or IEP as applicable. If the student has an IEP, staff will ensure the following:
 - a. IEP is current.
 - b. IEP is signed by all parties
 - c. IEP is service specific (private day is on the placement page).
 - d. Eligibility is current and contains all required signatures.
5. Admissions staff will schedule a tour and interview with the family to include interface with the director, clinician, or education coordinator. The placement agency will be notified of the date and the time of the tour. Any reports provided by the placement agency or family will be sent to the service in advance of the tour.
6. Admission staff will bring a pre-populated intake packet to the tour. The parent may complete the intake packet at the conclusion of the tour or take it home to be returned at their earliest convenience.
7. The service will determine the admission decision and communicate the decision to Centralized Admissions Office.
8. Admission staff will offer resources as needed to support responsiveness and ease of referral process:
 - a. Medications: Once a student is accepted and a POF is completed by all parties (physician and parent), med-trained staff will accept medication into the service and administer as appropriate.
9. The Centralized Admissions Office will notify referrals and placement agencies as applicable by phone and in writing regarding the admission decision. Referral information will be provided to individuals not accepted to programs at St. Joseph's Villa.
10. Admission staff will work with the placement agency to ensure transportation has been arranged for the student.

For students in the special education program, upon admission an IEP meeting may be scheduled to review or change content within the first 30 days, if necessary.

Intake documentation may include but is not limited to:

- Results from a physical exam and immunization records signed by a physician
- TDAP Test results for students grade 7
- HPV exam for all 7th grade students
- Meningococcal for all 7th and 12th grade students
- Most current psychological and social history (if applicable)
- Copies of previous assessments and/or testing
- Most recent academic transcripts

Exclusionary Criteria

- Adjudicated sex offenders
- Adjudicated fire starters
- Medically fragile
- Actively psychotic or psychotic episodes
- Actively suicidal or homicidal

Tuition

For students referred to our schools by their Local Educational Agency (Public School), The Family Assessment and Planning Team is responsible for allocating funds necessary to provide private education and related services. A current signed Purchase of Service Order (POSO) or a letter to pay for services rendered must be submitted to the St. Joseph's Villa Finance Office upon admission. Charges are based on enrollment.

Additional supplies needed that are not a part of the curriculum such as medical supplies or personal sanitary items are not included and are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Cancellation Policy

St. Joseph's Villa bills for services on a monthly basis for the prior month. Tuition is prorated for students who discharged in accordance with contractual/purchase order stipulations.

Transportation

Each student's Local Education Agency (LEA) provides transportation for your child to and from school unless other arrangements have been made by the educational agency or parent/guardian. Our educational and clinical staff provides support for students to and from each vehicle in the mornings and at the end of the school day. Once the student has been transferred to the supervision of the transportation staff, it is their responsibility to conduct any securing or fastening of the student into any safety equipment per the student's IEP. We do recognize that drop-off and dismissal can be challenging transitions for our students and always stand ready to assist in any situation in which student and/or staff safety is at risk. In the event that there is a disruption to the normal transportation operations for any reason (i.e., weather related event, mechanical failure, transportation decision to not transport the student due to behavioral concerns and/or medical concerns or any other eventuality) the student's locality is responsible for contacting the parent/guardian, making arrangements for the student to get home, and confirming with SDCA those plans. In the event that a student is dismissed early, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to arrange transportation for their child.

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Students who violate the Code of Student Conduct designated by their specific locality may have their privilege of riding revoked for a specific time frame or permanently.

Transportation for instructional field trips and athletic events during the school day will be provided by properly trained staff of St. Joseph's Villa.

