



PROVIDENCE CHURCH PRESCHOOL

2023-2024

Parent Handbook

Please sign and return the Parent Handbook Agreement (the final page of this document). Keep the handbook for your reference during the year.

Welcome!

We, the teachers, and the entire Providence family welcome you to the Providence Church Preschool program. It is a privilege to work with you and your children during their early childhood years. Thank you for entrusting us to care for your children during this time of great growth and learning.

This handbook outlines policies and procedures that are designed to help the program function well while keeping your child's best interests in mind. Please take the time to read this handbook in its entirety. ***Please sign the last page of this document to let us know you understand and agree to our policies. You may return it to your child's teacher or to the director.***

As parental involvement is key to a successful program, we welcome your presence, questions, and suggestions at any time. We strive to provide the highest standards in early education and a loving environment in which your children may grow.

Sincerely,

Terri Largent, Director
Janet Tinkel, Assistant Director

Providence Church Preschool Committee

Pastor Allison Benfield
Michelle Hiott, Chair
Morgan McQueeney
Julie Mathias
Mary Qualls
Ashley VonRosenberg, parent representative

THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

OUR MISSION...Our mission is to provide for and promote the mental, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development in children. Our program aims to accomplish these goals by providing a creative environment where children will have opportunities to grow within their reach. We have an open door policy and welcome families of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds.

OUR PURPOSE...The purpose of the Providence Church Preschool program is to offer early childhood education in a Christian setting that will provide a loving, caring, and safe environment for young children in and around our community.

OUR GOALS...The goals of the Providence Church Preschool program are:

- to provide age-appropriate, teacher-directed activities
- to provide a safe environment where children feel secure without their parents
- to foster a positive self-concept, positive attitude towards learning and developmental goals, self-control, and a sense of belonging
- to offer stimulating opportunities for creative play
- to provide opportunities for fine and gross motor development
- to encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment
- to offer choices that encourage the children's decision-making process
- to teach the children about God's love for each of us
- to promote and respect cultural diversity

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY...The Providence Church Preschool program admits children to its program without regard to race, color, religious affiliation, ancestry, sex, or national origin.

THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM...The Providence Church Preschool program is a ministry of Providence Church. The program reflects the Christian values of Providence Church while promoting an anti-bias and multicultural approach to early childhood education. This program is viewed by Providence Church as an essential part of its mission to the community. Classes will pray at snack and mealtimes, will have chapel every month, and will learn of God's inclusive love whenever possible. We welcome you all to our family.

Parents who have questions about the church's programs or questions related to children and faith are encouraged to contact Allison Benfield, Associate Pastor at Providence Church at 843-971-5275 or allison@providencecharleston.org.

PROGRAM BASICS...Our early childhood education program is designed for children ages 2 through 5 years old. Our program is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm. Each class follows a daily routine with a curriculum that is age appropriate, including activities that alternate between free play and structured play (both independent and group) that encourage learning through fun. Daily activities also include circle time, centers, stories, crafts, music, snack time, and playground time. Our teachers are highly-qualified: all are certified and/or have a background in early childhood education. Preparation for kindergarten is accomplished through differentiation to meet the needs of each and every child.

Our program offers five different classrooms. There are separate classrooms for each age group, including 2's, 3's and 4's. Based on your child's individual needs, he/she may be placed in a class based on ability level not age. We accommodate children of all academic and social abilities. Each class will have sufficient teachers to ensure the following child-to-teacher ratios

2 year old class 5:1

4 year old classes 6:1

3 year old classes 6:1

ENROLLMENT...Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. All enrollment materials can be found on our website (www.pbcpreschool.com). An annual registration fee of \$250.00 ensures your child's spot in the program. **Enrollment fees are non-refundable after June 1, and are not applied to current or future tuition.** Priority enrollment is available for members of Providence Church, children of staff of PCP, and siblings of currently-attending children. Each child must have ALL current immunizations required for school by DHEC, and the vaccination record must be on file with the director in order for the child to be enrolled.

WITHDRAWAL...Advance notice of two weeks is required for all student withdrawals, regardless of the date or reason for the withdrawal, unless the withdrawal is requested by PCP. You are responsible for the full tuition amount during the month of withdrawal, regardless of if or when the vacated space is actually filled by another child. August tuition is non-refundable. Refunds for families that pay for the year will be prorated beginning with the month following withdrawal. Refunds of tuition paid month to month are non-refundable.

TUITION PAYMENTS...Tuition is paid monthly from August to April. Paying one month forward allows us to make necessary purchases of supplies. Payments are the same amount each month, regardless of if there is a school holiday or closing. Tuition payments are determined by adding up the number of days of attendance for the entire year and divided by the number of months. Payments will be due on or before the 10th of each month beginning in August and running through April. A \$25 late fee will be required if a monthly tuition payment is not received by the tenth day of each month.

