

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

2009-2010

A Leader in Promoting the Education of Children
and Families in the Spirit of Christian Faith
for over Thirty Years

Policies Handbook for Parents

Mission Statement:

The mission of First Presbyterian Church Preschool is to assist preschool children to grow socially, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually in a Christian-based environment. Children will have the opportunity to understand that each individual is unique and loved by God, make new friends, explore new ideas and environments, and develop independence in a world away from home.

Vision Statement:

The vision of FPC Preschool is to be recognized as a leader in promoting children and families in the spirit of Christian faith.

First Presbyterian Church Preschool admits students of any race, color, creed, or national or ethnic origin.

Preschool Office Hours:

- 8:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

School Hours for Children:

- 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.– Morning Sessions
- 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Afternoon Sessions

Tuition and Fees:

- Tuition is due on the first school day of each month. **Please pay promptly.**
- If your pay schedule is later in the month, please contact the director to set up a payment date. If no alternate date is finalized, tuition will be due as stated above.
- Write your child's name, the classroom, and the month or months for which payment is being made on your check.
- There is a \$5.00 late fee added each month, if not paid by the 10th of the month, unless other arrangements have been made. A fee of \$30.00 will be charged for each returned check.
- Tuition for the 2009-2010 school year is:
 - \$100.00 a month for the 2-day program.
 - \$140.00 a month for the 3-day program.
 - \$200.00 a month for the 5-day program.
- The enrollment fee is a **non-refundable fee** collected at the time of enrollment. The fee is \$65.00. The second child to enroll from a family will be charged a reduced enrollment fee of \$10. The enrollment fee is due at the time of enrollment.
- Field trips may require an additional small fee. Special notes concerning field trips will be sent home in your child's backpack. Please check your child's backpack each day.
- Scholarships are available. Please see the director for more information.

- In case of emergency-no-fault building closure (fire, earthquake, tornado, etc.), tuition will be refunded within 30 days, for services not covered, to the limits of insurance coverage.

Requirements for Attendance:

- All children must be potty trained before they can attend preschool.
- All paperwork required by KDHE must be on file before children can attend preschool.
- Enrollment in the Beginner program is for children who are a minimum of three years of age by August 31st of the school year and eligible to enter kindergarten in two years.
- Enrollment in the Pre-kindergarten program is for children who are a minimum of four years of age by August 31st of the school year and eligible to enter kindergarten in one year.
- Children are accepted for a trial period of adjustment. If there are concerns during the first month from either parents or teachers, a meeting will be set up between parents, teachers and the director to discuss options. Please review the withdrawal procedures listed later in this handbook.
- Parents are responsible to provide materials, as listed on a supply list.

Attendance:

- Please notify the office (842-8291) when your child is ill. If necessary, leave a message. Teachers will be notified by the director.
- Regular attendance in class helps the year go more smoothly.
- We encourage you to **arrive and depart on time**. We do understand an occasional unavoidable delay and will reassure your child that you will be a little late. If you are near a phone, please notify us if an unavoidable delay occurs. Consistently late pick-up of your child (after 11:40 am or 3:10 pm) will result in an additional charge of \$1.00 for each minute after 11:40 am or 3:10 pm, for each occurrence. Additional charges must be paid at the time of the late pick-up.
- Parents must provide a list of persons authorized to pick up their child (see Safety section). Children will not be released to unauthorized persons. If an emergency has occurred and no one on your pick-up list is available, please notify the office as quickly as possible of the person responsible for picking up the child. The authorized person will need to show their driver's license to the classroom teacher.

Illness and Accident:

- Children should be kept home at least 24 hours **after** a temperature has returned to normal without the aid of fever-reducing medication. If your child develops a fever during school hours, you will be notified to come pick up your child promptly.
- Children with sore throats and/or runny noses (other than allergies) should not be brought to school. Please also look for signs such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs for your child, and consider keeping the child at home if such signs are observed to avoid spreading an illness.

