



First Presbyterian

Pre-Kindergarten

## **Parent Handbook**

*First Presbyterian Pre-K is called to serve the children in our community by providing a quality education in a safe, nurturing, and Christian environment. Parents are a child's first educator, and we believe we are partners with parents to continue the cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth of each child. Our goal is to build skills that provide children with a love of learning for continued success in kindergarten and beyond.*

**We welcome your child and family to First Presbyterian Church & Pre-Kindergarten. In this handbook you will find all the policies and procedures for our program.**

### **Teaching Philosophy**

First Presbyterian Preschool recognizes the developmental needs of the preschool age child. The goals of our program are met by providing a balanced age-appropriate curriculum based on the philosophy that children learn through play and exploration. We maintain well-equipped classrooms. These classrooms are pleasant, inviting and safe. We employ dependable, loving, qualified teachers and staff in each classroom to help children develop trust. We develop class guidelines for working and playing together and respecting the rights of others. Our staff affirms every child's self-worth through praise and acceptance of feelings. While we are a Christian-based preschool, we welcome all religious backgrounds to our program. We will mentor your child with kindness, love, acceptance and good moral beliefs. ***First Presbyterian Pre-K admits all children regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity.***

### **Objectives**

The objective of the First Presbyterian Pre-Kindergarten Program is to provide children in our community the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, physically, and spiritually within an environment that exhibits love and concern for each child. Our goal is to help each of our students:

- Develop a sense of security and a feeling of success
- Learn to play with other children
- Develop a comfort within group activities
- Make a successful break from home
- Develop self-expression
- Learn to be a good listener
- Learn to follow directions
- Develop self-control and creativity
- Develop a love for learning and exploration
- Develop responsibility and independence
- Develop kindness toward and respect for others

## Admissions Policy/Procedure & Records

The goal of the program is to provide educational, Christian experiences for children throughout our community. Children are considered enrolled when the following forms and fees have been completed.

1. Registration Form – Please help us keep these up to date.
2. Immunization Records – Preschool requires that within 30 days of admission we have copy of the child's immunization medical record signed by your physician or pediatrician that shows:  
A record of necessary immunizations as recommended for the age group by the American Academy of Pediatrics or U.S. Public Health Services needs to be provided ***and must be signed by your physician/pediatrician.***
3. Pertinent health history such as allergies or chronic conditions (stated on your registration form)  
A note from a physician if normal physical activity **is not** permitted.
4. Handbook Notice Form signed.
5. Media Permission Form – This gives us permission to have your child/children photographed and/or videotaped for the preschool to have published in advertisements, the church website, Pre-K Facebook/Instagram page, and other church related publications.
6. Emergency Consent Form: Each child must have a signed Emergency Consent Form in his/her file before the first day of attendance. In the unlikely event that a child has a serious or life-threatening injury that requires immediate medical treatment, and a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the hospital noted on the enrollment form.
7. State form 49444 completed.
8. Fire Safety Protection Letter signed.
9. First month's tuition & registration fees are paid before the child's first day of school.
10. If your child has a medical condition and must receive medicine at school, please request a medical form to be completed, signed and on file prior to the start of school.

## Arrival and Departure Procedures

Please share this important information with babysitters, grandparents, spouses or any others who may be delegated to drive your child to school or pick them up.

A teacher assistant from your child's classroom or another classroom will be at the North Circle drive from 8:50-9:05am to help children out of the car and into the building. If you arrive late and find that the assistant is no longer at the door, you must park your car in the parking lot and take your child to the office. **DO NOT** leave your car parked in the circle. And **NEVER** let your child come inside alone.

## **Dismissal:**

Dismissal begins at 12:00 pm and 3:00 pm depending on your child's class. At that time, the assistant will bring your child to your car (if you are in line at the North Circle Drive) and help secure their buckles. All children **MUST** have the appropriate car seat/booster seat and be properly restrained.

Prompt pick-up is required and appreciated. The teachers must prepare for the next class and/or may have plans to be outside of the classroom. If you are detained for any reason, please call the preschool (765-751-7960).