ONLINE PAYMENTS MAY ALSO BE SET UP ON OUR WEBSITE VIA THE REGISTRATION LINK.

www.pbcpreschool.com

Tuition fees are as follows:

- 2 days...\$200 per month
- 3 days...\$275 per month
- 5 days for 2's and 3's...\$420 per month
- 4 days for 4's...\$370 per month
- 5 days for 4's...\$435 per month

When automatic payments are made from your bank, please make them payable to Providence Church Preschool. Our address is 294 Seven Farms Drive, Charleston, SC 29492.

An automatic fee of \$35.00 will be charged to your account for a returned check. After an account has been charged with two returned checks, all payments must be made by cash or certified check.

If tuition is paid with a credit card, it is your responsibility to pay the credit card service fee. This applies to monthly tuition payments and for those who pay for the year. Please remember that we are a nonprofit organization. Thank you.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULES

SCHOOL CALENDAR...The Providence Church Preschool program follows that of the Berkeley County School District for holidays and school closings. A calendar will be provided to you at the beginning of the school year. However, the calendar is subject to change due to church events, weather, or other scheduling conflicts. We will notify you in advance of any calendar changes.

DAILY SCHEDULE... A typical day will have the following academic and social times:

Free Play: All areas of the room are available to the children. These areas include books, blocks, manipulative materials, dramatic play, and art materials. Special activities are available.

Structured Time: Teachers will work with small groups and individually with children. This is a time to provide children the opportunity to think, reason, question, and experiment, in addition to providing opportunities for fine motor development.

Circle Time: This is a time for songs, a book, introducing concepts and ideas, and discussions about aspects of the calendar. Children are encouraged to answer and ask questions as well as practice following directions.

Clean Up: Children learn the importance of cleaning up after playing. During the year, younger children become more and more involved in the cleaning process, learning to care for their materials by helping to put them in their proper place. The older children cooperatively put their rooms in order.

Snack Time: Children sit at the tables, enjoy a healthy snack and conversation, and clean up their spaces. Often a story or music will be enjoyed during snack time.

Playground: The children enjoy exercise and outdoor time with their classmates. The playgrounds are located on either side of the parking lot (small children's playground is between the buildings and the parking lot; older children's playground is across the parking lot). All areas of the playground are available and are supervised by teachers.

Lunch: Children are supervised as they eat lunch brought from home.

INCLEMENT WEATHER...Providence Church Preschool follows the Berkeley County School District Calendar in the event of inclement weather. Please tune in to local media in the event of pending inclement weather. If the Berkeley County School District is closed, PCP will also be closed, even if it is not among the listed closings.

SNACK and LUNCH...Parents will send in their child's snack and lunch, as well as a labeled water bottle. Your child's lunch time will be at the end of the school day. (It is helpful if snack is stored in a separate space from lunch, like a special backpack pocket).

If your child has allergies or special dietary needs we must know about them. Please ensure any such allergies or special dietary needs/preferences are indicated on your child's enrollment form.

SAFETY POLICIES

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP TIMES...All classes begin at 9:00 am and end at 12:30 pm. It is important that children arrive at school on time and are picked up on time. When children arrive late, they have to join activities that are in progress. This may be difficult for them and for the other children. If you are unable to pick up your child as scheduled, have a plan in place for someone to pick up your child on time. Please call the church office (843) 971-5275 or your child's teacher so that the teachers and your child can be told what to expect.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES...Upon arrival on campus, all children will be dropped off at their designated classroom spot at an exterior door of the building. This process ensures a smooth start to the school day, and reduces separation anxiety for children. It also helps us provide a safe school environment. Parents will not be allowed to enter the building at drop-off or pick-up on a regular basis. Parents should park in regular parking spots in our parking lot or on Seven Farms Drive.

CHILD SAFETY DURING DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP...If at any time, a parent, guardian, or person picking up is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the child will not be released to that person and the proper authorities will be notified.

PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP CHILDREN...During the enrollment process, each family is to provide the school a list of people (identifying by name and relationship) who are authorized to pick up their child from school. If a person's name is not on that list, we cannot release your child without a **prior authorization from you**. You may add or delete names whenever necessary. If you know ahead of time that someone other than you will be picking them up, please let the teachers know. That person may be required to show identification upon arrival and release of the child. If there are any custody arrangements, they must be given to the preschool to keep on file and must be kept current. Please email or call the director at any time if you have names to add or remove from this list.

HEALTH POLICIES

IMMUNIZATIONS...All children must have ALL current required immunizations and the DHEC vaccination records form must be on file with the director in order for the child to be enrolled. There are no exceptions.

STUDENT ILLNESSES...If your child has allergies or special needs, we must know about them. Space is provided for this on the enrollment application.