- If your child becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the school director so parents of exposed children can be alerted. A “Health Alert” will be posted near the sign-in sheets at the classroom door.
- If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified as quickly as possible, so that he/she can be cared for at home.
- Teachers follow emergency procedures in case of injury to a child. Parents will be notified as quickly as possible.
 - If a life-threatening situation occurs, 911 will be called first and then parents will be notified.
 - If a child has a non-life-threatening accident at school, the teacher will notify parents at the time of pick-up. Accident reports will be filled out by the teacher involved and be available for parents to review.
 - If a non-life threatening accident occurs, and staff believe parents should be notified immediately, the director will call parents. Please make sure correct contact numbers are listed on your child’s enrollment and medical forms. Please notify the director, if your contact numbers change during the school year.
- Minor “bumps or scrapes” as well as bathroom accidents, will be noted by a “Guess What Happened to Me” note in your child’s backpack or by verbal notice from the teacher.

Communicable Disease/Immunization Policy:

- Kansas regulations state: Schools and childcare facilities must exclude persons afflicted with an infectious or contagious disease that is dangerous to public health. It shall be the duty of the director in charge of facility to exclude any child or other person affected with a disease suspected of being infectious or contagious until the expiration of the prescribed period of isolation (65-122). The following common diseases are considered contagious: Chickenpox, Hepatitis Type B, Lice, Measles, Meningitis, Mononucleosis, Mumps, Pink Eye, Pinworms, Ringworm, Scabies, Staph infection, Strep infection. Other diseases may also be considered infectious. The Health Department requires certain communicable diseases to be reported to the county health department. This list is available to review and is posted in the preschool office.
- If there is a specific “Health Alert,” a notice will be posted outside your child’s classroom, as well as posted on the Parent Board. For example, if a child has been diagnosed with a strep infection, there will be a notice outside the classroom listing the infection, as well as a list of symptoms to watch for in your own child.
- All children must be immunized according to the recommended schedule found on the last page of this booklet. A waiver from this policy must be in writing and approved by the state or by a physician’s written recommendation.

Field Trip Policy:

- Some parental assistance, with driving and as chaperones, is needed for all field trips.
- Sign-up sheets will be available outside the classroom requesting parental help. If both parents work and your child is brought to school by another person, but you would like to assist with a field trip, notify your teacher that you will be available to assist and they will place your name on the sign-up sheet.

- Some field trips may be walking field trips.
- A volunteer-driver form, including insurance information, must be on file in the preschool office for each driver.
- All children must have a written authorization from parents in order to go on field trips. The preschool director will have these forms available before each field trip. If there is no authorization, your child will not be allowed to go on the trip. Please check your child's classroom bulletin board for the field trip forms.
- Kansas law states that children 4 years of age and under must be in an approved child safety seat. Children 4-7 years must be in a booster seat, unless they are 80 pounds or 4 ft. 9 in. tall.

Safety:

- Tornado and fire drills are performed monthly. Tornado drills occur during the months of April, May and September (tornado season). Fire drills are performed each month. There is a written log of drills listed on the Parent Board.
- Should a tornado warning occur during school hours, we have severe storm protection in our basement. We will take the necessary precautions for your child's safety. The preschool office monitors the weather with a weather and Internet radio if the weather begins to look threatening.
- In the unlikely event that a crisis occurs in the building, students will be evacuated to Clinton Place Apartments (just east of the preschool), where parents may pick them up. Children will be released only to parents or a person designated by parents.
- Each room in the preschool is connected to the preschool office and the main church office by way of an intercom system.
- Visitors coming to the preschool during school hours are required to sign-in at the preschool office. This does not include delivery and pick-up times.
- Kansas law requires that our staff report any suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Parents will sign-in and sign-out children at the classroom door. All persons authorized to pick up children will be listed on enrollment forms. Teachers will have a list of authorized adults for child pick-up in their classroom.
- If authorized persons are not available for pick-up, call the office and give the information to the director. The director will notify the teacher. The person arriving to pick up a child will then need to have a photo ID (driver's license) to show the classroom teacher before a child will be released to their care.
- Emergency contact numbers, other than parents, must be listed on enrollment forms.
- For the safety of all children, please do not leave unattended children in the parking lot while you deliver your preschool child to his/her room. If you have a sleeping child in the car, please ask another parent to help you by either delivering or picking up your child or watching the children in the car. Leaving unattended children in a car is considered a reportable case of neglect by SRS.
- Written permission must be given by the parent for photographs to appear in the newspaper, on television, or on the church website.