It is very helpful to the assistants and will make pick up go quicker if your child exits and enters (car seats or boosters) on the right (passenger) side of your vehicle. **Please stay in your vehicle.** Please do not detain the assistant with conversation. If you have a concern or a question, please call your child's teacher or the Director and set up a mutually convenient time that you can talk.

Each child will be assigned a number and will be dismissed only to a car displaying that printed number. Numbers will be assigned and distributed during the parent orientation. If at any time your child is to leave school with another child or person, we must have a written note or phone call to confirm the arrangement. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child, we will check their ID.

## **School Closing for Inclement Weather**

We make every effort to remain open and avoid unscheduled closing. If we need to close, you will be notified on Remind and Facebook. We are either open or closed, we do not delay. Use your best judgment depending on weather conditions in your area. Please do not feel that you must send your child to school if safety is a concern.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a fire, we will evacuate the children through the designated fire exits; each classroom has posted a map indicating their closest exit.

We will perform fire drills. All the classes have a designated area outside the preschool building as their meeting place. Please see the maps in each classroom for specific details. We practice fire drills once a month and tornado drills once a year.

In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, we will take the children to the hallway between the kitchen and Fellowship Hall where the children are least likely to be hurt by flying glass or debris. In the event of a flood, we will take the children to the upper floor of the church.

## **Safe Church Policy**

First Presbyterian Church and Pre-K adopted the current Safe Church Policy with session approval in 2013. The preschool hallway will be a secured locked hallway with keypad entry by staff only. The arrival policy states 8:50am-9:05am; arrival after the designated times will require checking in at the Director's office or the main church office on the second floor. All staff, teacher assistants and student volunteers are required to participate in the Child Abuse Prevention and Recognition training, Universal Precautions training, and a Background check.

## **Substance Free Zone**

No illegal drug, tobacco, cigarettes, or alcohol will be permitted on the church or preschool grounds. We are a substance free zone. This includes the parking lot area.

## Discipline Policy

We maintain safe, controlled classrooms by establishing clear expectations of classroom behavior. School rules include:

- Students treat their teachers and one another with courtesy and respect
- Proper table manners are expected during snack time and lunch bunch
- Everyone walks in the hallways and on the stairs
- Everyone helps during room clean-up
- Toy weapons are not allowed
- Gum chewing is not allowed

Discipline is handled in a gentle, age-appropriate way. To help children toward self-control and independence, teachers will model appropriate behavior, offer consistent reminders of correct behavior, redirect them when necessary and praise appropriate behavior. When conflicts occur between students, teachers will guide the children in thinking of solutions or may redirect them to other activities. Children are helped to gain the skills necessary to solve conflicts by using their words. Children can express their feelings but are taught to consider the perspectives of others. Our goal is to help students become self-disciplined and to teach the inter-personal skills needed to resolve conflicts in a socially appropriate manner. "Time out" is rarely necessary. When used, it is brief in length, the child is kept near the other children, and the child is encouraged to rejoin the group as soon as he or she feels ready. No harsh punishment, physical or verbal, is administered. Parents are consulted when their child has a reoccurring behavior problem.

## Health Policies

Childhood illnesses are frequent occurrence among children in the age range served by our program. We ask for the cooperation of all families in trying to limit children's exposure to infectious diseases. If your child experiences any of the following, we ask you to keep the child home for **48 hours** or until after their symptoms have disappeared: fever, vomiting, green runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, and rashes. If your child has a fever, he/she must be free of fever for 24 hours *without medication* before returning to school.

If your child is sick and does have to stay home, we ask that you give the school a call to let us know that your child will be absent. Your child will be missed.

## When your child becomes ill at the preschool

If your child becomes sick during the day, you will be notified and asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. If you cannot be reached, your emergency contact person will be called.

If your child has one or more of the following, you will be contacted to pick up your child:

A fever, severe pain or discomfort, acute diarrhea (twice the child's normal frequency of bowel movements with a change to looser consistency within the last 24 hours), severe coughing, red eyes with discharge, infected, untreated skin patches, unexplained rashes or hives, heavy nasal discharge in conjunction with a cold, blood in urine, and vomiting.