Food Services Program

Culinary Services at St. Joseph's Villa is licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Health. Our licensing specialist conducts at least one unannounced site visit annually to ensure compliance with all licensing standards. A well-balanced dietician

approved breakfast and lunch is served in the cafeteria at times based on the class the student is assigned. Special dietary needs will be followed as instructed and documented by a licensed physician. Depending on the need, Culinary Services may not be able to accommodate the diet, in which case the parent/guardian will be responsible for sending the appropriate food for their child. Snacks are also provided as needed.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is paramount to the success of each student. Whenever a student is absent, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school by calling the main office. Prior notification is requested as a courtesy. Excessive absenteeism, regardless of whether it is excused or not, impedes the individual learning process. If remote learning is deemed for whatever reason, please ensure your child is in attendance for daily scheduled sessions. Students who miss sessions will be marked as absent according to SDCA's attendance guidelines. In collaboration with the LEA, if attendance becomes an issue, St. Joseph's Villa reserves the right to schedule an attendance conference with the student and his/her parent/guardians. All absences are considered unexcused unless the parent/guardian contacts the school with a written reason for the absence. The reasons are listed below:

- Student illness
- Family emergency
- Serious illness/death in the family
- Religious holiday
- Other reasons approved by the principal/designee

A written statement by a physician may be required when a student misses 3 or more consecutive school days. Truancy is defined as the absence of a student for which neither parent nor the school had prior knowledge and consent. When a student is truant the school authorities shall notify the locality and parents or guardians of the situation.

Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Any student who arrives after 8:20 a.m. is considered to be tardy and must be signed in at the main office by a parent/guardian. Any student who leaves before 3:00 p.m. (except on Wednesdays with dismissal at 12:00 p.m.) must be signed out by a parent/guardian in the main office. Absences from class including arriving late or early dismissal will be documented in the student's record.

Inclement Weather/Campus Alert System

St. Joseph's Villa is proud to announce an exciting new opportunity for our families to receive advance notifications regarding important announcements and altered hours of service. This new communication system will provide you with immediate information when events such as inclement weather prevent our schools from operating as scheduled. Notifications will be sent to you via email, text message, and voice mail.

By providing the school with your contact information, you are giving St. Joseph's Villa permission to send notifications to you regarding important school information. Please reach out directly to SDCA to ensure contact information is up to date. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions at 804-521-5571.

During periods of severe or inclement weather, service cancellation or modification of service hours may take place and transportation will not be provided. Announcement of school closings or modified hours will still be displayed on WWBT Channel 12 and the WWBT12 website.

If the student's local school district is closed, and St. Joseph's Villa schools are open, parents/guardians will be responsible for transportation. Make-up days will be scheduled using any available teacher work days, holidays, or days after graduation. Notification of school make-up days will be sent to each locality to ensure transportation is provided.

Student Illness & Injury

A student who is injured or experiences the following symptoms is considered sick and unable to participate in Villa services:

- A fever of 100.1 or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Excessive coughing and runny nose with/without a fever
- Lethargic and uncharacteristic behavior
- Possibly rash or dysentery depending on the severity

Common infectious communicable diseases and conditions are listed below but not limited to:

- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Conjunctivitis (Pink-eye)
- Strep-throat
- Chickenpox
- Viral gastroenteritis
- Hand foot and mouth disease
- MRSA
- Ring-worm
- Lice
- Scabies

Any student that shows symptoms of an infectious communicable condition or a temperature of 100.1 degrees or higher must be sent home from the program and shall not return until they are free from any signs/symptoms and/or medically cleared by a physician and 24 hours after the individual is no longer symptomatic or contagious. If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the parent or guardian will notify the school and the school will follow the recommendations set forth by the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Education.

Certain suspected or confirmed diseases must be reported to the Henrico County Health Department within 24 hours. Refer to the Virginia Reportable Disease List located on the website (www.virginia.gov/epi/regs.asp).

Notification of Responsible Parties: Responsible parties will be notified if the student, during service delivery, begins to display the symptoms listed above. Responsible parties will be expected to make arrangements to have the student picked up as soon as possible. Responsible parties will be responsible for contacting the Emergency Contact if they are not able to pick up the student.

Maintaining proper hygiene is an important aspect of providing a safe and healthy environment for our students. In the event of toileting incidents and to respect student dignity, SDCA will shower a student (with parent permission) while under our care.