Health & Nutrition

- Parents provide juice and snacks. **We require 100% juice, and we encourage healthy snacks, such as cut-up fruit, vegetables, crackers and cheese, popcorn, muffins, and trail mixes.** The preschool provides cups and napkins.
- Pre-kindergarten parents are encouraged, if possible, to bring snacks that begin with the letter the children will be studying during a specific week.
- Parents will be asked to assist with snacks for special days, i.e. Thanksgiving, Kansas Day, Valentine's Day, etc. A sign-up sheet will be available outside your child's classroom.
- Parents may provide a special treat on the day their child celebrates his/her birthday. Parents should provide spoons or forks, if needed for the snack. We encourage healthy snacks for birthdays, as well. Fruit muffins are a good substitute for cupcakes.
- Parents should bring the same snack for all children. (For example, do not bring 6 chocolate puddings and 6 vanilla puddings.)
- Parents will make an effort to be aware of children with special allergies in their child's classroom and provide appropriate snacks for all children. (Ask the classroom teacher about known peanut allergies, for example.)
- Food and other allergies must be clearly listed on child's enrollment forms. If special emergency medication is needed, it must be clearly marked with the child's name and have the prescription on or with it. All medication will be stored in a locked first aid cabinet in the director's office or a locked classroom cabinet.

Withdrawal:

- Parents are free to withdraw their child at any time **after** a two-week notice is given to the preschool office. **Please notify the director, as well as the classroom teacher.**
- At least two weeks payment is due from the date of notification.
- **Enrollment fee is non-refundable.**

Classroom Assignments:

- Beginner classes have one teacher for every 6-8 children.
- Pre-kindergarten classes have two teachers per room, one for every 6-8 children.
- Classes are grouped according to age but may be adjusted due to the number of enrollments and maturity of the child.
- Staff reserves the right to group the children for balance of gender, chronological age and the best environment for each child.
- All children have art, music and movement in the art room and music room, at least once each week.
- All children attend chapel once a week.

Special Services:

- We encourage you to contact Lawrence Early Childhood Special Services for services in auditory, speech, language and movement exploration. These services are free to district 497 children.
- If a child needs special services, we work directly with the district to assist with and accommodate special services within our preschool program. Most special services are offered within classroom settings.
- Teachers/director may discuss specific needs directly with parents and assist parents in contacting Lawrence Early Childhood Special Services or in formulating IEPs.
- We desire to facilitate the best possible learning environment for each child. If your child has a written IEP/IFP (Individual Educational/Family Plan), state law mandates that we have a copy of it in our confidential, locked files. Please give copies to our director as soon as the plan has been finalized.
- The KU Child and Family Clinic is also a good resource for assistance with specialized problems.

Curriculum:

- Christian Education materials are used, which often coincide with those used in many of the Christian churches in our community.
- Children will have the opportunity to assist their classroom teachers with chapel presentations during the school year. Parents are notified when their child will assist. Parents are welcome to stay for these special presentations or to attend any of our chapel presentations.
- Christian holidays are celebrated, such as Christmas, Epiphany and Easter.
- Each teacher will organize monthly lesson plans, according to the individual needs of the children in her care. Lesson plans will be open and available to view within each classroom.
- Although all teachers will be working toward the same goals, experiences provided may vary, as each group and each set of teachers is different.
- Beginner programs may cover the following broad curriculum: I Am Special, My Five Senses; Fall; Colors; Shapes; Numbers; Letters; Community Helpers; Nursery Rhymes; Dental Hygiene and Transportation. Curriculum concerning Kansas is also addressed in January.
- Pre-kindergarten curriculum may include topics such as Sensory Perception; Numbers and Math concepts, such as sizes, shapes, sequencing, classification, and pattern; Opposites and Similarities; Color recognition; Beginning letter and sound recognition; Rhyming Words; and Scientific explorations; Dinosaurs; Animals and Pets; and Dental Hygiene. Kansas curriculum is also addressed in January.
- Both Beginner and Pre-kindergarten classes celebrate holidays, such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Kansas Day, and Valentine's Day etc. We also enjoy other "fun days" for example, Pajama Day. Other individual days may be celebrated in individual classrooms, for example, 100 day (the 100th day of school).
- Special days are reserved for our Dads and Moms. Siblings may join us for the ice cream social and classroom visit.