Children with a temperature of 100.0 degrees are considered contagious and will be isolated. The staff members will set up an area for your child in the Director's office, where they will be supervised, and kept as comfortable as possible until you arrive.

If your child has a fever, keep them home at least 48 hours after the fever has subsided. If on an antibiotic, keep them home for 24 hours after the first dose of medication (to prevent spreading). Don't be surprised if your child gets sick early in the school year as it takes some time to build up immunities.

**The First Presbyterian Preschool reserves the right to request a doctor's note at any time.**

### **Communicable Diseases**

Should a child be exposed to any communicable diseases while at school, parents will be notified with description of the disease and symptoms. First Presbyterian Preschool requires that children not attend school until the child's physician has released them from care. A signed statement of health from the Doctor may be requested.

Please be sure to notify the Director when your child is going to be out sick. We like to keep track of illnesses so that we can inform other parents about any illnesses that are going around.

### **Lice**

We have a no nit lice policy. If nits are found in your child's hair, your child **MUST** stay out of school for at least 72 hours. If lice/nits are found at home, please notify school immediately. When ready to return to preschool, please call to make an appointment to have your child's hair checked by a staff member. A parent/guardian must be present at this time. Please know that lice can happen to any family. We will help you with education and understanding. Your privacy is important to us in all matters and there is nothing to be embarrassed about. Telling us is of the utmost importance to keep from spreading to all our students.

### **Accident Policy**

Each child must have a signed Emergency Consent Form in his/her file before the first day of attendance. In the unlikely event that a child has a serious or life-threatening injury that requires immediate medical treatment, and a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the hospital noted on the enrollment form. In the event a teacher or staff member has a serious or life-threatening injury that requires immediate medical treatment, the class will be supervised by an emergency sub; classes may be combined to address emergency situations.

### **Minor Injuries**

If a child has a minor injury, a staff member will use their first aid training. An incident report will be filled out by a staff member for any visible or non-visible injury that occurs at First Presbyterian Preschool. Any head injury will be reported, and parents will be notified immediately. The parent will receive a copy of the report, and another copy will be put in the child's file.

### **Nutrition**

Each day a small snack will be provided. It is preceded by a prayer. This is a learning experience as well as an energy booster. If your child wishes to bring a "special" snack for the class, please let your teacher know ahead of time so that she does not prepare the regular snack. Please let us know about any allergies or special dietary needs or concerns.

### **Lunch Bunch**

Students who are attending Lunch Bunch will bring their own lunch from home. This lunch should be cold and able to be eaten right from their boxes. Lunch Bunch assistants will assist your child in opening items, learning to pick up after themselves, staying seated until everyone is finished and helping with housekeeping afterwards. Please label lunch boxes clearly on the outside with first and last name. The children are encouraged to eat a reasonable portion of their main course.

## **Holiday Parties**

Our classroom celebrations include Halloween, A Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter. Parents are invited and welcome to help with holiday parties. A sign-up sheet will be available at "Meet and Greet". Again, we ask for no treat bags or party favors.

## **Cubbies**

Each child will be assigned a small storage space, referred to as a cubby. Your child can put his/her coat, tote bags, artwork, important papers, or other personal items in their cubby. **Please make it a habit to check your child's tote bag daily.**

## **Your Child's School Needs:**

We ask that your child come to preschool in clothes that will be comfortable and allow him/her to participate in all activities throughout the day, including outdoor play. The best type of clothing is the kind that children can put on and remove by themselves. **For safety reasons, children must wear shoes that have straps or ties. No flip flops.** Please label your child's jackets and shoes.

The school has extra clothing (though limited) in case of emergencies. If your child wears school clothing home, please launder and return these items by the next class session.

## **Diapers or Pull-ups (Toddler Time & PDO)**

Parents are required to supply their own child's diapers or pull-ups and wet wipes (non-alcohol). We support parents who choose to use cloth diapers, but because of health reasons we ask that only disposable diapers be used at First Presbyterian. Please provide these items every day your child comes to PDO or Toddler Time.