To assure the health of the children and teachers in the program, we ask that parents keep sick children at home. A good rule of thumb is if you wouldn't want another child in the class to look/act the way your child is (i.e., red eyes, discolored running nose, hacking cough, lethargic, unusually tired or cranky), keep your child at home.

If your child has any of the following, your child must remain home:

- Fever of 100.4F or higher in the past 24 hours (without ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- Inflamed mouth or throat
- Unusual fatigue or irritability
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Discolored discharge from nose, eyes or ears
- Conjunctivitis
- Unexplained rash
- Active chicken pox or measles
- Scabies, head lice, or other infestation
- Pinworm infection or ringworm infection
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

A child cannot be brought back to the program until the contagious period of a disease is completely over (as listed below or as a note from a physician indicates).

- Chicken pox: until all sores are crusted
- Measles: until 5 days after development of rash
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after antibiotics have been administered
- Strep Throat: 24 hours after antibiotics have been administered
- COVID-19: 5 days, then return if symptom free

Regardless of the illness, your child must be completely symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child is being treated with antibiotics, he/she should be on the medication for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

PCP is not equipped to isolate and supervise sick children. If a child should get sick while in class, the child's parents or another responsible adult, so designated by the parent, will be contacted to pick up the child as quickly as possible (within 30 minutes). This helps protect the health of the other children in our care.

If your child is exposed to a contagious disease while attending our program, your child's teacher or the director will notify you as soon as possible. If your child is exposed outside of our program to a contagious disease, please notify the director as soon as possible so that other parents may be informed. Specific information about children, including their names, will be kept confidential between the parents and the director.

ALLERGIES AND FOOD SAFETY...Due to the high incidence of nut and peanut butter allergies, Providence Church Preschool strives to be a nut-free environment and does not allow any peanut butter, nuts, or nut products for snacks, parties, and any other shared food. If there is a child with allergies in your classroom, teachers will notify the families. Peanut butter and other nut butters are acceptable in individual lunches.

MEDICATIONS...NO oral medication is to be administered to children at school unless special arrangements have been made with the director in writing.

MINOR INJURIES...Minor injuries are inevitable during active play. Therefore, if your child receives a minor scrape or cut that breaks the skin, the affected area will be washed with soap and warm water and a bandaid may be applied. Ice packs may also be administered for bumps and bruises.

When injuries occur, an incident report will be filled out by the teacher and a copy given to the parent. If the situation warrants, parents may be called prior to pick-up time to be informed of the injury.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES...All Providence Church Preschool staff members are certified in CPR, AED, and first aid. In the event of a medical emergency, the staff of PCP will attempt immediate contact with a parent. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff of PCP will then attempt to notify one or more of the alternate emergency contacts named on your child's enrollment form.

If the situation warrants, PCP will transport your child by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical facility. A representative of PCP will remain with your child at all times until a parent or alternative emergency contact arrives. Any expenses incurred in connection with the transport, care, and treatment given in any such situation are the responsibility of the parents.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN...Providence Church Preschool has adopted an emergency response plan, which outlines procedures that will be followed in the event of various emergency situations, such as fire, severe weather, earthquake, criminal activity near the church, etc. These procedures will be followed as closely as possible, but circumstances may warrant a deviation from the plan.

BITING...Biting occurs among preschoolers. If biting occurs, the bitten child will be calmed and medically-treated as necessary. The biter will be separated from the other children. We will emphatically but calmly let the biter know he/she hurt the other child and that it was not acceptable behavior.

After a 3rd biting offense, parents will be asked to keep their child home for up to 2 weeks. If biting occurs after the 2 week break from school, the child may be asked to leave our preschool.

STUDENT REMINDERS AND DISCIPLINE

SPECIAL SERVICES/THERAPY... Children are allowed to be pulled from class to receive services/therapy during school hours. We also allow evaluations and observations from the appropriate professionals to be conducted as long as they are scheduled in advance. These may include speech/language and OT services as well as others.

DISCIPLINE...One of our goals is to teach necessary social skills to the children. While respecting that each person is a valued individual, we teach children to function well within a group. This involves learning to meet one's needs without infringing on the rights of others and eventually accepting that one is not always able to do exactly what one wishes to do at any given moment.

The classrooms, daily schedules and curricula are designed to help children function well and to reduce frustration and conflict. The general classroom rules are:

- Listen carefully
- Follow directions
- Do your best
- Use inside voices
- Respect others
- Respect our school property
- Play safely, keeping hands and feet to yourself
- Use walking feet inside

However, if conflicts begin in any class, the teachers step in to unravel what happened and to help children resolve the issue peacefully. Usually, simple redirection is all that is needed. If a child persists in displaying negative behavior, a teacher works to calm the child and to make the limits clear.