- Children will be involved in singing opportunities for parents to view. For example, there will be short programs given at our Halloween Day celebration as well as at our celebration of the Christmas holiday season.
- Parents are always welcome to come to a specific classroom and share their occupation or hobbies with the children in their child's classrooms. These need to be coordinated with the classroom teacher. We often need a dental professional to give a presentation in conjunction with Dental Hygiene Week.
- Children may bring a pet to school for sharing, if coordinated with the classroom teacher and there are no children with pet-related allergies.

Behavior Guidance Policy:

- The goal of behavior guidance is to help children develop inner control in order to manage their own behavior in a socially appropriate manner.
- Staff will assist children and parents to understand the expectations of behavior and the purpose behind them.
- Teachers will monitor the environment to anticipate possible problems.
- Teachers will model appropriate positive behavior.
- Teachers will reinforce positive behavior.
- Teachers will use logical consequences of behavior, as often as possible.
- Teachers will use positive word direction by telling a child what to do, and how to do, rather than what "not" to do. Teachers may use positive direction; with an explanation of inappropriate behavior. For example, "Our chairs are for sitting on, not standing on. It is dangerous to stand on our chairs."
- Teachers will give clear opportunities for children to make choices and select appropriate behavior.
- Teachers will mediate disputes between children minimally, allowing them to solve problems by themselves, if possible.
- Teachers will use a firm but kind voice in correcting inappropriate behavior.
- Teachers will use time-out as a regrouping time rather than a punishment. For example, "Throwing sand is not appropriate. You may not play in the sand box, if you continue to throw sand; you will have to sit on the bench."
- Teachers will use natural and logical consequences in correcting behavior. For example, "We want you to wear your mittens outside. If you choose not to wear your mittens, your hands may be cold."
- Negative physical behavior (hitting, biting, pinching) will not be allowed. If negative behaviors continue, the child will be removed from the group and told that hitting etc. is not allowed because it hurts people. The child may return to group activities when the negative behavior stops. If further intervention is needed, they may be brought to the director's office for a limited time.
- Punishment that is humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to the child shall be prohibited.

- **The following techniques are prohibited:**
 - Corporal punishment.
 - Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or the child’s family.
 - Binding or tying to restrict movement, or enclosing in a confined space.
 - Withholding or forcing foods.

Christian Direction:

We use Luke 2:40 as a direction for your child: “And the child grew, and became strong, filled with wisdom and the favor of God was upon him.”

We strive to help your child grow socially, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually in the following ways:

- *“And the child grew.”* (Personally/Socially) We strive to assist your children by helping them to: feel that they are unique individuals who are accepted and loved; be independent in self care; accept a reasonable amount of authority; learn to cooperate with friends, know there are others who love them; enjoy group activities; understand that the community offers friends and helpers; gain a joy for learning; understand that we are part of the world.
- *“And became strong.”* (Physically, Emotionally) We strive to help your children: be aware of health and safety habits; be aware of acceptable ways to handle their emotions and feelings; coordinate their large and small muscles through indoor and outdoor play; use manipulative materials; create special art projects; and participate in directed music and movement classes.
- *“Filled with Wisdom.”* (Intellectually) As each child is unique, we will help them develop a strong foundation for further education by giving them: life experience; opportunities for language building; hands-on science experience; language interaction with peers and adults; opportunities to use their five senses; music and rhythm experiences; opportunities to develop thinking and reasoning skills; and opportunities to learn about art and art appreciation.
- *“And the favor of God was upon him.”* (Spiritually) In our Christian school, your children will be exposed to the following concepts: God is the Creator who loves each one of us; Jesus is God’s Son who lives, loves us and is our friend; prayer is an opportunity to talk to God anytime or anyplace; the Bible gives us the privilege of discovering God through many stories; a church is an important place to worship; we respect and love other people; and we care for the beautiful world because it was created by a loving Heavenly Father.

Calendar:

- An all-school yearly calendar of “special all-school days” will be available to parents. In the future, the calendar may also be accessible on-line at the church website. Occasionally, we may need to alter the calendar. Parents will be notified in *The Preschool News* of any changes.

- Each classroom teacher will send home a monthly calendar near the end of the previous month. Please check these regularly, as they list the day your child may be responsible for snack, birthday celebrations, weekly themes, and vacation days.
- The staff reserves the right to change the school calendar to respond to emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances that affect the educational program.

