



2023-2024

# GERMANTOWN ACADEMY SPARK FAMILY HANDBOOK

Supplemental Programs in the Afternoon for Recreation and Knowledge

**MISSION**

Germantown Academy inspires students to be...

Independent in Thought  
Confident in Expression  
Compassionate in Spirit  
Collaborative in Action  
Honorable in Deed

**Our Community Commitments**

As a GA community member, I will strive to:

Be kind.  
Be inclusive.  
Be an active learner.  
Be an upstander.  
Be my best self.

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## **WHAT IS SPARK?**

The Supplemental Program in the Afternoon for Recreation and Knowledge (SPARK) is an after-school program designed to meet the needs of Lower School families who want a safe, structured place for their children to spend time at the end of the school day. Led by a capable team of GA faculty and staff, SPARK lets children participate in a variety of enriching, age-appropriate activities, including homework time, playground games, arts and crafts, sports, and other creative endeavors.

## **SPARK LOCATION**

SPARK is located in the Lower School buildings and playgrounds. We utilize the Lower School multi-purpose room, assembly area, and classrooms. In order to maintain security, access to SPARK is limited to the side door adjacent to the McLean playground.

## **SPARK SCHEDULE**

The SPARK schedule is designed to be flexible. Families can sign up for an occasional afternoon as needed, a few days a week, or every day. We are committed to being available for your child any time your family needs this service.

### **DAILY SPARK**

Care on any single day; pre-registration is not required, but you must send a Blue Note in with your child or call/email the Lower School office on the day that you need care. The credit card in your Active account will be billed.

Session 1: pick up 4:30 – 4:45pm

Session 1 and 2: pick up 5:30 – 5:45pm

### **FULL YEAR DAILY AFTERNOON SPARK**

Care provided after school on each regular school day.

### **FULL YEAR SPARK PLUS**

Care provided after school each regular school day plus Full and Extended Day SPARK.

### **SCHEDULE SINGLE DAY(S) WEEKLY**

Choose a single day or any combination of days. Example, every Monday or every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the entire year.

### **EXTENDED DAY SPARK**

Offered on days when Lower School dismisses early. Pre-registration is required one week before.

### **FULL DAY SPARK**

Offered on days when Lower School does not have classes including In-services and Conference Days. Pre-registration is required one week before.

### **PRE-WEEK and SPRING BREAK SPARK**

Offered on days in August prior to the opening of school and during some Spring Break days. A minimum of 10 students are required to run the program. GA will decide on the first of each month if the program has adequate enrollment to run the program. Pre-registration required.

### **ASAP**

After School Activities Programs (ASAP) are open to all Lower School students. They provide specialized instruction once a week in areas outside of regular SPARK programming. ASAP programs are offered by term in Fall, Winter, and Spring (8 week sessions). ASAP offerings are emailed to parents seasonally. ASAPs are timed to run during the first SPARK session, so students can sign up for an ASAP and the second SPARK session on the same day. Enrollment is limited in these courses and there are no refunds or credits for missed classes. Classes cancelled by an instructor will be rescheduled.

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Arrival and Dismissal

- SPARK and ASAP students stay in their classroom at dismissal. A SPARK teacher will come and check students in and bring them to their designated SPARK space.
- There are two carline dismissal times from SPARK, 4:30-4:45pm and 5:30-5:45pm. During these dismissal periods, parents pick up in a carline on the bus lane (driveway along the playground).
- Students must be picked up by an individual who is 16 years of age or older who is on the approved pick-up list.
- Students may be picked up at any time during SPARK hours. When a parent picks up their child outside of the carline time, they should park in a parking spot and walk to the SPARK Room (Multipurpose Room).
- Students wait for their car on the sidewalk or under the pavilion along the bus lane.
- Students must enter their car on the curb side.
- For everyone's safety and to keep the traffic flowing, please do not get out of your vehicle during carline.
- Drivers may not use cell phones while driving on school grounds.
- Parents who arrive for pickup after regular SPARK hours (5:45) will need to park and walk into the Tinker Lab to pick up their child. There will be an additional fee (\$15/day). If a child will be picked up late, parents must call the SPARK phone (267) 709-3255 to notify the staff.
- SPARK staff are not available to escort individual students to other areas of campus to participate in non-SPARK sponsored programs.

## Registration and Billing for After School Programs

All After School Programs registration and billing takes place on the ACTIVE Network, which makes it easy to schedule programming that is right for your family. Custom filters let you explore all of the programming described above. Once you select your program, you will be asked to create an account and register a credit card. This card will be automatically billed according to your selected payment plan, and you can add additional programming to your account at any time. Students can only attend SPARK if they are first registered into ACTIVE. If you have questions about the billing process, please contact the SPARK Director.

## Other Policies

- Students in SPARK who participate in private instrumental lessons after school are transported to and from lessons by their private instrumental instructors or Spark staff.
- Daily SPARK Policy:
  - For families who take advantage of SPARK on an as-needed basis, a Blue Note is required every time there is a change from their typical dismissal plan.
  - The family's Active account will be billed at the end of the week.

# SPARK Student Expectations

Participation in SPARK/ASAP requires students to consistently meet behavioral expectations as outlined in the Lower School Family Handbook for students during the school day. Student expectations around personal and playground safety are the same as those during the school day. If there are concerns about students' behavior during SPARK, the Director or supervising staff member will communicate the details to parents or caregivers either at pick up, by phone, or email. In cases where there are repeated concerns with safety or the harmful treatment of others, the SPARK Director will collaborate with the Lower School Administrative team to discuss strategies, consequences, or the possible need to discontinue in the SPARK program for a student. All reports of bullying and harassment will be investigated in conjunction with the LS Administration.

SPARK staff use the same approach to responding to student behaviors that is used in the Lower School, which is based on a program developed by Dr. Thomas Phelan called 1-2-3 Magic. Key tenets of this program are:

- Students thrive when expectations, feedback and consequences are fair and predictable.
- Students' choices are their own.
- Everyone has a right to make mistakes, problem solve, apologize, and try again.
- Students can and will problem solve to understand the best choices in the school environment.
- When expectations are not being met, adults use a "no talking/no emotion" rule.
- Feedback should be provided to students to help them understand best choices during non-academic time and in private.
- Students, teachers and parents must work together to support high expectations and accountability.

## SPARK Expectations for Students

### BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Be kind  
Respect other's personal space  
Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself  
Keep all non-Spark items and toys at home  
Personal devices are not allowed  
Follow direction from staff at all times

### TRANSITION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND SPARK

Enter calmly and quietly  
Sit down  
Listen for your name  
Check for all belongings

### PLAYGROUND

Play safely; Rough play is not permitted  
All natural materials stay on the ground:  
sticks, rocks, and woodchips are not toys  
Include others in play  
Find an adult when help is needed

### SNACK

Wash hands  
Fill water bottle before sitting down  
Stay in your seat  
Eat snacks at designated snack time only  
Clean up after yourself

### HOMEWORK

Bring all necessary materials  
Remain seated during work time  
Focus on work  
Read quietly when homework is done  
School iPads may only be used for work assigned by teachers for homework

### END OF DAY

Clean up  
Check for all belongings

**Disciplinary Consequences:**

If a student engages in physical or verbal behaviors that create harm for other students, or create conditions in which staff cannot attend to all of the students in their care, the following consequences may be considered:

- Removal from SPARK for the day.
- Removal from SPARK for an extended period to determine the readiness for the student to return
- Removal from the SPARK Program for the remainder of the school year