Our discipline policy is as follows:

1st Offense – verbal warning; redirection

2nd Offense – time-out (time away from situation); redirection; explain consequence

3rd Offense – parent contacted to pick up child

If behavior issues are preventing proper operation of the classroom or causing harm to others, the teachers and/or the director will request a conference and the parents may be asked to keep their child home for up to 2 weeks. If the behavior issues continue after the 2 week break from school, the child may be asked to leave our preschool. We will work together with the family to determine the best solution for all involved parties.

ATTENDANCE POLICY...All required forms must be completed and on file in the office prior to each child attending classes. Children should be brought to school on those days for which they are registered. There are no make-up days due to illness, vacation, holidays, or other reasons, and tuition is not reimbursed for days off.

DRESS CODE...Please dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes work best and are the safest. **We recommend shorts under dresses.**

The clothes should be washable play clothes, as they will be using paint, glue, markers and other “messy” materials on a regular basis.

We encourage self-help skills and want children to be able to manage their clothing. We want your children to feel free to play and engage in activities comfortably and safely. Please dress them so that this is possible. It is helpful if they are dressed in clothes that are easy to deal with in the bathroom by themselves.

It is best to assume there will be an outside recess every day, throughout all seasons. Please send sweaters, jackets, or raincoats for your children according to the weather.

SPARE CLOTHING...Please provide a complete change of clothing for your child suitable for the season (including shirt, pants, underwear or diapers, and socks). PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING. This clothing should be put in a clear plastic bag or box, which fits in a cubby. Please update these clothes after the winter and spring holidays to account for the change in season.

If your child has an accident or spill and does not have suitable clothing, we will attempt to find something appropriate in our spare clothing bin. If your child leaves school wearing any clothing you do not recognize, please launder the item(s) and return them as soon as possible so that it can be made available to the next child who needs to borrow it.

POTTY TRAINING...We understand that potty training is a learning process and that children do have accidents. We do not expect two-year-olds to be toilet trained. However, we do ask that children wear pull ups if they are in the training stages. Children should wear clothes they can easily manage for using the bathroom as well. If you would like us to aid in the training process, please let us know, and we will assist to the best of our abilities. Regular bathroom breaks will be held early in the morning and after snack.

*** All children in the 3's classes and older must be fully potty trained by our start of school date.**

TOYS FROM HOME...The program will not be responsible for any toys brought to school. Toys should not be brought to school unless discussed with your child's teacher.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION...Communication between school staff and parents/students is crucial for overall school success. Keep an eye out for monthly newsletters from the director and regular classroom information. The director will send emails and newsletters. Teachers will use email, newsletters, and/or social media for your child's class.

The director and the teachers are busy during the school day and may not have time to have an extended conversation with you during pick-up and drop-off. Please make appointments with your child's teacher for conferences to discuss progress or problems. You may communicate with the director via email or phone (preschool@providencecharleston.org or 843-971-5275).

TEACHER CONFERENCES...Arrangements for teacher conferences may be made at any time with your child's teacher, the director, or the assistant director. We urge you to exercise this right should any concerns or questions arise. Parents of 4 year olds will receive an evaluation mid-year to discuss Kindergarten Readiness.

VISITING THE SCHOOL... During the 2023-24 school year, we look forward to welcoming parents into our school. Please be on the lookout for special event opportunities from your child's teacher, and in your monthly newsletters from the director.

BIRTHDAYS... Birthdays are acknowledged as special days for each child. It is fine to send a special treat in for your child to celebrate with their classmates. (Please know that if you don't, it is also fine! Your child's teachers will make them feel very special on their special day). If you do send in a class treat, please keep it small and simple! Sending in your child's favorite cookie, brownie, or cake pop is a great choice. ***Please remember that all shared snacks must be nut-free, and that specific classrooms may have further restrictions for shared treats. Please check with your child's teacher prior to sending something in!***

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

CHILD ABUSE POLICY... Definitions of child abuse (as defined by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse):

- *Physical abuse:* non-accidental injury, which may include beatings, violent shaking, human bites, strangulation, suffocation, poisoning or burns. The results may be bruises and welts, broken bones, scars, permanent disfigurement, long-lasting psychological damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage, or death.
- *Neglect:* the failure to provide a child with basic needs, including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.
- *Sexual abuse:* the sexual exploitation of a child by an older person, as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism, or pornography. It may be done for the sexual gratification of the older person, out of a need for power or for economic reasons.

If child abuse is suspected, the PCP staff will take appropriate measures to ensure the safety and well being of the child. Teachers and staff at PCP are mandatory reporters. Mandatory reporters must report signs of abuse to the appropriate authorities, including the Department of Social Services.

Providence Church Preschool

2023-24

Handbook Signature Page

Please sign and return this page to your child's teacher or to the director. Keep the handbook in a safe place for future reference.

I have read and understand the 2023-24 Parent Handbook for Providence Church Preschool. I agree to the policies and procedures listed and described in this document.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____

Parent's Printed name _____

Date _____