## **Birthdays**

We like to celebrate birthdays or a "special" day at school. Families are invited to spend time with us and bring your child's favorite snack, drink and napkin. Food items should be brought in packaged from a store with ingredient label still attached. Many children have food allergies, and we need to make sure items are safe for them to consume. **Cupcakes are discouraged due to the mess they leave behind.** Please no party favors. In place of favors, some families have chosen to give something to the whole class to be used at school. A book or a game would be an appropriate suggestion. Of course, this is entirely optional.

## **Problem Resolution Procedure**

If a problem arises regarding the policies, programming, staff, physical environment, or any other aspects, we ask that you discuss the problem with the teacher and/or Director. If you feel that your complaint was not dealt with promptly and/or appropriately, you may contact an Advisory Board Member.

## **Discrimination**

All staff treats children of all races, sex, and cultures with equal respect and consideration and provides all children equal opportunity to participate in all activities.

## **Outdoor Play**

Children will participate in outdoor activities daily, weather permitting. There may be occasions when teachers feel that the weather is not appropriate for outdoor play (rainy or very cold weather). On days such as this, the teachers will take the children to our downstairs play area inside the church.

## Playground Safety

The preschool is always concerned about the safety of the children. Here are the procedures all staff use for the children's outdoor play. We need everyone to be aware of them to help reinforce them. We appreciate your assistance.

*Sandbox: sand stays in the sandbox, it's unsafe to throw sand. Climbers: One person at a time on the ladder and rainbow bars. Climb up the steps, slide on your bottom, feet first, then move aside for the next friend.*

## Communication

The Preschool staff desires and works at creating a beneficial relationship with parents. The Director and/or teacher will be happy to meet with parents at any time during the year. Please phone for an appointment. Families are informed about the program and any policy changes through our website, Remind or phone calls.

- **Advisory Board Meetings** are held monthly.
- **Portfolios:** Teachers will maintain a sampling of the children's work throughout the school year.
- **Newsletters:** You will receive a monthly newsletter via Remind and you will also find it available on the preschool link on the website ([firstpresprek.org](http://firstpresprek.org))
- **Teachers will utilize the Remind App for direct classroom communication.**

## Security Doors

Entry into the preschool hallway will require you to check in with the director. The doors will be open during the drop off (8:50 am – 9:05 am) and pick up (12:00pm/3:00pm) times. If the director is out of the office, you will report to the main office on the second floor to gain access into the hallway.

## Preschool Safety and Transportation

All parking lots can be dangerous. **DO NOT PERMIT YOUR CHILD TO RUN AHEAD OF YOU** in the parking lot or in the building. Do not leave your child unattended in the car. If you need assistance, team up with another adult or discuss the situation with the director.

On field trips, each adult must wear a seat belt. Children will ride only in the rear seat.

## Traffic Pattern

Please enter the parking lot at the North entrance off New York. Drive along the outside of the parking lot around to the circle drive. Then exit onto New York. This is a one-way traffic pattern.

## Donations

We gladly accept any donations at any time during the year. All gifts are tax-deductible. Your support is appreciated.



## **Family Changes**

It is very important that you discuss with your child's teacher any changes in the home situation including births, deaths, lengthy illnesses, moves, trips by parents or any other major changes in your child's life. Please keep the teacher informed about these situations. They will be kept confidential if you wish. Also, whenever you are out of town, please provide the name of the person responsible for your child in your absence.

## **Field Trips**

Each Pre-K class will have the opportunity to go on field trips throughout the year. Trips are planned to increase a child's awareness as related to the unit of study in the classroom, to give a child a greater number of experiences from which to draw and to foster his/her growing independence. Examples of field trips include a pumpkin patch, a local apple orchard, horse farm, planetarium, and the farm festival. Siblings are often welcome to join us on our field trips. Parents are required to transport their own child to and from the field trip. You will be notified prior to the time the trip is taken either through the newsletter or special notice. The school will pay admission fees for the student. Parents and siblings are asked to pay for themselves in the classroom before departure.

## **Separation Anxiety**

One of the purposes of your initial "Meet and Greet" is to ease anxieties about school by allowing you and your child to visit and explore the classroom and to become acquainted with the teacher. Some children and/or parents still find separation on the first day of school difficult. Children may resist leaving their car, cry or cling. This is behavior that we are prepared to handle, so try not to overreact.

