



## Mission Statement

**Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool supports the learning, social, relational and spiritual needs of children in a part-day Christian fully inclusive early childhood program.**

**Typically developing children, their developmentally challenged peers, and families are supported with individualized assessment and learning through play.**

**Employing the highest standards of quality and best practices in early childhood education, Palma Ceia seeks to model a compassionate, joyful and playful learning community for all enrolled children.**

## General Policies

The preschool staff and committee intend for our daily operations to reflect our care and concern for each child and family. Parents are encouraged to visit our classrooms at any time, by contacting an administrator for guidance in doing so. There are parent volunteer opportunities both formal and informal throughout the year, and the preschool enjoys a high level of parent involvement. You will have an opportunity to sign up for these opportunities, and if you have talents we may not know about, we would welcome an offer. Parent engagement greatly enriches our program. At least once a year you will be asked to evaluate the program, in writing. Two conference days are available for individual conferences, but others can be scheduled with very little notice, by asking the teacher or an administrator.

Staff have been trained to follow our program policies, and we have found that adherence to them is critical to the health, safety, and effective administration of our program. Teaching staff is not empowered to change policies due to family input, or to selectively adhere to policies.

At Palma Ceia Presbyterian, the partnership between families and the school is paramount. Accomplishment of our mission can only be based upon the positive and constructive cooperation of both parties. If a situation arises in which the Director concludes that actions of a parent or guardian make such a positive and constructive working relationship impossible, or that such a situation interferes with the needs of other students, administrators, teachers, or other parents, thus impeding the ability of PCPC to accomplish its mission, the school reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment. Both parents and all alternate caregivers will be asked to sign an agreement indicating support of these policies. Any concerns may be relayed to the Director in writing.

Continued enrollment at PCPC is contingent on the staff's agreement that enrollment is productive for both the child and the group as a whole. Staff may request, and parents must provide and release assessments and evaluations of their children as needed to insure our ability to make this determination and to provide or refer to appropriate services. If enrollment in another community agency seems more appropriate, staff will assist families in transition.

A current preschool directory will be distributed by September 15 of the school year. If you do not want your names included, please let us know in writing by August 27.

While this handbook is intended to cover many of the circumstances surrounding the operation of the school, it must be understood that it cannot cover all possibilities of situations arising during the school's operations. Discretion regarding operation must finally rest on the staff, committee, and the church which have final responsibility for the school. There will be changing factors which will determine whether practices are continued or altered, therefore, while everything in this book is assumed to be true and

correct at the time of this writing, no guarantee and no promise is made as to its' future application. (6/07)

## **Closing of School**

If by 7 AM, the Director has determined that the preschool cannot be sufficiently staffed in accordance with Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing standards, the preschool will be closed for that day. A sign will be posted on the main entry door to the school to indicate the closure.

## **Orientation procedures**

Staff works with parents in a very individualized way to help children become acclimated to the program. Families may come on a tour, during which policies, philosophy, and daily program are discussed, and families see the school in action. Tours are generally scheduled on a monthly basis. The parent handbook is available in the church office at all times for checkout to interested parties. An individual visit may be scheduled when a space becomes open. An orientation day may be held for children and parents. Staff spends special time forming a close relationship with the child, and extra staff may help out in the classroom as needed, so that one person can be the "point" person for that child. Working with families, for example, we may decide on a shorter day for a child for awhile, and a child may need to work up to a full day. We often call families on the first few days to give a status report, and they are welcome to call us. Children who are sad are held, comforted, and made to feel that their emotional needs are understood and accepted. Soon enough, we will find things in the classroom that interest them, and they will make friends. If any child is not making a good adjustment, you can be sure that you will be notified, so that we can discuss it, and make plans to support your child.