Make-up work

Students at the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism progress through their instructional programs at an individualized pace. Instruction will be reinstated at the appropriate level following a student's absence.

Student discharges

When a student is discharged, a summary will be completed within 30 days. The completed discharge summary shall be provided to the student or student's legal guardian, placed in the student's file and forwarded to the placing agency or CSB, as appropriate. Discharge Summaries shall include, but not limited to: dates of attendance; reasons for discharge; progress within the program; and discharge recommendations. In the event of extreme aggression or circumstances where the safety of students and staff is at risk, Sarah Dooley Center for Autism will convene a meeting with parents, placing agents and SDCA staff to discuss whether remaining at SDCA is in the best interest of the student and the school.

Post Discharge Follow-up

St. Joseph's Villa is available to be contacted or offer additional consultation for all previous students post discharge. St. Joseph's Villa will contact the student within 1 year after the discharge by way of a questionnaire or data collections sheet to obtain student's current status, progress and/or outcome feedback. Documentation of contact will be maintained in the student's file.

Medication Management

Qualified staff will administer prescription medication if the following conditions are met:

- The Physicians Order Form is completed annually and signed by the prescribing physician and responsible party.
- The Physicians Order Form clearly indicates the client's name, medication, side effects, dosages, times, frequency and route of administration.
- The medicine must be received in the original prescription bottle or container with an unaltered pharmacy label attached that matches the Physicians Order Form.
- The physician must provide St. Joseph's Villa staff with current information each time the medication or its directions are changed in any way (i.e. - type of medication, time, frequency or dosage of medication). An updated form must be completed and signed by the physician and entered into the files prior to the next scheduled dosage.
- "Over-the-counter" medications can be administered to students with a Physician Order Form (POF) signed by a physician and parent/guardian. The dosage cannot exceed the guidelines outlined by the manufacturer. Over-the-counter medication must be provided to staff in an unopened container by the parent and labeled with the client's full name.
- All medications will be kept secured in accordance with State regulations.
- Parent or Legal Guardian is responsible for all medication transfers to and from the service.
- All staff are trained by a registered nurse in the administration of epinephrine in the event of an emergency.
- If a medication is discontinued, the physician must submit a discontinuation of a medication script to the school.

Medication Storage

- All medication must be kept behind two locks at all times.
- Only designated staff will retain or have access to keys to medication cabinets.
- Only the medication of persons served and supporting documentation may be stored in the medication cabinet. Staff personal belongings or personal medication shall not be intermingled with the medication of individuals or persons served.

Medication Administration Errors and Refusals

- When individuals refuse medication, staff will indicate the refusal in the medication log and complete an Incident Report which becomes part of the individual's file. Under no circumstances should a staff force an individual to or insist that an individual ingest medication (e.g. force individual's mouth open, pinch nose, etc).
- In the event that a medication error occurs, staff will at minimum document the error as an incident report in the client's record. The Service Director should be notified and the individual should be kept under observation for adverse reactions.
- Medication errors that are potentially life threatening will require SJV staff to contact emergency response entities immediately, which may include Poison Control, 911, and the individual's physician. A consultation with the physician and pharmacist may be warranted as a first step if the individual's reaction to the medication does not appear to be a threat to his or her life, health and safety.
- Medication administration errors are defined as any time a staff administers the wrong medication, or at the wrong time, or to the wrong client, or by the incorrect route, or the wrong dosage. It could also include no medication present to administer.

Adverse Reactions, Side Effects

In the event that an individual shows signs of a drug reaction, or if a medication error has resulted in or may result in adverse consequences for the individual served, the staff on duty must take the following steps immediately to ensure the individual's safety:

- Notify the individual's physician and/or pharmacist immediately - 911 will be called if necessary.
- Notify immediate supervisor, who should then follow the internal communication lines to the Service Director, the Administrator-On-Call, or the Chain of Command.
- Notify parent or legal guardian.
- Notify placing agency.
- Document reaction and error in the medication log.
- Complete an incident report as soon as the individual's safety is secured and within 24 hours of the incident. Incident reports must be completed prior to a staff person leaving the St. Joseph's Villa property at the end of his or her shift.