To ease possible separation anxiety, you as parents can talk about school in a positive, natural way. Describe activities that your child will participate in at school. Set up a bedtime and morning routine, allowing extra time the first few days.

When you drop your child off on the first day, try not to appear worried and anxious. Your child's attitude will most likely reflect yours. Don't prolong the good-bye as your child may feel he/she has control over the situation and you. Reassure your child, tell him/her you will return, smile and be positive as you leave, even if your child is in tears. Try not to project your anxieties on your child.

Along with the classroom assistant, the Director will help children from their cars and escort them to their classroom on the first days of school. If your child is distressed, the Director will ask your permission to hold the child and take him/her to the classroom.

In the classroom, the teachers will help children work through this adjustment period by helping them get involved in play, introducing them to classmates, assuring them that their parents will return, and by providing plenty of loving, comforting words and touches. Most children who have tearful good-byes are playing happily within 5-10 minutes. Even those children who experience more acute separation anxiety on the first day or two of school are happily involved in the routine of going to school within a few weeks.

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

### **Parents' Day Out Program**

Each 3-hour session includes open play, story time with age-appropriate activities, a daily craft and snack time. We conclude each day with outdoor play time or in bad weather indoor play with riding toys and climbing structure in a large indoor play area to develop gross motor skills. Through our story time and crafts, we reinforce color and shape identification, and we work with seasonal themes. We sing, count, work on fine and gross motor skills in a multitude of hands-on experiences.

## **Two-Three-Year-Old Toddler Time Program**

Toddler Time is a fun way to introduce your toddler to school and being away from Mom and Dad for the first time! They learn how to interact with children their own age and how to follow a regular school routine by having fun with different themes each week. Themes often focus on different seasons, holidays, nursery rhymes and/or Bible stories.

## **Three-Four-Year-Old Program**

The basis of the 3-year-old class is to introduce pre-academic skills and build self-esteem. This program begins but is not limited to teaching letters, colors, shapes, counting, name recognition, manners, taking turns, following 1 and 2 step directions, sharing and developing self-help skills and independence. We introduce field trips, circle time with stories, craft time, music and gross motor time.

## **Four-Five-Year-Old Program**

Instilling confidence in your child so they will have a successful transition to kindergarten is an important goal of our program. We will provide enriching activities to work on the following skills (but not limited to these skills):

### *Academic Skills*

Letter & letter sounds  
Upper & Lowercase Letters  
Rhyming words  
Opposites & Patterns  
Counting by 1's, 2's, 5's, 10's  
Coin recognition  
Months of the year  
Days of the week  
Scissor skills  
Writing first name (capital then lowercase)  
Identify first and last name  
Correct pencil grasp

### *Social & Independent Skills*

Hang bag and coat up  
Putting coat on and zipping  
Follow 2-3 step directions  
Sitting at circle time, raising hand to speak  
Walking in a line  
Keep hands to themselves  
Taking turns/sharing  
Respect friends and teachers

## **Facilities**

Children use play constantly to explore, test, and clarify their world. Our classrooms are set up to enable such developmental progress. We plan for flexible structure so each child can participate at his/her own pace, choosing from a variety of activities within the classroom. The Pre-K classrooms are located on the first floor of the church near the north entrance and each include:

Puzzle center  
Art center  
Block area  
Language and listening area  
Dramatic play area  
Sensory table (i.e. play dough, clay, shaving cream, etc.)  
Rug area for group sharing  
Science center  
Table toys, which are rotated daily to promote fine motor skills, creativity and sharing  
Classroom library  
Musical instruments

Sand and/or water table

Additionally, the church has a fenced outdoor playground and indoor multipurpose room for play.

## **Parent Orientation Meeting**

Shortly before school begins, parents will be invited to an orientation session held in the Church Fellowship Hall. At least one parent from each family is encouraged to attend to learn of school policies and procedures, some of which may have changed from previous years. Handbooks and tote bags will be available. All paperwork will be distributed and completed, as well as tuition payments, distribution of car numbers, etc. Hopefully, this meeting will allow you to have your procedural questions answered so that the “Meet and Greet” time may be more child centered. Childcare will not be available.

