

First Presbyterian Day School Parent Handbook 2024-2025

Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church Day School has a unique role in the development of children in the community. The church seeks to provide an environment in which each child may meet God and be nurtured in a life of fellowship with Him. The First Presbyterian Church Day School seeks to support the mental, emotional, social, physical and spiritual growth of each child. Through the Day School experience, the child comes to know God's love for him/her and as he/she grows in his/her understanding that he/she is a part of the church and develops an awareness of being one of God's children.

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Hours of Operation, Arrival & Dismissal, Holidays

The Day School opens at 8:30 a.m. If you arrive prior to 8:30 a.m. we ask that you wait with your child in your car. Staff will meet you and your child at your car each morning and take your child to his/her classroom. Teachers will be under the porte-cochere during rainy weather. After 8:45a.m., please bring your child with the access card and ring the doorbell. The church volunteer will let you in the first entrance and then a teacher will let you in the next door. We would appreciate it if everyone would strive to be on time since it is disruptive to our precious class time.

Dismissal - 12:00pm for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds, 11:45 for 2-year-olds and toddlers.

Pick-up is also by the door, unless it is raining. Teachers will put your child into the car but for insurance purposes will NOT buckle your child. We ask that you pull forward to buckle your child so we can keep the car line flowing smoothly. If you arrive after 12:10pm you will receive a late fee notice. After the second notice, a \$25.00 late fee may be added to your account for each occurrence. This fee can be added to the next draft. Please enter from W Innes Street entrance and exit onto S Jackson Street.

For Your Child's Safety:

- The double doors entering the Day School always remain locked. To enter the building, press the buzzer on the left side. The church secretary will ask your name, your access card and then unlock the door. She has a surveillance camera to view who enters and exits the building. If you do not have your access card, you will need to enter the building through the church office on Fisher Street.
- If the usual person is not picking up your child, please send a note with the name of the person who will pick up your child or a text to the teachers. In some cases, we will ask for ID verification.

Holidays and School Closings

Please refer to the school calendar for holidays and breaks. Parents will receive the calendar in email and is on the church's website. You can request a hard copy if needed too.

Weather

The Day School usually follows Rowan-Salisbury Schools for inclement weather decisions. The schedule is announced on local radio stations and TV stations. Exceptions to this policy will be if road conditions have greatly improved, inclement weather conditions have subsided, and the Day School feels it is safe to return to school. An email will be sent to parents to communicate the schedule for the inclement weather day, and we will post on our Facebook group.

Parents are asked to pick up children immediately if bad weather conditions develop during Day School hours. Parents will be notified when the Day School needs to close early.

Delays are as follows:

- 1 Hour Delay for Rowan-Salisbury Schools = 1 Hour Delay for Day School (9:30am). Dismissal time does not change.
- 2 Hour Delay for Rowan-Salisbury Schools = No School for Day School

Communication

The main source of communication is the Parent Folders. Please keep this folder in your child's book bag each day. Notes, emails and newsletters will also be sent home.

Conferences should be scheduled to discuss any concerns you have about your child.

We welcome parents into our classrooms – please give us a little time to adjust and schedule your visits beginning in October. If you have a special talent or skill, we invite you to come and share with the Day School.

Communication is very important at the Day School, and we will try to send a picture once a week of an activity your child is participating in and/or our private Facebook group. Our teachers will try to answer any text or emails as soon as they can safely, which might be after school.

Clothing

We encourage movement and active play and want your child to be comfortable throughout the day. Play clothes that can get dirty or messy are good for school. Please send jackets when needed because we almost always go outside. For girls, we recommend shorts or leggings under dresses. Tennis shoes are highly encouraged – please do not send your child in sandals, crocs or flip flops. Please put your child's name or initials in all coats, sweaters, book bags, lunch bags, etc. Please do not send umbrellas on rainy days but don't forget coats and jackets.

Snacks *NEW Change*

We know children receive a healthy breakfast each morning. With the Day School being a half day program, snacks must not extend past 10 minutes so not to disrupt the routine of the day. Snack time is just that- a quick snack to carry them through until lunch.

For many reasons (time consuming for staff, not as healthy as some parents prefer, etc.), parents will be asked to provide a morning snack for their child. Snacks should be small and healthy. Remember this is a quick snack, not a mid-morning meal; one or 2 small items are plenty. Also, please send a labeled plastic water bottle or cup. You may send it empty, and we will be glad to fill it with water. Please do not send metal or “Yeti” style cups. They can make lots of noise which may cause students who have sensory issues to be uncomfortable. First Presbyterian Day School is a nut-free facility. Please do not send any items with nuts. We also have a staff member with a severe orange allergy. For their protection, we ask that you avoid sending oranges. Suggestions for snacks: goldfish, graham crackers, pretzels, small fruit, dry cereal, cheese, crackers, veggie straws or cut up vegetables. But remember, one or 2 items is plenty.

Many of you like to send treats for holidays or your child’s birthday. Please talk with your child’s teacher before sending items in so we don’t get multiple treats on the same day. Remember for health and safety concerns, all shared treats must be store bought and nut free. Thank you! We love these special treats you bring us!

Health & Safety

The Day School only enrolls children who have up to date immunization records.

Illness

Sick children, including *but not limited to a fever of 100° or higher, any communicable disease such as severe cold, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, undiagnosed rash, non-clear runny nose, pink eye, head lice or consistent coughing* should not be brought to school. Your child must remain at home for 24 hours AFTER the symptoms subside. Teachers, with the approval of the Director, may refuse to accept a child who exhibits any of the symptoms listed above. If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school, you will be notified and asked to immediately pick up your child.