Medication Administration on Field Trips

Should it be necessary to transport medication outside of the program to administer to an individual during a field trip, the protocols for field trips must be followed as trained in the service and licensing specific Medication Administration curriculum. At minimum, for a field trip that lasts a day or less, medication will be packaged safely and securely with the following information:

- Individual's name.
- Prescribing physician's name and contact information.
- Drug name, strength and quantity in the packaging/container.
- Directions for administration.

If a field trip will last longer than a day, an individual's prescription medication should be provided by the parent in a properly labeled container which has been dispensed from the pharmacy, and which contains only the quantity needed for the duration of the field trip.

Medication Disposal

- At any point while an individual is receiving service, and at discharge or service termination, the following will be returned to the legal guardian or authorized authority for disposal: expired medication, discontinued or unused medication, and drug containers with worn, illegible or missing labels.
- In instances in which this procedure is unable to be completed (i.e. voluntary or sudden discharge), the Director (or designee) shall make efforts to have the unused medication returned to the legal guardian or authorized authority.
- Medications that are not returned to the legal guardian or authorized authority shall be documented on the Medication Transfer and Count form. Medications are disposed either on National Drug Take-Back Day, dropped off at Bremo Road Pharmacy, or follow the Health Department Guidelines for home disposal.
- In the event that St. Joseph's Villa becomes responsible for medication disposal, federal guidelines on the Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs will be followed. Medications in need of disposal will be destroyed on a quarterly basis. The expired medications, completed Medication Transfer & Count Forms, and signed and dated receipt by person accepting medications for disposal must be obtained for each item and shall be brought to Triannual Review meetings for disposal. Designated staff of the Integrated Services Office will ensure that all medications are disposed of properly with two (2) witnesses, and properly stored for transport. Documentation of date/time of disposal with signature on the corresponding Medication Transfer & Count Form shall be obtained upon destruction. Form will be returned to service and maintained in client's record. Copies of all forms will be maintained in the Office of Integrated Services.
- A medication count should occur under all circumstances and be witnessed and documented per the section in this procedure on transferring and counting medication

Complaint Resolution

Any individual receiving a Villa service may file a grievance in relationship to the services they have been receiving at any time. Some of the reasons an individual may file a grievance include:

- You feel a staff member has been unfair.
- You feel that a staff member has not followed the rules and/or procedures correctly.
- You are having serious conflicts with a staff member and can't resolve it without help.

Before you file a formal grievance, we encourage you to discuss your concerns with the staff member and resolve it directly with him or her. If that does not work, we ask that you talk with the staff member's supervisor and see if the issue can be resolved. If the issue still does not get resolved or you don't feel comfortable talking with the staff member, then you may file a formal grievance. If you would like a copy of the St. Joseph's Villa Grievance Procedure and Form please contact your school's main office. Parents and guardians should also understand that the Virginia Department of Education is interested in and available to help resolve complaints if it is needed. In the event that a complaint is not satisfied with the internal resolution, they may file a complaint with the Office of Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120.

Physical Facilities and Equipment

The schools of St. Joseph's Villa are located on the 82 acre campus of St. Joseph's Villa at 8000 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227. The campus includes playgrounds, a gymnasium, outdoor learning centers, recreational fields, picnic pavilions, enclosed pedestrian walkways and a therapy garden. The buildings contain sensory rooms, individual and group classrooms, laundry facilities, kitchens, dining areas, computer labs, a centralized library, social/common areas as well as offices for the professional staff.