## **Meet and Greet**

These days are devoted to parent/child/teacher meetings. You and your child will be scheduled to meet with his/her teacher for 15 minutes sometime during these days. “Meet and Greet” allows you, your child and the teacher to exchange information about the class and allows your child to become acquainted with the teacher and the classroom setting. Allow 10-15 additional minutes to explore the classroom with your child.

No formal conferences are scheduled during the year, **but you are encouraged to call the teacher if you wish to discuss any matter relating to the school and/or your child.** You will be contacted if the teacher notices any troubling changes in your child’s behavior or if an incident has occurred that she feels you should know about.

## **Tax Exempt Status**

We are classified as a non- profit organization. Many families ask for our tax-exempt number to use for tax purposes. According to our church accounting department we cannot give out our tax-exempt number. We do have a W10 form that we can give to you for these purposes.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parents are welcome to visit our program any time **after** the first few weeks of school. A phone call or text to the teacher is not necessary but may help her arrange to have a few minutes to talk. If there are more than two visitors at a time, please make your visit brief. Be advised --- the teacher may ask for your help! For insurance purposes, siblings or other children are not permitted “to go to school” with the enrolled child.

Parents may also volunteer to help with our classroom parties and classroom activities. We especially encourage you to share any special talents you possess with our students. Your child’s teacher will explain these volunteer opportunities during the “Meet and Greet”.

## **Monthly Newsletters**

Newsletters will be sent via Remind at the beginning of each month to inform you of upcoming events and general classroom activities. For full participation in your child’s education, it is essential that you read the newsletter. Make a note of important dates and schedule changes.

We will send a monthly Scholastic book club order form home with your child. If you wish to order books, you may do so online. Books generally take two weeks to arrive. The book order due date will be stated. *The Pre-K earns “points” for each order, and we use these points to enrich our classroom libraries.*

If you would like to submit information about an upcoming community event or entertainment suitable for families with young children, please do so by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. A written copy can be left with your

child's teacher who will pass it on to the Director.

## **Telephone Calls**

If you wish to speak with the Director, please feel free to call the school anytime at 765-751-7960. **If your call is an emergency**, you may call the church office for immediate assistance (765-289-4431). Every effort will be made to return your call promptly.

## **Enrollment and Admission Policy**

Enrollment will occur in February for the following school year. A child is eligible for enrollment that will be two, three, four, or five years old by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the year for which he/she is enrolling.

**Children will be admitted without regard to religious tradition, race, color, sex, national or ethnic background.**

Preferences for class times and days will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The Director will make specific classroom assignments. Enrollment will be made for the entire year. Any vacancies may be filled from a waiting list as they occur.

Children to be admitted must be toilet trained and will be required to climb stairs.

*Students in Toddler Time (2-year old) and PDO do not need to be toilet trained.*

Two-year old classes will be limited to 12 students. Three-year old classes will be limited to 14 students. Four and five-year-old classes will be limited to 16-18 students.

**Each classroom maintains a teacher and teacher assistant.**

## **Supplies**

The registration fee you paid at the time of your child's enrollment covers most supplies. Each class does have a small supply list that you are responsible for purchasing at the beginning of the school year. From time to time a call out for a collection of specific items for craft purposes (i.e. berry baskets, socks, Styrofoam, etc.) may occur. You will be informed of these needs through our monthly newsletter or a notice from the teacher. Additionally, if you ever have books, puzzles, toys or dress-up clothes that are in good condition and that you no longer want, donations to our program are greatly appreciated.

Your child will be provided a tote bag that he/she is to bring to school **EVERY** day (except on field trip days!). We will send home all correspondence and precious art projects in the bag. Please check it each class day. You may decorate the plain side of the bag if you wish. Please do not remove the nametag! Replacement bags will be available from the Director for \$7.00. **Your school issued bag will remain with your child throughout their time at First Presbyterian Pre-Kindergarten.**

**\*\*Policies may be updated or revised as needed. Parents will be notified of any policy changes.**