Bad Weather Policy:

- First Presbyterian Church Preschool (FPCP) follows the lead of USD 497 in dismissing school due to inclement weather. If the district is closed for inclement weather, FPCP is as well.
- Use your best judgment in bringing your child to school. If you are uncomfortable in certain driving conditions, please notify us that you will not be bringing your child to school.

Visitation:

- Parents are welcome to visit their child's class at any time. However, please be cautious with visits at the beginning of the year. This is a time when your child needs to be learning to adjust without you.
- It is best not to go through lengthy "good-byes" at the beginning of each day. During the first few weeks of school, each child goes through an adjustment period. As hard as it may be, it is best to say goodbye and leave. The teacher will calm your child, if needed. If your child cannot be calmed within a reasonable time, we will notify you and ask you to return.
- Some special visits will be encouraged during the school year; for example, Dad's Day, Mother's Tea and Art Show. These will be listed on the Yearly School Calendar. You will also be reminded of these times in the monthly newsletter.
- If you are unable to attend on Dad's Day or Mother's Tea, we encourage you to get a substitute to attend in your place, a special grandparent, aunt or uncle, or close adult friend.

Progress Assessments and Parent Teacher Conferences:

- The fall assessment will be a written assessment. After reading the assessment, if you feel you need more clarification, please contact your child's teacher directly and set up an appointment.
- The spring assessment will be a written assessment plus a conference. The date will be listed on the calendar at the beginning of the school year. Sign-up for conferences will be available before the conference date. No children will be in class during this day. If you are unable to attend during the conference time, teachers can arrange a phone conference or to meet with you at a different time.
- The lead teacher and the assistant teacher work together as a team. They share ideas, feelings and information that they gather in preparing for assessments.

- The Art and Music/Movement teachers will have an opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the lead teachers. These teachers will also prepare specific sections of the assessments.
- Both classroom teachers will be in attendance at conferences, if possible.

Teacher Time Commitments:

- If you wish to speak with a teacher, please remember that during preschool hours, a teacher's time belongs to the children. Please do not engage the teachers in long conversations at arrival or pick-up times.
- Please notify the classroom teacher about changes in your child's life that may affect your child, e.g., the loss of a grandparent, or a serious illness in the family, or the loss of a pet.
- Parents will not receive daily assessments of child behavior at pick-up time. Teachers will provide only positive comments, while other parents are present. If you or a teacher has a concern, a private meeting should be set up.
- Teachers are always willing to set up special times to discuss any problem or situation that may have an impact on your child.
- Please do not discuss your child in their presence, especially with other parents present, other than giving positive comments.
- The director will attend any conference, if needed.

Teacher/Director Continuing Education:

- Teachers are required to obtain 10 in-service hours per year in order to keep skills sharp and updated. These classes are certified by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.
- All teachers are certified in CPR, first aid, and how to recognize symptoms of illness and abuse and neglect.
- All teachers are mandated by the State of Kansas to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- We are licensed by the State of Kansas, and KDHE evaluates our program and staff on a yearly basis.
- All persons who may come in daily contact with our preschool children are reviewed for criminal records by Kansas Bureau of Investigation each year.
- Kansas Bureau of Investigation must also review all volunteers.
- Teachers have current health assessments on file.
- All teachers, substitutes and volunteers must have a negative TB test on file.

Teacher/Director Evaluations:

- Each teacher is evaluated yearly by the director. Individual goals are submitted at the beginning of the year, and the teacher and director review the outcomes at the end of the year.

- The director is evaluated yearly by the Preschool Advisory Committee of FPC. Individual school goals are submitted at the beginning of the year, and the outcomes are reviewed at the end of the year.
- Parent evaluations may be collected at various times during the year; a spring evaluation is collected yearly. We encourage you to return this evaluation, as it assists us in improving our program.
- Special concerns about any teacher should be discussed with the director at any time during the school year.
- Special concerns about the director should be taken to the Preschool Advisory Committee or Personnel Committee of FPC at any time during the school year.

Membership:

- FPCP director is a participant in the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- FPCP is a member of Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children.
- FPCP is a member of the Christian Preschool Association of Kansas City.
- FPCP is a member of the Douglas County Child Development Association.
- FPCP teachers are members of Early Educators United, an affiliate of Douglas County Child Development Association.