Emergency Procedures and Drills

All emergency procedures and protocols can be found in the St. Joseph's Villa Emergency Preparedness Manual located in the main office of each service. Students will receive training in all drills and safety procedures during the first week of school, and upon Admission. Emergency drills are conducted on a monthly basis which may include evacuation, shelter-in-place, lock-down/intruder, tornado and earthquake drills. One emergency evacuation drill shall be conducted once per week for the first 20 days of school and each month for the rest of the school year. Other emergency drills are conducted at intervals recommended by the Virginia Department of Education. Below are the actions to take during the following emergencies:

- Fire – Evacuate the building – Staff will assist students to quickly and calmly evacuate the facility according to posted and practiced evacuation routes. The primary evacuation route will be the closest exit from the group's current location.
- Tornado – Shelter in-place – Relocate to a space that has no windows on the lowest floor possible and remain there until the emergency passes.
- Earthquake – Drop, duck under a piece of furniture, or cover your head and hold on to a solid structure.
- Lockdown – Lock the doors. If you are not in a lockable space, move to the nearest lockable space, cover the windows and remain there until further instructions.
- Armed Intruder – Run – only if you're certain it is safe to run. Hide – close windows, lock/barricade the door, silence all electronics, hide under furniture, in a closet or any space where you are not visible, remain quiet, and stay there until you have instruction from law enforcement. Fight – only if you are in imminent danger.

Referrals to Child Protective Services

All staff employed by St. Joseph's Villa are mandated reporters. Any staff who suspects maltreatment, abuse or neglect of a student must inform their immediate supervisor. The supervisor will contact the Director of Clinical Services. The Director of Clinical Services will investigate the situation and determine if Child Protective Services (CPS) should be notified. If CPS is deemed necessary the Director of Clinical Services will make the contact.

Behavior Support Strategies

Sarah Dooley Center for Autism uses Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) methods for behavior management. This approach relies on Licensed Behavioral Analysts (LBAs) to direct a team of staff in determining the underlying causes of the behavior. In order to identify and implement alternative, more adaptive strategies to meet the needs of the maladaptive behavior, strategies are developed, e.g., what communication function does the behavior serve for the student. We use collaborative and proactive supports based on Therapeutic Options™. Whenever possible, we strive to eliminate the use of physical restraint and maximize our students' access to choice.

St. Joseph's Villa emphasizes a gradually progressive system of alternatives that involve the least restrictive means of interpersonal and physical interaction. The Positive Behavior Support Model is used for behavior support & management, as well as the Approved Behavior Management Curriculum (Therapeutic Options™), which is used only when necessary as a last resort to ensure safety. Below are various forms of behavior interventions supported by St. Joseph's Villa.

- *Positive Behavior Support Model* - Systems of reinforcement, rewards and other positive behavioral interventions.
- *Modeling* - Modeling is the process of providing the client with a visual, verbal and/or manual representation of the desired behavior that you want him or her to engage.
- *Relaxation Exercises* - Relaxation exercises are different calming techniques such as deep breathing, counting, imaging or visualization.
- *Therapeutic Take Space* - Therapeutic Take Space as a concept allows a person to calm themselves down by removing the person from elements that contribute to fueling his/her escalation (i.e., take a walk, look up at the sky, count to ten). Take Space as a concept serves as a model for a person in distress, illustrating varied ways of coping and defusing stressful situations. Take Space offers an opportunity for staff to assist a student in the moment to reflect and enhance awareness of personal triggers and will never exceed 30 minutes per incident. Using Take Space at a specific location, with the door open at all times with direct staff supervision. Take Space will never to be used as a punishment. Seclusion or Time-Out (i.e. the involuntary placement of an individual receiving services alone into a locked room or secured area from which he is physically prevented from leaving), is never allowed within St. Joseph's Villa.
- *Therapeutic Options™* is St. Joseph's Villa's Approved Behavior Management Curriculum. It is used only *when necessary as a last resort to ensure safety*. The curriculum is a gradual and graded set of alternatives from simple re-direction to full physical restraint, if and when necessary. Physical restraint is always seen as one of our last alternatives or when the situation is of emergency proportions and requires immediate action or the safety of the student and those involved. Safety and the physical and emotional well-being of all individuals is our main concern and must be protected. Employees who work directly with the clients are required to be trained and certified in TO on an annual basis. Below is a synopsis of TO tenants. More information on Therapeutic Options techniques can be accessed in the TO training manual kept by the certified, on-campus St. Joseph's Villa TO trainers.

