

First Presbyterian Weekday School



*"Learning that starts in the heart"*

PARENT MANUAL

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## PROGRAM

### **Introduction**

For over 60 years, First Presbyterian Church has offered a superior Christian preschool for area children. First Presbyterian Weekday School is committed to the quality of your child's daily experiences.

Our school is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accreditation is a sign that your child will be safe, healthy, and learning each day. NAEYC has developed 10 standards for high-quality early childhood education. Programs that meet these standards provide a safe and healthy environment for children, have teachers who are well-trained, have access to excellent teaching materials, and work with curriculum that is appropriately challenging and developmentally sound.

Our approach to early childhood education is rooted in educational philosophy and theory, as well as practice. It relies heavily on Erik Erikson's stages of socio-emotional development, Jean Piaget's theories of how children think and learn, and the principles of physical development.

Although religiously exempt from state licensure, the Weekday School voluntarily complies with regulations specified by the Virginia Department of Social Services. We adhere to state and accreditation standards for room and playground space, staff to children ratios, and the type of program equipment and learning materials used.

The Weekday School occupies 12 classrooms in the church: an indoor and outdoor play area; a Godly play room; and a music room. The maximum enrollment does not exceed 175 children.

### **What is the Program's Mission?**

The mission of the First Presbyterian Weekday School is to provide early childhood Christian education that enables children to be moral, contributing participants in their homes, schools, churches, and nation by following developmentally appropriate guidelines.

## **What is the Program's Philosophy?**

We believe that every child is a unique creation and gift from God. We believe that God's Son, Jesus, demonstrated a love and appreciation of children in a time and society when this was not the standard. Therefore, all that we do in our Weekday School is supported and guided by strong Christian principles. Every child has the right to expect a loving, healthy, and safe environment; an attractive and well-functioning facility; a warm, caring, qualified and Christian staff who treat the children and each other with compassion, kindness, and respect; and the professional, intelligent execution of a curriculum which meets individual and group needs of a Christian, creative, academic, and social nature. This school is open to young children regardless of race, color, creed, or nationality.

In keeping with the core principles of Christianity within the Presbyterian tradition, the Weekday School will seek to foster a spirit of Christian love and welcome the value of each person in God's sight, toleration and respect for differences, cooperation and peaceful resolution of conflict, and strong ethical and moral principles. Children of all faiths and backgrounds are welcome at the school. Although explicitly Christian teaching is part of the school, there is no intention to proselytize or disrespect other traditions.

## **Social and Emotional Development**

The theories of Erik Erikson provide a helpful framework for understanding children's socio-emotional development. Erikson defined eight stages of socio-emotional growth from infancy to old age. At each stage people confront circumstances that must be addressed. How these situations are handled determines how a person's character and personality develop. During the early childhood years, children deal with three of the eight stages. They learn:

1. to trust outside their families.
2. to gain independence and self-control.
3. to take initiative and assert themselves in socially acceptable ways.

When a learning environment encourages exploration and discovery, children develop a sense of trust and belonging. They feel safe and encouraged to explore not only materials, but also their relationships with peers and adults. They feel important and valued when others listen to them, seek out their ideas, and allow them to express themselves.

Our environment encourages both autonomy and self-control. Children learn to handle their feelings in acceptable, socially appropriate ways. They are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and thereby experience a sense of control over their lives. They learn that what they say and do is important and has an effect on others. We foster competence and initiative in this type of environment. By setting clear, age-appropriate expectations for behavior and letting children know what is expected of them, our teachers can engender success and minimize frustration. Children's concerns about doing things "right" diminish because they are encouraged to learn from their mistakes, to explore, and to take risks.

### **Physical Development**

When children have proper nutrition, good health, and a safe environment, they progress physically through a predictable sequence of stages and acquire predictable skills. During these years, children need well-balanced meals and snacks high in nutrients and low in fats, salt and sugar. Therefore, we ask that you not send items to school that contain large amounts of fat, sugar, or chocolate.

As children grow physically, their muscles develop and mature. Children are able to perform more complex and refined actions. Both gross and fine motor development are important, although gross motor skills usually come before fine motor development. We enhance gross motor skills' development by providing safe spaces, equipment, and plenty of time for children to practice skills. By offering encouragement, guidance, and reinforcement for effort and accomplishments, our teachers establish an environment in which children are inspired to participate in activities.