If you have to give your child medicine prior to coming to school to help with their symptoms, then they should not be brought to school (examples: Motrin for a low-grade fever). They may infect others as well as they cannot rest and heal while at school.

Medicine

Medications will not be administered at school without specific instructions from the child’s parent and doctor. If medications must be administered at school, parents should complete the appropriate medication request form and return it with the medication to the director.

Emergency Treatment

If a child is injured at the Day School, the supervising staff member will assess the injury and determine which of the following is needed:

- a) Simple first aid provided at the school for an injury needing minimal attention.
- b) Contact the parent to determine if parents need to come to the school or medical transport is needed for more serious injury or illness.

Toilet Learning

We realize each child is different and has his/her own developmental timetable. Research shows that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally and emotionally ready. Positive toilet learning usually occurs when children have shown signs of physical control and awareness of their bodily functions and have an interest and curiosity about the process.

Toilet learning is an exciting yet challenging time for children and parents. One of the most important factors in making this process successful is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. We will work with you to make sure toilet learning is carried out in a way that is appropriate for your child's physical and emotional abilities.

Our staff is committed to helping facilitate this process.

When to begin toilet learning:

Your child may be ready for toilet learning if he or she:

- Can sense that the bowels are full
- Can let you know when he/she has to go to the "potty"
- Understands what is expected
- Cooperates with your requests

The following guidelines are followed:

- Teachers and parents share information and make consistent home and school plans. Toilet learning is never coerced. The individual developmental abilities of each child are considered.
 - Reminders and encouragement to use the bathroom are provided throughout the day.
 - Children are supervised during toilet learning and are praised for their efforts and accomplishments.
 - Children are never reprimanded emotionally or physically for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- Families should provide sufficient extra clothing for their children.
 - If an accident occurs, the child is changed into clean clothes.
 - Any extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day.
- Families are kept advised on their child's progress on a regular basis according to family wishes.
 - If a child has repeated accidents at school, the teachers and/or Director will meet with you to reassess the process.
 - If we determine that your child is not ready for underwear, it may be necessary for him/her to return to diapers as we continue the toilet learning process.

Discipline Policy

The philosophy at First Presbyterian Day School is that everyone and everything here is safe - our bodies, our feelings, our toys and our equipment are all safe. Teachers will explain the class rules and expectations to the children and be consistent, firm and fair when enforcing them. Setting limits gives children a sense of security.

Steps to address unacceptable behavior

- If a problem arises, the teacher will remind the child of our class rules and will use positive methods of modification such as redirection, verbal

explanation of why behavior is inappropriate, and role play of alternate behavior.

- When attention must be given to a child's persistent unacceptable behavior, the child will have a time-out period apart from the group before being allowed to resume activities for other children.
 - This time-out period is never a long amount of time (One minute per year of age is acceptable. Ex: 3 yr old will be in TO no longer than 3 minutes).
 - Time-out is not used as a punishment but rather to redirect the child, allow time to separate from the activity and to talk about appropriate behavior choices.
 - If a child becomes uncontrollably disruptive to the other children, a parent will be contacted.
- If the staff should determine that a child's continuous undesirable behavior is detrimental to the other children in the group, the teacher and Director will request a conference with the parents to discuss the options, as a last resort, dismissal from the program.

Physical punishment, *slapping, spanking, etc.* will not be allowed as a method of punishment nor will the verbal threat of such punishment be tolerated.

Biting

Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition, most commonly seen between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. Biting is a particular concern for the staff in the Two-Year Class.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve the desired results. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized.

Our teachers plan and supervise activities carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter
 - is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO.
 - is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, then redirected.
- The child who was bit is consoled and the area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising.

Repeating Biting

- We will work with the parents to develop a plan to help their child refrain from biting. We review the context of each biting incident looking for a pattern, to hopefully prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with the child to help them learn to positively resolve conflict or handle frustration in an appropriate manner.
- We may adapt the environment to reduce any child stress.
- In rare cases, we may ask a parents to withdraw their child if we cannot get the biting under control.
- A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.

Aggressive Behavior

Our school is committed to addressing developmental and behavioral concerns as soon as they arise. If our staff identifies developmental concerns, the parents are promptly contacted. The staff will work with the family to share information, make recommendations, and discuss an individual program for meeting the needs of the child. Our staff uses positive guidance techniques when working with children. Our policy for handling behavior challenges is the following:

- The parents will be contacted with detailed information about the developmental or behavioral concern
- The teacher and/or the Director and parents will meet together to share information, develop an action plan to support the child, and set a time for a follow-up meeting.
- During the follow-up meeting,
- The teacher and/or Director and parents will review the data and the action plan.
 - They will determine if the plan is working or if additional support needs to be included.
 - At this time, we may suggest collaborating with an outside childhood consultant.
- If all of our interventions as well as those made by the family outside of school have not been successful, we may determine that we are unable to meet the needs of the child. At that time, we will ask the family to find an alternate placement for the child.

Serving Families

The Day School strives to work in partnership with the family of each child we serve. Our goals are to ensure the child has a safe, enjoyable learning environment and the parent knows their child is well cared for and loved. At any time, please reach out to your child's teachers and/or the Director to share your thoughts, appreciation and concerns.



Where God's Love is Alive for Mission

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