All physical interventions are engineered for maximum safety for both people receiving services and for people providing services.

Prohibited Interventions

- *Seclusion* - The involuntary placement of an individual receiving services alone, in a locked room or a secured environment from which he is physically prevented from leaving.
 - *Mechanical or Chemical Restraints*
 - *Students supervising students*
 - *On-Floor Restraints (Supine or Prone)*
- Other Prohibited Interventions and Actions* - Abuse; corporal punishment; degrading comments or actions; profane, demeaning, indecent or insulting language or actions; racial or ethnic slurs; or deliberate destruction of student property; releasing any confidential information about the student, the student's treatment or the student's family; or belittling jokes, cartoons or comments are prohibited.
- *Withholding basic rights of students* such as food and water; use of toilet facilities and needed medical services including approved prescriptions is prohibited. In no way will students' well-being be violated by intrusive and punitive measures such as strip and body cavity searches or aversive stimuli.

Student Code of Conduct

Students at St. Joseph's Villa are expected to meet the following code of conduct. Due consideration is given to the relationship between a student with disability and his/her ability to manage his/her behavior.

- Respect all staff, students, guests and property.
- Be considerate and kind to others.
- Be on time for school. Those arriving late must have a parent/guardian sign in the main office.
- Students must remain in sight and sound supervision at all times.
- Students must dress in appropriate attire (shorts and skirts at least finger-tip length, no low cut tank tops, clothing must cover body parts when sitting, standing or bending, no exposed under garments or advertisements for sex, drugs, alcohol or profanity).
- Students must have permission to enter the school office.
- Smoking/Vaping or use of any tobacco products is not allowed on or off campus.
- All electronics, including cell phones, are to be given to staff upon arrival and will be returned to student upon dismissal (unless student has prior approval to keep devices throughout the day). Devices will be secured at all times.
- The use, possession, and/or distribution of illegal drugs and/or alcohol is strictly prohibited.
- Destruction/defacement of property is not permitted and student may be required to make restitution.
- Theft will not be tolerated, including plagiarism, theft of another person's property, hiding another person's belongings, and/or eating another person's food.
- Settle disagreements verbally and respectfully. Physical violence and/or threats will not be tolerated.
- No bullying and/or harassment of any kind.
- Firearms, knives or other weapons are not allowed on the grounds of St. Joseph's Villa.

Consequences and disciplinary actions up to and including discharge could occur if rules are not followed.

In addition to the Villa's Code of Conduct, students must follow their locality's Code of Conduct. Students. Inappropriate or dangerous/serious behaviors are handled in the following ways:

- Documentation of the event by completion of an Incident Report to be maintained in the student's permanent file.
- Notification of parent/guardian/locality placing agent.
- A meeting with all interested parties to discuss action steps and future activities to reduce or extinguish the behavior.
- Suspension from school will only be used when other means of intervention/correction/instruction fail to bring about the desired respectful conduct. Suspensions are used for serious offenses only.

Search and Seizure

As a matter of school safety and respect for students, general searches are discreet and as infrequent as possible, consistent with the protection of values, property, health and lives of the other students, faculty and/or administration. Students may be asked to pass through an electronic wand upon arrival to school.

All school facilities are property of St. Joseph's Villa and may be searched at any time without cause and without notice. In addition, students may be searched at any time if the administrator has "reasonable cause" to suspect contraband of any type.

Services Provided

- Individual education programs for each student (IEP/IIP)
- Physical Education
- Use of technology in instruction
- Structured referral systems
- Prepare students academically for successful transition into future study at the college or career of choice
- Remediate deficiencies in basic, essential skills
- Focus on academic challenges appropriate for students based on their learning and academic ability
- Build strength in problem solving, critical thinking, communication and organizational skills
- Engender close communication between parents and staff regarding academic expectations and progress

Technology Media

Students will use technology in an appropriate manner. Technology is an integral part of a student's educational experience and must be used in support of education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, other hardware, electronic devices, software, internet, e-mail, all other networks, etc.