Fine motor development involving the use of small muscles, such as those in the hand and wrists, are developed through activities such as building with blocks, molding clay or play dough, using scissors, stringing beads, placing pegs in holes, drawing or painting. It is much more important for children to practice these skills than it is to make a "product" from their efforts. They begin with scribbles and marks on a page, then start to draw circles, curves, and lines and ultimately combine these shapes into a picture. Gradually, the shapes will remind them of something and they will name what they draw. Developing these skills lays the foundation for cognitive abilities in reading, writing, and math.

## **Spiritual Development**

We know young children are very concrete thinkers and therefore find abstract concepts difficult to grasp. Thus, the faith values that we wish to instill in children are better "caught than taught." This concept means that there is very intentional thought on the part of the teachers about how to model and challenge our children to think about and embrace these values internally. Therefore, our program has multiple approaches by which we weave Christian principles into our curriculum. Our chapel program is a very important example of one approach. On a biweekly basis, the children have the opportunity to have an interactive experience with our Chapel Coordinator. The goal is to have this be a vital, ongoing work in progress, similar to our adult faith journeys. We as a staff will always be searching for new ways to guide children toward embracing the values which we know to be important.

## **The Teacher's Role**

To teach effectively, we believe our teachers must always keep in mind the dynamics and needs of the group of children as well as the individual characteristics and needs of each child in the group. Teachers use their understanding of child development to plan the activities, create the learning environment, establish the schedule, and work with children individually and in small groups. Our philosophy encourages teachers to respect and value the differences among children. One of the ways to do this is to provide a variety of activities. In this way children learn to make choices. Allowing children to make choices is one of the teacher's best strategies for promoting positive behavior.

## **What is Your Curriculum?**

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "Curriculum is an organized framework that delineates the content that children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve identified curricular goals, what teachers do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur." We take this definition one step further in that we believe everything we do in the classroom is learning and thus part of our curriculum. Every contact we have with a child is an opportunity for learning. Curriculum cannot be just what is planned or taken from a book if we believe children learn from meaningful experiences which occur often and are relevant to their lives. NAEYC calls this a "developmentally appropriate curriculum."

## **A Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum**

The following is a list of guidelines that ensure we are offering both an age-appropriate and individually-appropriate curriculum:

- A. A developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development (physical, social/emotional, and cognitive) through an integrated approach.
- B. Curriculum planning is based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's special interests and developmental progress.
- C. Curriculum planning emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.
- D. Learning activities and materials are concrete, real, and relevant to young children's lives.
- E. Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials. They increase the difficulty, complexity, and challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills.
- F. Teachers provide opportunities for children to choose from among a variety of activities, materials, and equipment and they provide time to explore through active involvement. Teachers facilitate children's engagement with materials and activities and extend the child's learning by asking questions or making suggestions that stimulate children's thinking.

### **How Does the Curriculum Vary by Classroom?**

We provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and a curriculum that addresses all areas of the child's development. We understand that children have different needs as they grow, and each developmental level is organized to reflect these differences.

The Infant program is interactive and stresses the importance of infancy by setting the stage for ongoing growth and development. The program focuses on the fact that babies not only see and hear at birth, but are also responsive to the world around them. It is the teacher's role to recognize the periods when a child is ready for interaction and when the child needs rest. Daily routines such as diapering and feeding are seen as teaching opportunities for language, physical, and social development.

In our toddler and two year old classes, we provide an environment which promotes social relationships and facilitates each child's individual growth. When children experiment with their environment, active learning occurs. Daily activities are designed to foster this active learning by allowing these children to choose activities or materials. Each part of the child's day is structured to promote his/her growing ability to communicate ideas and feelings, develop a sense of his/her own needs and how he/she can meet those needs, and finally, to form close bonds with others. During center times, your child may choose to paint, use the sensory materials, do puzzles, participate in dramatic play activities, or look at books. These activity times provide opportunities to play alone, near peers, and/or with peers and teachers.

Our preschool curriculum utilizes the *Creative Curriculum*®. Teachers intentionally provide activities, themes or units of study which support children's interests. Teachers plan activities in the areas of math, science, literacy, and art. The *Creative Curriculum* provides teachers with suggestions as to how to enhance existing learning centers to extend those skills.

Our curriculum is inspired by the "project approach." A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. Projects can be child-initiated and supported by teacher observations and group discussions with the children. Projects give the children opportunity to apply basic skills in meaningful ways, as well as to develop new skills. This approach reflects the preschoolers' confidence in their developing skills and enthusiasm for learning.

## **Staffing**

The Weekday School program is staffed to meet the needs of and promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children, in accordance with guidelines from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Specific job descriptions and expectations for staff may be reviewed in the Weekday School Policies and Procedures Manual.