## **Communication with parents**

The following are some of the ways staff and parents may communicate at PCPC:

- \* initial family orientation
- \* family interest survey
- \* request for and use of family pictures, homes, pets etc.
- \* regular school wide newsletter
- \* parent handbook
- \* pre-conference issue surveys

- \* parent-teacher conferences scheduled twice a year
- \* conferences scheduled at the request of families
- \* teacher availability at drop -off and pick- up to **briefly** exchange information
- \* Individual Education Plans for supported children
- \* developmental screening for all children, done by parents and staff, and results discussed at the first and final conferences
- \* written communication to family mailboxes on topics or changes related to Preschool
- \* written communication to families on topics related to child development
- \* parent bulletin board for preschool communications
- \* daily communication boards outside of all classes
- \* annual parent evaluation of program
- \* daily schedules posted in the classrooms and on doors
- \* calendars on door of classroom
- \*duplicates of all correspondence available in hall for those who have misplaced theirs
- \* parent orientation by clergy and preschool administration
- \* administrator availability at drop-off
- \* articles in church newsletter, speaking engagements at church events, women's retreat, Presbyterian Women, new members, and Wednesday Night suppers
- \* parent involvement opportunities such as music volunteers, parent orientation partner, helping hands, end of the year party coordinators, library volunteers, calling committee, refreshment volunteers, etc.
- \* parental talks, demonstrations concerning trips, cultural topics, or occupations, religious heritage or practice
- \* encouragement of parents to volunteer and observe child's classroom

- \* parent informational events
- \* invited parent participation on preschool committee
- \* director's chats
- \* reports of accidental injuries
- \* email newsletters and notes from administrators and staff
- \* display of children's work in hall gallery

Church policy requires that all physical space in the preschool, including bulletin boards, walls and countertops are to be used only for the bulletins and notices relative to activities of Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church and which have been cleared with the program staff. Examples of requests to post information that are not permitted include but are not limited to: advertisements for businesses, solicitation for participation or contributions for other organizations, schedules or invitations for various community programs, and advertisements for child care.

Q: How does PCPC Preschool prepare children for school?

A: In all that we do, we have identified academic, social, emotional, and spiritual goals for the children. Lesson plans are prepared with all these goals in mind, and are individualized for the level of each child. Children who have higher ability levels in some areas are encouraged to move ahead. Learning goals are derived from standardized developmental schedules, early childhood learning curricula, and the interests of the children. They are consistent with the published Florida Standards for School Readiness and are embedded in teaching strategies which include play, discovery learning, and direct instruction. Teachers are aware of what young children should know at each stage, and create lessons which will encourage children to reach the next level.

## **Church Governance and Christian Education**

The preschool is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church. Oversight of the preschool is by sessional committee which governs its policy and direction. Decisions concerning its operation are at the discretion of the director. The preschool derives its support from the tuition paid by parents, estimated to cover about 1/3 of the costs, gifts, and annual budgetary support from the church. The Committee hopes this outreach can continue to benefit both the children we serve and the community at large, serving as a model of a compassionate church school community. Christian education and worship are integral parts of our curriculum. Our senior pastor, Dr. John DeBevoise, or his designate will lead chapel each Monday. Pastors, educators, parents, and others in church life visit and present lessons to the children in a developmentally appropriate chapel program. Themes for the chapel visits may follow the themes taught in the church school, a lectionary passage, or a theme

developed by the preschool staff, both Old and New Testament. There is a curriculum available for use by staff and guests, called Godly Play. Children of other faiths are welcomed and demonstrations of the elements or stories of their faith are welcomed. We purchase materials, and develop curriculum support for children of other faiths.

## **Daily Procedures**

### **1. Arrival Procedures**

According to law, children must be signed in upon arrival and signed out upon dismissal. Upon arrival and sign-in, parents must separate at the door. This means that the classroom teacher assumes responsibility for the child and parents depart at that time. If parents wish to volunteer in the classrooms they are welcome to contact an administrator. The full description of 07-08 arrival and dismissal protocols will be mailed prior to the start of the school year. Changes in arrival and dismissal protocol may occur, and will be sent under separate cover as changes are made. These changes will be noticed to families through the classroom teacher or administrators.