Students are responsible for all appropriate use of all computers to which they have access. Obscene, pornographic, threatening, or other inappropriate use of technology, including but not limited to e-mail, instant messaging, web pages, and use of hardware and/or software which disrupts or interferes with the safety and welfare of the school community, is prohibited even if such takes place off school property. (i.e. home, business, private property, etc.).

Staff are provided with computers in their classroom for instructional and student use. In addition, teachers are provided with a laptop to use throughout the school year. Teachers have access to a variety of educational software such as Brain Pop, Ingenuity, A to Z Reading, ABC Teach, Super Teach Worksheet, Education.com, 5 Ponds Press, etc.

Health and Physical Education

A certified Health and Physical Education licensed teacher provides instruction to K-12 students who require it. Recess is also provided to all students in our elementary grades.

Art and Music

Art and music experiences will be provided by a Certified Art Teacher or classroom teacher.

Sports

St. Joseph's Villa provides an opportunity for students to participate in organized sports activity on a daily basis.

Report Cards

Report cards are distributed every 9 weeks. Monthly progress reports are generated and reported to the school division. IEP progress is reported quarterly. Transcripts are updated annually. Faculty update grades on the electronic grading system (Infinite Campus). Parents are encouraged to schedule conferences to discuss student's academic and behavioral progress as needed throughout the year.

Management of Student Records

The schools of St. Joseph's Villa comply with all regulatory requirements from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities (VAISEF) as well as St. Joseph's Villa internal procedures. Student records are confidential and are stored in a locked file cabinet located in the main office with limited access. The content of each student record is updated annually and on an as needed basis.

Confidential information will not be made available or transferred using the internet unless through secure methods. Electronic client records are maintained in the St. Joseph's Villa client database system. Security for and access to electronic records include multiple layers of password protections and firewalls to prevent access by unauthorized users. All client records are retained according to the Record Retention Schedule identified in the SJV Records Retention and Destruction for Discharged Client Records procedure. The school shall inform each individual/designee how to access his/her client record should they so desire. This discussion includes how and when an individual/designee is able to amend their record. Should access be denied, the individual/designee will be provided a written explanation as to the denial, the individual's rights and the process for appeal. Student information may be shared with other individuals/agencies if the parent/guardian completes a Consent to Exchange Information form indicating who information may be shared with.

Transcripts

Requests for transcripts from alumni or former students must be made in writing. Transcript requests can be faxed to 804-553-3317 or emailed to the director. Any forms required with the transcript, from businesses, colleges, etc., must be completed as appropriate by the student and submitted with the transcript request. Allow 5 business days to complete a transcript request. Transcript requests made via phone or voicemail will not be accepted.

IEP Individualized Education Plans

All Exceptional Education students are provided an instruction and transition plan (if secondary student) that provides individual goals, both academic and behavioral. The development of goals in collaboration with the home locality offers students and parents the forum to formalize ideas about the future and prepare for achievement of those goals. The purpose of this plan is to identify the student's areas of relative strength and need, his/her present level of performance, and to specify goals relevant to the student's progress and the schools mission. This plan is updated annually and may be used/referred to during faculty/family conferences and transition meetings. Progress on the IEP will be reported monthly and quarterly to jurisdictions, and interim and nine weeks to parents and guardians. In extreme unforeseen circumstances, St. Joseph's Villa recognizes electronic signatures with the intent to sign.

Initial Assessment

All students will receive an initial assessment within the first 30 days of enrollment. The assessment is based on current school records. If additional educational assessment is needed, evaluation will be completed by St. Joseph's Villa staff.

Career and Transition Services

Career and Transition Services (CATS) offers a wide variety of quality services designed to support and challenge participants at nearly every stage of their academic, transition, vocational, post-secondary, and employment stages of development. Participants have opportunities to learn, plan, assess, train, and participate in various activities that will help them prepare to secure employment or participate in post-secondary training or educational activities. CATS encourages participants to strive to discover their tomorrow.