First Presbyterian Weekday School staff members are enthusiastic and dedicated to working with children in a positive and successful way. Many of our staff members are parents and have children currently enrolled in our program, or are the proud parents of Weekday School alumni! As teachers are usually most discriminating about where their own children go to school, this speaks loudly of their commitment to our program.



The high quality that we are able to offer at the Weekday School is largely due to the talented and well-trained staff. We strive to obtain staff who have a degree in a field related to early childhood development and/or education. All teachers are required to have a Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA). Continuing education and ongoing staff training are valued highly at the Weekday School. Staff meetings are used for training opportunities and many staff members attend local child development and education conferences in the spring and the fall. All staff are encouraged to take further coursework, such as: the CDA (Child Development Associate); courses at Lord Fairfax Community College; courses offered by the Lord Fairfax Association for the Education of Young Children (LFAEYC), etc. Scholarship monies are available as needed to assist staff with the cost.

All staff members are required annually to obtain a signed statement from a practicing physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner that they are free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children.

### **What is the Dress Code for Children?**

Busy, creative, learning play can be messy regardless of the age of the child. We use washable paints during all art projects and smocks or shirts cover clothing, but we cannot guarantee spills or stains will be avoided. Please dress your child in play clothing that is washable and durable so she/he can enjoy our activities without fear of soiling an outfit. For your child's safety we ask that children not wear sandals, flip-flops, or "crocs" at school. If a shoe cannot be secured on a child's foot, it should not be worn to school. Sturdy, closed-toe shoes, such as tennis shoes, will do a much better job of protecting your child from injury.

### **What Should My Child Bring to School?**

There are items you should bring with your child to start the school year:

1. proof of your child's identity (birth certificate). We must have documentation that we have seen your child's birth certificate and recorded the necessary information required for compliance with the Department of Social Services.
2. a physical examination form (available at your local pediatrician's office) dated and signed by your child's pediatrician (annually); including the immunization form. We must have this form on file for the protection of all children in the school.

3. a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothes. Be sure to label each article of clothing that is brought to school with your child's name.

On a daily basis, what you need to bring depends on the age of your child. Parents of infants, toddlers and 2's are asked to provide the following:

diapers, wipes, and ointments (a specific "Medication Administration" Form will need to be filled out separately). Diapers are changed as needed. Experience indicates young infants may need 4-5 diapers and older infants, toddlers, and 2's need 2-4. Many parents prefer to leave a package of diapers and wipes in the classroom labeled with their child's name. In this case, the teacher will notify you when the supply needs to be replenished.

We do ask that children leave toys, gum, pets, and money at home. Children share the learning materials at the school as part of their educational experience. When children are not concerned about their toys being lost or broken, they are able to participate more fully in our educational program.

At the beginning of the school year, the teacher will send home a list of classroom supplies that your child should bring to school. This would include items to be shared by the class such as tissues, and wipes for general cleanup.

### **Lunch and Allergy Information**

All of our children bring their own lunches to school.

For infants, toddlers and two year olds, we ask that you send the following:

1. formula (or milk) must be in permanently labeled bottles with the child's name. Each bottle must be capped and non-breakable.
2. nutritious food for children not yet on table food along with utensils. Baby food in jars must also be labeled with the child's name. Food opened and not finished must be taken home. No food will be used again once it is opened. Infants will not share food.
3. foods that are cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces for infants and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces for toddlers and two year olds.

*Please note that no nut products are allowed in infant, toddler and two year old classes. Read packaged food labels carefully before sending them to school.*

For our other preschoolers, lunches should include a drink and ice pack if necessary. We will not serve a snack. For children younger than four, we ask that the following food items not be packed in lunches: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, or spoons of peanut butter. These items may be potential choking hazards for children.

Please note that some children have nut (or other food-related) allergies. Signs are posted on classroom doors where this applies. Refrain from sending any nut products with your child in these classrooms. Be sure to read labels carefully on foods sent to school.

Families whose children are in rooms where there is a nut-related allergy will receive detailed information about safe foods and procedures prior to the beginning of the school year. A list of safe foods may also be found on our website.

### **What is Your Policy Regarding Discipline of Children?**

We follow the principles of Conscious Discipline®, an emotional intelligence program based on the most current brain research. Fundamental to this theory is the assumption that children's brains are best prepared to learn when they feel safe and part of a bigger community. Rather than administering punishment for poor choices, we teach children better ways to handle strong emotions or stress. These are skills they will be able to use throughout life. Teachers provide clear, consistent, and age-appropriate limits and help children learn to become increasingly responsible for themselves. When out-of-bound behaviors do occur, we believe it is important for children to understand why the behavior is inappropriate and how to handle the situation differently next time. Teachers establish predictable limits and help the children understand the consequences of their actions. They act as role models and encourage children's appropriate behavior.

