

First Presbyterian Children's Center Parent Handbook

(revised June 2018)

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

We, the staff of First Presbyterian Children's Center, believe the best way to promote learning is to provide a nurturing community. Our families are valued for their commitment to their children. Our staff members are valued for their unique talents as well as their ability to work together to bring a quality program to our families. Most importantly, our children are valued for their individuality and their creative spirit.

Our program includes free and directed play activities, which foster all areas of child development: physical, social, emotional and intellectual.

The First Presbyterian Children's Center is a community service of the First Presbyterian Church. The Center is part of the ministry and mission of the church and as such will reflect values consistent with and appropriate to Christian Faith.

This Handbook contains policies and procedures for the current school year. It is not possible to foresee every situation that may arise during the school year. The Children's Center's administration reserves the right to amend, revoke or revise the policies and procedures in the Handbook at any time as circumstances require. If/when changes are made to the Handbook, parents will be informed in writing that will include when the change will take place.

ADMISSION

The Center admits students of any race, color and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the Center.

The Center reserves the right to deny admission when it feels that either the program offered or the child's best interests cannot be served emotionally, physically, medically or socially.

Registration is accepted on a first-come basis. Registration forms must be completed for returning families and new families and turned in along with a non-refundable registration fee.

Families that are currently enrolled are given preference for enrollment as long as it is done before open enrollment. Returning families and families of First Presbyterian Church are given preference before open enrollment to the community, as long as it is done before the open enrollment time frame.

ADMINISTRATION AND PARENT ADVISORY BOARD

If a parent has a concern or question about the general operation of the Center, they should discuss it with the Director. Questions or specific problems within a classroom should be addressed with the teachers in the classroom first; if an acceptable resolution is not met, a meeting with the Director can be set up.

A Parent Advisory Board, comprised of a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, will initiate fund-raising opportunities as well as assist the Director by recommending new ideas and policies based on feedback from parents.

ATTENDANCE/ HEALTH /IMMUNIZATIONS/HEALTH RECORDS

Missouri state regulations govern health records and immunizations and require that health records be kept in the Children's Center office. According to state law, immunizations must be up to date; if a child is on a delayed immunization schedule, the Center must have an immunization exemption form on file. According to state law, parents may request notice of whether there are children enrolled at the Center with an immunization exemption on file. The name(s) of individual children are confidential and will not be released.

- If a child has an allergy or asthma and medication or an inhaler is required to be kept at school, there must be a written order from the doctor with the steps that need to be taken in case of a reaction or incident.
- A parent/guardian must provide written permission so that the Center can comply with the doctor's orders.
- Prescription medications (epi-pen, Benadryl, inhaler) must be in either a container with the pharmacy label on it or the original container.
- If there is a change in the administration of the medicine, the change must be submitted in writing by the doctor.
- An allergy action plan must be completed.

If your child will not be coming to school, please call the Children's Center office at 314-965-4028.

No child should attend school if:

- They have a fever. Your child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to their class.
- They have a fresh cold.
- They have a dry, hacking cough.
- They have had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- They have been exposed to a communicable disease, at which time a phone call should be made to the Center, so notices may be made to other parents.

We will make every effort to keep your child's exposure to illness at a minimum.

CLOTHING

Please send your child to school in comfortable play clothes that are appropriate for the playground, painting, bike riding, climbing, etc. We ask that your child come in tennis shoes or closed toed shoes that have a flexible or rubber sole. Croc-type shoes, sandals or shoes with slick soles are discouraged and your child may be asked to wear something else. Since we go outside as often as possible, please send appropriate outerwear. All coats, boots, sweaters, etc., should be labeled with your child's name. **School t-shirts are to be worn on field trip days by children in the preschool classes.**

COMMUNICATION

We feel that it's important to make connections between home and school. To achieve this goal, it is important that the line of communication between the staff and parents remains open. We make every effort to keep you informed of your child's behavioral, social, intellectual and developmental changes, both positive and negative. Parents are asked to inform teachers of any unusual happenings or changes at home, both positive and negative. This will help parents and staff establish a stable and consistent environment for your child. Your child's teacher will make either their email or phone number available to help with this communication.