CATS staff believes in enhancing the programming offered to students already enrolled in our programs on campus. We engage in hands-on, real-time opportunities in various locations such as pizza making and garden-based activities. Additionally, students participating in CATS have an opportunity to connect with professionals from world of work or college through our career-mentoring program. The Villa helps facilitate connections to potential professional career mentors to help students further develop their vision for their future and the pathway to their success. We believe that every participant needs to have a vision for their future in order to achieve the success they desire.

Sarah Dooley Center for Autism Overview

School Offerings

Opportunities for group/peer interactions, independent work, physical education, transitional programming, vocational training, family life classes, academic courses, field trips, and integrated speech services by a certified speech pathologist, are offered daily. All students are enrolled in:

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- History/Social Studies
- Science
- Physical Education
- Career exploration/vocational training (upper level classes)

Population Ratio

The Sarah Dooley Center for Autism's standard model is one teacher, one instructional assistant and several crisis counselors per classroom. A classroom holds a maximum of 8 students. The number of counselors may vary depending on the needs of the students in the class.

Data Collection

Data will be collected consistently throughout the school day and will be used to determine if the individual student's needs are being met.

Grading Scale

P (Pass) – 70%-100% and F (Fail) – 0-69%. Percentages are recorded on the monthly progress report and on the quarterly report cards. Progress is discussed during weekly Treatment Team meetings to determine the effectiveness of the instruction.

Instructional Strategies

Based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis, multiple teaching techniques are used, including

- Discrete Trial
- Incidental Teaching
- Task Analysis
- Remote Instruction
- Structured Play
- Behavior Management Strategies

The goal is to promote the independence of each student and to prepare him/her for integration into his/her least restrictive learning environment or community placement. Sarah Dooley Center for Autism currently tracks academic, daily living and career and transition performance as evidence by pre- and post-scores on the VB-MAPP (Verbal Behavior-Milestones Assessment and placement Program), Vineland, Woodcock Johnson III and T-Tap (TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile). Sarah Dooley Center for Autism also collects discrete trial data for all academic programs. Mastery of academic targets (specific academic programs that are broken down into smaller steps) is generally achieved when 80% accuracy is reached over two data collection sessions.

Daily Schedule

8:00 a.m.-2:45 p.m. – The daily schedule for each student is different depending on the student’s present level of performance. Although each class and each student has a varied schedule, the day is broken down into 15 minute blocks, which allows flexibility in the student’s day. Meals (breakfast and lunch times) are the exception and are always scheduled for at least 30 minutes each. Dismissal is at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Graduation Requirements

Students who attend Sarah Dooley Center for Autism seek to achieve an IEP diploma or certificate of completion awarded by the Virginia Department of Education and the IEP Team. Student may take the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) during grades 3-8 and at grade 11. The decision to do so will be determined by the IEP Team.

Sarah Dooley Center for Autism Contact Information

Director	804-521-5572
Program Director of Operations	804-553-3296
Clinical Supervisor	804-553-3309
Education Coordinator	804-553-3270
Treatment Specialist	804-553-3248
Fax Number	804-553-3317
Main Office Number	804-521-5571

Important Dates to Remember

Last Day of School	August 2, 2024
August Break	August 5-August 16, 2024
First Day of School	August 19, 2024
Back to School Night	September 25, 2024
Thanksgiving Break	November 28-29, 2024
Winter Break	December 23, 2024-January 3, 2025
Martin Luther King Day	January 20, 2025
Parent Teacher Conferences	March 26, 2025
Good Friday (Early Dismissal)	March 28, 2025
Spring Break	March 31-April 4, 2025
Memorial Day	May 26, 2025
Early Dismissal	June 2, 2025
June Break	June 3-6, 2025
Juneteenth	June 19, 2025

The mission of St. Joseph's Villa is to provide children with special needs and their families the opportunity to succeed through innovative and effective programs.

We never stop believing in children and their families.



8000 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227
www.SarahDooleyCenter.org