We believe it is our responsibility to provide children with positive guidance, and in our experience, most children will respond well to our approach. In the event a child does not respond, we will notify the parents and work closely with them to develop a plan to help the child gain self-control and a positive attitude toward his peers and teachers.

We reserve the right to ask the parents to withdraw the child from the school:

- should the child's continued negative behavior put himself, his peers, or his teachers at risk for physical harm, or
- should the child damage Church property.

While we understand the developmental tendencies of many children to experiment with inappropriate language to shock others, withdrawal may also be requested for children who are verbally abusive, including the repeated use of inappropriate language which other families consider offensive.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please check with your child's teachers before making your plans. In order to comply with safety standards, food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers (with a list of ingredients available on the package). To ensure the safety of children in our care, we ask that no balloons be brought or sent to school. Balloons have been found to be extremely dangerous. Your child may choose to greet arriving students by ringing our school bell to celebrate his/her birthday.

### **Field Trips**

We like children to have the opportunity to learn about our community by providing recreational and educational trips. We require your signed authorization for each trip. Teachers are required to prepare field trip plans prior to each trip. You will be notified of all scheduled trips. In accordance with Virginia state law, all children under age eight must be properly secured in a child safety seat or booster seat. Parents are responsible for the transportation of their children to and from field trips. In order to comply with insurance regulations, teachers may not arrange for or transport children.

### **How Do We Handle Biting?**

Children biting other children is the most common and the most difficult occurrence in toddler and two year old classes. Unfortunately, it happens in even the best programs. It is not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers. Biting incidents happen quickly, and a pattern and epidemic of biting behavior may occur in a very short period of time in spite of close supervision and intervention.

At the Weekday School, we feel a responsibility to all children we serve. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for all children and when biting occurs, the teacher and director will analyze the environment and make adaptations to reduce biting. In reality, biting behavior can be very difficult to change and requires time, patience, and understanding from all who are involved.

When a child bites, we:

1. immediately remove the child who bites from the situation.
2. attend, console, and administer first aid to the child who was bitten. We help this child re-enter play when he/she is ready.
3. firmly remind the child who bites that biting is not allowed, ask them to help in caring for the child who was bitten and help the biter to see that they have hurt someone else.
4. do not release the name of the child who bites, as this is not constructive and can make a difficult situation worse. We do, however, send home a report describing the incident.

To help a child who is biting, we:

1. observe the child to see if there are any common variables as to the time of day or the situation. Observation helps us in trying to identify the motivation of biting. Children bite for many reasons and each case calls for a different approach.
2. will meet with the parents, teacher, and the director to discuss the situation and possible behavior modification techniques.

If you are the parent of a child who bites, we want you to know that we will work with you and your child to change this behavior. This takes time and cooperation between caregivers and parents. Appropriate strategies will be identified and all adults involved (parents, teachers, and school director) will be responsible for consistent implementation of behavior modification techniques. Occasionally, children become stuck in a pattern of biting that does not respond to behavior modification techniques. In this event, you may be asked to withdraw your child from the program.

## **Outdoor Play**

We believe that in order for children to be healthy, they need fresh air and exercise. Our supporting agencies concur and require us to provide outdoor time for children every day, weather permitting. Parents are advised to be aware of daily weather conditions so appropriate outdoor wear is sent to school with the child. Children will be taken outdoors in hot and cold weather and teachers will monitor the conditions and limit the time children are outside to assure children are neither too hot nor too cold. It is our policy that if a child is too sick to go outdoors, the child is too sick to be in school. We cannot honor requests to keep a child inside while her/his class is outdoors.

## **How Will We Communicate About Your Child?**

Communication is important. A teacher and school newsletter will be sent home monthly. Teachers will send home daily notes for infants and toddlers to relate the child's activities that day.

Conferences are offered twice a year and at other times as requested by the teacher or parent. During these conferences we will discuss your child's progress, accomplishments, and challenges at school. We encourage you to share what is happening at home.

Parent surveys are distributed at least once a year in order for us to gather feedback. We use that information to develop objectives for the next year. Should you have any questions or suggestions, please notify your child's teacher or the director. Open lines of communication will enable us to provide you with the service you expect and value.

The supervision of your child's growth and training is our joint responsibility. We want to know and understand your child, so feel free to discuss with us any problems your child may be experiencing. Specific instructions concerning feeding, health, medicine, etc. must be in writing and signed by parents. When you have questions or concerns, we ask that you communicate first with your child's teacher. In addition, you are always welcome to make an appointment with the director.