DISCIPLINE / TERMINATION

Our program is set up to have the children interact in a group situation and in an environment that is safe. Our teachers and caregivers make sure that the children are aware of what is and is not acceptable classroom behavior. The teachers and caregivers will help the child to understand why a particular behavior is not acceptable so that the child will gradually become less dependent on adult authority and more dependent on finding solutions. Our policy is to encourage children to learn the tools needed to behave appropriately for the school situation and other social situations.

We do not allow for embarrassing or ridiculing a child when he or she misbehaves. We do NOT engage in any corporal or physical punishment.

The majority of behavioral situations can be handled by redirecting the child to another activity that is appropriate. However, occasionally a behavioral situation may necessitate a brief time out. The child is removed from the situation and the other children, allowing for the child to think about improving his or her behavior. This break also allows for self-calming by the child. When they have calmed down, they can rejoin their classmates.

Behaviors that involve *intentional* physical abuse or continual verbal abuse towards another child or teacher will be handled in the following manner:

- 1st offense - Written notification given to the parent.
- 2nd offense- If the second offense occurs within two weeks of the first offense, written notification will be given to the parent, a copy of the note is signed by the parent and discussion is held with the teacher and Director about the behavior. A signed plan of action by both the parent and teacher is developed.
- 3rd offense-If the third offense occurs within two weeks of the second offense, a call is made to the parents to pick up the child and only after professional help has been sought, an evaluation has been done and a plan is implemented will the child be allowed to return to the Center.
- 4th offense- If all three prior offenses have occurred within a six-week time frame, the child is dismissed from the program. Physically hurting another child or teacher so that professional medical attention is required is grounds for **immediate dismissal**.

A child/family's enrollment may be discontinued if a mutually satisfactory working relationship cannot be established with the parents.

FIELD TRIPS

Preschool classes have the opportunity to go on walking field trips during the school year. Parents are welcome to attend a field trip and help supervise the children. We ask that you do not bring siblings on field trips. Teachers will try to ensure that each interested parent has a chance to attend. Written permission is required by a parent in order for their child to attend a field trip.

HOURS OF OPERATION/LATE POLICY

Monday-Friday:

Early Drop Off: 8:15 am– 9 am (ages 2-5)

Monday-Friday

Preschool and Kids Day Out: 9 am-11:45 am

Mondays and Wednesdays

Ladybugs extended day: 11:45 am-2 pm

Monday-Friday

Lunch Bunch: 11:45 am-1 pm

Please arrive on time to pick up your child. If you know you are going to be late please call the Children's Center office at 314-965-4028. If a parent or guardian is frequently more than five minutes late picking up a child, the Director may issue a warning. After this initial warning the late policy will go into effect. If you have not called the Center after the 5-minute grace period an additional charge of \$1.00 for each (1) minute will be added to your bill.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

In the event of any legal proceeding, i.e., a custody case or divorce, any and all costs incurred by the school in terms of teacher/administrative salaries, copies, notary fees, delivery fees, postage, cancelled vacation travel, etc., are to be paid by the party making the request. First Presbyterian Children's Center is in no way responsible for any loss due to legal requests or proceedings.

LUNCHES

Children attending an afternoon session or Lunch Bunch will need to bring a lunch, including a drink and any utensils they will need. **Please label** all lunch boxes and containers with your child's name. **DO NOT BRING ANY PEANUT PRODUCTS TO THE CENTER.** (It is helpful to label products such as soy or almond butter.)

RECORD RETENTION

The Children's Center keeps all children's records until they turn 18 years of age.

SAFETY PROCEDURES / EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

It is very important that you inform us of any changes in phone numbers, address, e-mail or employment. We want to be able to reach you as soon as possible in case of an emergency.

Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone but their parent or persons listed on their pickup form. If your child will be going home with another parent or friend, we prefer to have written permission; however, in emergency situations, a phone call to the Director is accepted. This is for your child's safety. Forms are available in each classroom. **We also require that the responsible party (parent or others) "sign out" the child at the time of pick up each day.**

The Children's Center has a written plan in place for the following emergencies: fire, tornado, earthquake, intruders and toxic spills. Each classroom has an emergency response handbook and the staff has been trained in keeping the students safe at all times. To help ensure the safety of each student, drills for fire, earthquake, tornado and intruder drills are held throughout the school year. In the event of an emergency, families will be notified through text, email and/or Facebook post. The most current information will be available through texts or social media. Parents should check statuses often to keep abreast of the most current information.

The classroom doors are locked each day by 9:15 a.m. Each teacher carries a key to all the classroom doors. Should a parent arrive after the classroom doors have been locked, they will check in at the Children's Center office, sign in, get a visitor pass and the classroom teacher will be informed by walkie-talkie of the parent and child's arrival. Upon leaving, the parent signs out and returns the visitor's pass. The doors are unlocked shortly before the end of the school day.

In the event of a lockdown or lockout at a school in the Kirkwood School District or nearby district, the Director will use the information provided by the district to determine whether it would be prudent to take further action. We will notify parents through either Facebook or email to keep you informed.

In the event that we would need to extend the school day unexpectedly, we keep extra stores of food and water on hand.

Here is a brief description of each of our emergency procedures:

Fire: Classes exit building to their assigned location. In the event of an actual fire, teachers lead students to the Kirkwood Library.

Earthquake: Students stop, drop and cover under tables and desks.

Lockdown (Intruder): Classes practice gathering in safe place until situation is resolved.

Tornado: Classes evacuate to basement and stop, drop and cover.

Toxic spill: Because the Center is located near railroad tracks by which hazardous materials may be transported, an evacuation could be ordered due to a toxic spill. Teachers would transport students by car to St. Joseph's Academy (2307 S. Lindbergh Blvd.), where they will contact parents and keep students safe until a parent or guardian can pick them up.

SNACKS

All children attending any of the morning sessions at the Center will be asked to contribute a peanut-free snack. This is done by class on a rotating basis. Some suggestions are: graham crackers, cheese crackers,

pretzels, cereal, individually packaged snacks or fresh fruit such as bananas, apples or oranges. **HOMEMADE TREATS ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Whenever possible, choose healthier options.

Please coordinate ahead of time with your child's teacher if you want to bring a special snack to celebrate your child's birthday with the class.

If your child has an allergy, please talk with the teacher/caregiver about the best solution for the child's safety. We make every effort to see that your child is not exposed to the wrong food.

SNOW DAYS/UNSCHEDULED CLOSINGS

The Director will make the decision to close the Center during inclement weather. This decision will be made considering a number of factors, among them is safety and whether the Church is open.

If the Kirkwood School District is closed, we are closed. If the Kirkwood School District is on a delayed start, we are as well. A delayed start means classes will begin at 9:30 a.m.

If the decision is made to close school or alter the start time, families will be notified through the Snow Watch system on KSDK (Channel 5) as well as through email, Facebook post and text.

We do not make up snow days nor reimburse for days missed.

TOYS AT SCHOOL

Children should leave personal toys at home, except when brought specifically for show-and-tell or sharing time. Pacifiers and other "lovies" are the exception.

TUITION

Tuition is due the 15th of each month, unless indicated otherwise. Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Children's Center or FPCC. Your check should be placed in the mailbox outside the Children's Center's office. Our system does not allow for direct debit transactions. However, if you prefer to make online payments through your bank, please put "preschool tuition payment" on the memo line.

If payment is not received by the 10th of the month or the date listed at the bottom of the invoice, a \$10 late fee will be added to your bill. If your bill is not paid by the end of the month, your child will not be allowed to attend our program until the bill is paid. If your check is returned for insufficient funds, a \$15 fee will be added to your bill to cover bank fees and administrative costs.

Please feel free to talk with the Director if you have a situation impacting your ability to pay.