Parking is limited, and dropping off children quickly will allow others to use the space. We know that parking is a challenge, but we have no way of changing the available parking and law enforcement may issue tickets to those parked illegally. Parking signs on the streets surrounding the church are enforced. During the first week of school, staff will be available to assist you. We will try to warn you of upcoming events via email when we have the information in advance that impact parking. Parents are responsible for the careful supervision of children while at the church. Please do not permit children to walk in the parking lot without holding hands. Because we are right next to Plant High School, and because there are many church and community activities here during the day, there can be a lot of traffic. Not all drivers in the vicinity use appropriate speed or safety, and children can be difficult to see. The church and school continue to try a variety of strategies, but caution is merited.

We will not allow anyone under 18 to drop off or pick up a child. Supervision must go from parent or other adult designate to the teacher. Children must be able to be seen and heard at all times by the responsible adult.

Q: Why is it important that my child arrives on time? It's only preschool.

A: There are staff-led activities and planned instruction that begin promptly each morning. Teachers actively lead these lessons following the greeting of children at the door. Children may not arrive late because it disrupts the planned activities and engagement of teaching staff with the children. So many exciting opportunities are waiting for the children and in order to give them these experiences we must begin the classroom day on time.

Q: My child wants to run in. I'll watch but hide so she thinks she is independent. Is it OK?

A: No, for us to be absolutely sure about your child's safety, supervision must go from adult to adult. Children must be signed in and out.

## 2. Separation Issues

Often a child cries and clings when a parent or caregiver says goodbye. This is normal, and your child is demonstrating the strong bond between the two of you. Crying at the moment of separation does not indicate poor adjustment or a dislike of school, and may come and go. If your child is unhappy at school, we will tell you, and work together to strategize how to help. At PCPC Preschool, concern for the emotional well being of our children is paramount. During adjustment, we will work with you on a plan to best support your child as he or she begins school. We may recommend shorter days to start with. After your child has adjusted, if he or she cries or balks at separation, the best thing you can do is to calmly express positive expectations, such as "you will find some fun things to do". Our experienced teachers will take your child, acknowledge his feelings, direct his attention to something interesting, and then it will be time to say goodbye, tell your child when you will pick him up i.e. "Mommy will see you after snack", and turn and leave. We will let your child know we see that he feels sad, we are sorry, but that Mommy or Daddy always comes back. We will acknowledge his or her feelings and comfort your child. A ritual is valuable, but prolonged or changing ritual can be hard on children. Most often, children will settle down and become engaged very quickly, but if not, you can be sure that we will let you know. You are always welcome to call us during the morning for an update.

During arrival, teachers are trained to do a cursory health check. If your child has not slept well, if she has had a "boo-boo", please tell the teacher briefly about it. A child who is ill under our policies may not be received. For those policies, please see the section: **Health, Safety and Nutrition**. Teachers are required to follow program policies concerning health and exclusion from preschool. Please do not attempt to bring a child who is ill. If you need clarification, call before bringing the child to school and check.

Q. My child drank too much juice last night and threw up. I know it was because of the juice/pool water, berries etc. It's still fine to come, right? I know it was the juice.

A. If a child shows any symptoms listed in our health policy, he may not come to school regardless of the presumed reason for the symptoms. We cannot truly know the cause, and many people have gotten sick as a result of wrong casual diagnoses

### 3. Departure Procedures

According to law, children must be signed out. No child will be released to a person not authorized by their parent to pick the child up. Please notify the staff, preferably in writing, if your child is to be picked up by another person. If the person who comes for your child is not well known to us, we will ask for a driver's license. If identification is not conclusive, we will not release your child.

Occasionally, parents will ask us to deny the other parent access to a child. We can do this only if we have a court order to that effect. Otherwise, we cannot legally keep a child from a parent.

All children are to be picked up by 12:30 P.M. School is over at that time and staff has other obligations. If an emergency keeps you from picking up your child on time, please call and explain provisions made for your child. At 12:30, you will be called, as well as any emergency numbers you have given us. Late charges are as follows: \$20.00 for every 5 minutes over 12:35 p.m. Please do not ask if late charges apply to you. If you are late, it does apply. If children are not picked up after a reasonable time, and staff must go, the Department of Children and Family Services or the police department will be called.