## **Parental Visits/Parent Group**

Parents are welcome at any time. We encourage our parents to be involved in our school. Parents may choose to eat lunch with their child or spend time observing their child in the classroom setting. Our parent group also offers many ways to volunteer and enrich your child's school experience. Some of the opportunities available include:

1. Assisting with fund-raisers,
2. Serving on a special events committee,
3. Participating in our "Meals for Moms" program,
4. Serving as "Parent Liaison."

Ask for more information at school if you would like to become involved. We can give you the name and phone number of our Weekday School team representative.

## **Volunteering in Your Child's Classroom**

Parents may wish to volunteer time to assist in their child's classroom. Helpful ways to assist may include:

1. assisting with paperwork,
2. assisting with children's journal writing,
3. reading to children,
4. assisting with art projects.

We do ask that before volunteering you meet with your child's teacher to determine the requests and opportunities available and to develop specific dates and times when a volunteer is needed. All volunteer activities will be planned by the teacher and performed with the teacher's guidance.

The goal for classroom volunteers is strictly to help the teacher, assistant, and children. Therefore, we ask that respect be shown to the teacher's needs, children's interests, and group dynamics. Should an observer's or volunteer's presence within the classroom cause unnecessary disruption and/or stress for the teacher, assistant, or children, then the teacher may ask the observer or volunteer to leave the classroom.

## Procedures for Filing a Complaint

We strive always at the Weekday School to accommodate the needs of our children, parents, and staff. We are committed to maintaining effective and positive communication with children, parents, and other staff members. We realize that situations may arise in which parents have questions and/or concerns about policies, procedures, or incidents within the school. We will do our best to work together with the parents to resolve any issues. Should a parent continue to have a concern, the following procedure should be followed.

Address the question or concern to:

1. your child's teacher (this is **ALWAYS** a critical first step if the question or concern relates to the class or your child's participation within the class.)
2. the Weekday School Director.
3. the Weekday School Team.
4. the Pastor of First Presbyterian Church.
5. First Presbyterian Staff Relations Committee.
6. NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) (Please note that before initiating this step, the NAEYC guidelines state: "The complainant must have exhausted all possible strategies within the program to resolve the situation, such as talking to the teacher, the director, the board, or other administrative organizations, prior to filing a formal complaint with the Academy.")

Should a parent continue to express dissatisfaction with the Weekday School, then that parent may choose to withdraw the child from the school. If the director and the Weekday School Team feel that all strategies have been exhausted in seeking to resolve an issue, with no agreeable outcome, then the Weekday School Director may ask the parent to withdraw the child from the school.



## ENROLLMENT

### **Who Can Enroll at First Presbyterian Weekday School?**

The school is open to all students ages 6 weeks to 5 years regardless of race, color, creed, gender, or nationality. As in any outreach of the Church, we are obligated to offer a program consistent with the highest type of early childhood education and to provide an atmosphere in which children and teachers are learning to live in a Christian way. This gives the Church one of its best opportunities for Christian education and outreach.

### **What are the Operating Hours?**

Our hours of operation are: arrival time of 9:00 a.m. and dismissal time of 1:00 p.m. Infants may be brought in as desired from 9:00 a.m. on, if a shorter day is desired. The Weekday School is set up with a minimum of 160 teaching days based on the five-day program. We will make every effort to make up missed days.

### **What is the School's Inclement Weather Policy?**

All weather related announcements will be made by 7:00 a.m. You will receive a call from Blackboard Connect®, a rapid communication system, with this information and/or you may call the Weekday School office phone at 662-7588.

The following procedures will be followed:

- 1) If the decision is made to close school for the day, we will assign a make-up day to the school schedule. This information will be sent home to parents.
- 2) Should the decision be made to open on a **ONE-HOUR DELAY**:  
School will open at 10:00 a.m.  
School will dismiss at 2:00 p.m.
- 3) Should the decision be made to open on a **TWO-HOUR DELAY**:  
School will open at 11:00 a.m.  
School will dismiss at 2:00p.m.

This policy was established in order to ensure the safety of the children. In an effort to be equitable to the parents, the Weekday School will remain open for an extra hour on One and Two-Hour delay days.

### **How Will My Child be Assigned to a Group?**

Class assignments are made at the discretion of the director. Factors that guide these assignments include: teachers' schedules, gender ratios, child's age, and most importantly, which teacher's skills would best meet your child's needs. It is our belief that children grow socially when exposed to a variety of peers. Therefore, children together one year might not necessarily be placed together the next year. Teachers also grow from change; therefore, staff may not teach the same-aged children from year to year.

### **How Do We Get Started?**

We will ask you to fill out a number of forms. Some of these, like the child's enrollment record, the health and immunization records, and the emergency cards, are required by the state agency that monitors and regulates our school. Other forms are specifically designed for our use. These forms will help the primary teacher gather needed information to help your child adjust to out of the home care. We have computerized enrollment records to ensure the information we have about your family is up to date and accurate.

If any of the following information should change at any time, please notify us so that we can update your records:

1. Phone Numbers where you can be reached during the day (It is very important that you provide current cell phone information in the event we have to reach you quickly.)
2. Home and work addresses
3. Names of authorized persons to be contacted in case of your child's illness or injury and their home and cell phone numbers
4. Any change in your child's schedule
5. Names of persons authorized to pick up your child in the event that you are detained.

In addition, we suggest that parents interested in enrolling children in our program take part in a pre-enrollment tour and observation session. The tour and observation session will help you make sure our program is the type of program you want for your child.

## What is Gradual Transition?

One of the best ways to facilitate your child's adjustment is to plan for a comfortable introduction to the program. Young children have little experience in change and often need extra time to adjust. Gradual transition gives your child that time. Before the first week of school, we offer an Open House for students and parents. You and your child are invited to come in, meet the teacher, and explore the classroom together. If your child experiences difficulty adjusting, we will be happy to work with you and your child to develop a transition/separation plan to try to meet his/her needs.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The school has an emergency preparedness plan in place for dealing with emergencies and security. We conduct monthly emergency drills for evacuation and severe weather. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom of the school. In the unlikely event the school is severely damaged and declared unsafe, plans are made to evacuate children to safety where they will await arrival of parents or persons authorized to pick them up. Should such an emergency occur, the Director will notify Blackboard Connect® and post a notice at the school. Appropriate agencies will also be notified in the event of an emergency at the school.

We do everything possible to minimize accidents through various safety programs, facility inspections, routine maintenance, and consistent policies and procedures. The Weekday School is covered by public liability insurance. Should an accident occur, we will contact you immediately. In order to reach you, it is imperative that you provide us with cell phone numbers and current home and work numbers. We complete written documentation of all accidents.

Children will be released only to authorized adults whom you identify on your enrollment papers. It is your responsibility to notify the school and complete new forms if there are any changes. If your child is to be picked up by someone who rarely comes to the school, it is best for you to phone the school and notify us. Please alert relatives and friends who are picking up your children that they may be asked to show identification.

A safe environment is one of our goals. In accordance with these goals, we have several rules that must be followed for the safety of our children:

1. Always notify the school if someone other than the parent/guardian is to pick up a child. When possible, notify the school in advance with a note stating the adult's name and day and time she/he will pick up your child.
2. Please keep your child's emergency information record up-to-date and let the office know if your daytime or cell phone number has changed, even if it is a temporary change.
3. Any time an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, the parent is called before the child is released. If this person acts suspiciously, or is hostile, the police will be called. No child will be released to an unauthorized person without parental or guardian's consent.
4. In the case of separated or divorced parents, the law stipulates we cannot determine which parent may pick up a child. We must release children to either parent; regardless of which parent had enrolled the child, unless the custodial, enrolling parent has a court order. In that case, we must retain a copy of the court order in our files. Parents should inform the school if there are any issues with custody of the child.
5. Children will not be released without an adult escort from the premises. Our parking lots are frequently busy, and we want to ensure that children are always safe.

### **What is Your Policy Regarding Sick Children?**

Based on state regulations and our facility limitations, we are unable to care for children who are ill. If any of the following conditions occur after you leave your child at school, we will notify you. Your child should be picked up as soon as possible. When a child is sick, the wait for a parent can seem like a very long time.

The following list describes some of the most common illnesses that we see and the Weekday School policy on care and treatment. In addition to the following examples, if your child seems unusually irritable, lethargic, or generally "not himself/herself," but shows no other symptoms, we will notify you and a joint decision will be made about whether he/she should remain at school.

**Contagious Diseases** - If your child is exposed to or contracts a contagious disease (i.e., chicken pox, pink-eye, etc.), you need to report this to the director so that other parents can be notified. Contagious diseases tend to have incubation periods. For example, the incubation period for chicken pox is two weeks. Children who contract a contagious disease must stay at home until all danger of contagion has passed.

**Fever** - A child with a fever (100°F) should be kept home until the child has been fever free for at least 24 hours (without the use of medication). (Although your child may have a normal temperature in the morning, body temperatures at that time tend to be normally low, and fevers usually return during the day.) If a child develops a fever while in the program, parents are to take the child home as soon as possible.

**Vomiting** - A child who is vomiting will be sent home. The child should not return to school until the vomiting has stopped. A child should remain home until she/he has eaten and digested at least one meal.

**Rashes** - Rashes may have a variety of causes. If your child develops a rash, we will call to talk to you about it and possibly recommend you contact your pediatrician. A child with a communicable rash should be kept home until the rash has subsided.

**Allergies** - Please inform us of any allergy your child is known to have. The information in your child's file provides a space for listing your child's allergies on both the general information form and the medical information form. A list of allergies will be posted in each room. Teachers will be informed of both a child's allergies and treatments for their symptoms. Teachers will take every precaution to prevent children from coming into contact with a known allergen.

**Runny noses** - Generally, a clear discharge is not cause for concern, while a thick yellow or greenish discharge might be a sign of a more serious condition. Teachers will use their own discretion in sending a child with a runny nose home, particularly when it seems to be interfering with a child's ability to function in the preschool program.

**Head lice** - Incidence of head lice is not unusual in a school environment. If we find nits on your child, we will call you to take him/her home. Your pediatrician can recommend one of the special shampoos that are on the market for treatment of head lice. Children may return to the Weekday School when they are nit free.

**Diarrhea** - A child who has diarrhea while at school shall be sent home and may not return until the condition is under control. If your child has an allergy, condition, or is on medication which commonly causes diarrhea, please alert the Weekday School staff.

### **Can My Child Be Given Medication While at School?**

State regulations only allow staff members who have successfully completed Medical Administration Training (M.A.T. or P.M.A.T.) to administer medication. When prescription medication is necessary, we must have a medical consent form signed by the child's physician. Parents are required to complete and sign a consent form for any medications which are to be given to the child at the school. State regulations are very specific about administering medicines to children. Copies of state requirements and consent forms are available in the director's office.

Often, medication can be administered before the child is brought to school or in the evening, avoiding medication at school. If this is not possible, we prefer to administer medication once a day, to avoid confusion and to ensure proper documentation. You may wish to ask your pharmacist to provide you with two labeled bottles for the medications so that one can be left at school and one at home.

### **What Happens at Arrival and Departure Time?**

The Weekday School is open at 9:00 a.m.. We encourage families to arrive by 9:15 a.m. so that children can participate in morning group activities. Children who come after 9:30 a.m. are welcome, but may find the back door locked. Push the button to the right of the door and, after identification, the door will be opened. An adult must accompany each child to the classroom and sign-in the child.

Our responsibility begins when you place your child in the care of a school employee. Parents are asked to park in either the Cameron Street lot or a metered lot across Loudoun Street. The Loudoun Street Entrance is best for walkers and strollers. On occasions when the lot is full, you may also find metered parking along Cameron Street and at the Cameron Street Parking Garage.

You are expected to take your child to her/his classroom and sign him/her in. Each classroom has a sign-in sheet. We use this form for you to provide written notification of any change in daily pick-up for your child. A classroom teacher or assistant will greet you and your child. This provides for a smooth, safe transition for you and your child and also provides an opportunity for you to communicate with the teachers. For safety reasons, at dismissal, all children must be signed-out and released to the care of an adult.

Dismissal time is 1:00 p.m. Adults picking up children must come into the school and sign the child out. Parking may be difficult at times. We ask for your patience and efficiency toward others trying to park. The first Wednesday of each month, classes will dismiss at noon. This early dismissal provides for staff professional development time.

The Weekday School is in operation between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. While communication is key to success, it is important to respect the scheduled drop-off and pick-up schedules. Parents are welcome in the classroom during the school day. However, it is helpful to teachers and classroom management procedures if parent time is limited. If parents need additional time for conversation and communication, conferences can be scheduled with classroom teachers.

Parents **may not** park in the Church Staff parking places even if they are empty. The ministers and secretarial staff often are in and out and need to easily return to their assigned parking places. On early dismissal days or when we are having school-wide events; parents are urged to find alternative parking. There are two parking lots in the front of the church across the Loudoun Street Mall.

## Tuition and Fees

Tuition will be due as follows:

- A non-refundable deposit of \$100 per child will be due by June 1<sup>st</sup>. This will be applied toward September's tuition.
- The remainder of September's tuition will be due by August 10<sup>th</sup>.
- For October - April, tuition will be due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

The registration fee and annual tuition will be based upon the 160 teaching days and full or part-time status of the students. The annual tuition will be paid in nine (9) monthly installments or in full at the beginning of the school year. Full time students are considered to be those attending five (5) days per week and part-time students are those attending two (2) or three (3) or four (4) days per week. There are no deductions for days missed due to illness or vacations.

You may choose to participate in ACH withdrawal. Just complete the form and return it to the school. Your account will be charged on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Or you may put your tuition check or cash in the envelope and place it in the locked box just inside the Cameron Street entrance.

Should a child enter or leave the Weekday School within the monthly attendance period, the tuition will be prorated based on the amount of time enrolled. The prorated tuition schedule is as follows:

One week attendance -	25% of monthly tuition
Two weeks attendance -	50% of monthly tuition
Three weeks attendance -	75% of monthly tuition

The parents should give notice of withdrawal to the Director no less than one (1) month prior to the child's last day.

The registration fee is not refundable.

## Delinquent Tuition Payments

Tuition is due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. Contact will be made with families whose tuition payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup>. There will be a late charge each month of \$35.00 for any tuition due and not received by the 10<sup>th</sup>. If circumstances warrant, the parent or guardian should contact the director if payment cannot be



made by the 10<sup>th</sup> so that a payment plan or application for scholarship can be discussed.

If an account is delinquent for 60 days, the child will be removed from the program. If the account is not current by June 1, the child may not be eligible for placement the following year.

**Returned Check/Non-Sufficient Fund Fee:**

The Weekday School charges a fee for returned checks for non-sufficient funds. A fee of \$35 will apply if payment is returned for nonsufficient funds.

**Late Pick-up Notice:**

As a school staff, we are committed to being present with your child(ren) from 9:00 - 1:00 each day. We ask that families commit to picking up their children by 1:00 each day. Our staff must clean and prepare their rooms for the following day. There are also days when staff members attend trainings or meetings or have other family obligations after school hours. For the children, the wait can become very long and produce anxiety if parents are not waiting for them at dismissal time. We realize that there may be times when, due to circumstances beyond your control, you may not be able to arrive by 1:00. It would be helpful if you called the Weekday School office if you know you will be arriving late. If no one is in the office to answer personally, please leave a message for us. We will keep your child safely in the Weekday School office until you arrive. Or you may wish to have a back-up arrangement with a trusted adult or another Weekday School family for these times. Please call the Weekday School office to let us know of any transportation changes during the preschool day so we may notify your child and his or her teacher.

In the absence of extenuating circumstances, should a family fail to adhere to the 1:00 pick-up time, the family will be contacted and given a warning on the first occurrence. A late fee will be charged for all subsequent late pick-ups, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The following fees shall apply: \$20 for the first fifteen minutes and \$5 for each additional minute thereafter. This fee will appear on the next scheduled tuition invoice.

## **Scholarships**

Limited scholarship funds are available for families with financial need. Applications are confidential and are reviewed by a scholarship committee designated by the Church.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in the church or on the grounds. For the safety of our children, please do not toss cigarette or cigar butts on the grounds or in the parking lot.

## **Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 63.2-1509, we are required to report incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect.

### SUMMARY

Prior to enrollment we will need:

- Completion of all enrollment papers including:
  - Weekday School student information and registration form,
  - birth certificate (We will record the information and return it to you.),
  - the physical examination form dated and signed by the pediatrician,
  - the immunization form from the pediatrician's office,
  - the signed yellow form from the back of this booklet, indicating your understanding of our program.
  
- Custody papers if applicable.

On your child's first day, make sure to have:

- a complete change of clothes including underwear and socks
- labeled bottles, diapers, food etc. for infants and/or a packed lunch for older children

As needed:

- Check to see that your enrollment forms are current, including correct phone numbers and addresses, release authorizations,

- Update your child's immunization record to include all new shots,
- Update your child's extra set of clothes for the season,
- Restock your child's supply of diapers, wipes, etc.

The policies and procedures contained herein are not inclusive. Other procedures may be published or posted in and about the facility and shall be binding as if set out herein and in full. The Weekday School from time to time may adopt and/or amend the established policies and procedures, not herein covered, and all enrolled participants will be obligated to observe these policies.

PARENT MANUAL

I acknowledge that I have received the First Presbyterian Weekday School Parent Manual and by signing below agree to adhere to the policies and procedures contained therein, including the delinquent tuition policy and \$35.00 late fee if the tuition is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month; a fee of \$35 for non-sufficient funds; and a late pick up of children of \$20 for the first fifteen minutes and \$5 for each additional minute thereafter.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_