Arrival and dismissal are not times when parents and teachers can have a conference. The reason for this is that the teacher is still required to provide sight and sound supervision for all the children in her care. She cannot do that while paying extended attention to a verbal exchange. A **brief** exchange of information is appropriate, but please respect the teacher's need for ongoing supervision of the class. Problem solving is best left to a conference, which can be scheduled with very little notice, so that classroom coverage can be arranged.

### 4. Confidentiality

Children's diagnoses and conditions are confidential. This includes your observations while volunteering at preschool. Please be sensitive about discussing these in front of the children and their parents. We are open with the children about things they notice, giving them sensitive words to use. We may say: "You're right, that is harder for her". Or, "He needs that wheelchair to get from place to place." No confidential information will be released without a signed consent form, or under legally defined conditions.

### 5. Clothing

Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes, which are free of complicated fastenings, and comfortable, **closed toed**, rubber soled shoes, which allow for running, jumping, climbing and all physical activities. Injuries and accidents such as stubbed toes and twisted ankles can occur if children wear sandals. Please do not send children

to preschool dressed in distracting or inappropriate clothing or accessories. Examples include but are not limited to: cheerleader and football player uniforms, pajamas, various costumes, hats or caps, watches, jewelry, boots, umbrellas, unneeded hair accessories.

Q: My son refuses to wear his tennis shoes. Can he wear his sandals and then the teacher can change him into his shoes once he is in the classroom?

A: No, please make sure he has the appropriate shoes on before he enters the classroom.

Messy activities are part of any good child development program, and clothes will at some point, probably become soiled. We will try to minimize this by using smocks, but you should know that it will sometimes occur. Getting dirty is a sign that your child has been engaged in some sensory experiences, which are part of a high quality program.

Q: My child got a stain on her dress. Can you make a policy so this doesn't happen?

A: All high quality programs must provide sensory or "messy" activities. All the precautions that can be taken are probably already being taken (smocks, washable paints that aren't always washable) The answer lies in sending your child to school in clothing that allows for experimentation with messy materials.

Children will need a complete change of clothing in a zip lock bag, labeled with their name, to be left in the classroom in case of spills, and during toilet learning, many changes are needed. Please keep weather changes in mind and supply clothes appropriate for changing weather, as well as growing children and sizes. If you forget, we will have extras on hand. If your child comes home in "extra clothes", please remember to wash and return them to school as soon as you can.

## **6. Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, but your concerns can always be addressed very quickly. We can best do that on site, where we have records and calendars to consult. Please do not call staff at home or if this is the only way to talk, please set a phone date in advance so that the teacher can arrange for her own family needs to be covered. Also, some teachers are willing to email with parents. To contact any staff member, you may email the preschool at [preschool@palmaceia.org](mailto:preschool@palmaceia.org). Families should maintain an awareness of their requests for staff time.

## **7. Toys**

Toys from home are not allowed except on the day your child has the "ME BOX". If your toddler has attachment or security needs that are met by a "lovey" of some type, please talk with the staff about how to handle this together. Children in the three year old

classes should not bring these at all. They may not briefly show them to their friends or to their teacher. Please do not ask the teacher to “be the bad guy” and return a toy to the parent at arrival. This sets a negative tone for the day. Our experience with toys at school has been that it encourages jealousy, “turfism”, and “one upmanship”. It has even been dangerous. We are encouraging community at school, and are blessed by the diverse and rich inventory of toys and educational materials that we have. Sometimes families share books or tapes with us, and we appreciate it, but it should be given to the teacher to allow her to choose an appropriate way to use it. It may or may not be incorporated into the class that day. Please mark all items with your child’s name.

Q: My daughter refuses to go into the classroom today unless she can show her friends her new sparkle tap shoes. Can she just show them really quick?

A: No, this again will only cause problems when it is time to part with the new shoes. Another alternative would be to include those new shoes in the “ME BOX” when that is sent home. Even very little children have some boundaries on their behavior.

## 8. Diapers

Diapers are sent by parents for their child. Please label with your child’s name. Toddlers may bring a small diaper bag of the size that will fit in their cubby. **No backpack is needed or allowed for threes.** Please be sure to label everything with your child’s name. When you are ready to begin helping your child potty train, please contact the teacher AHEAD OF TIME, to set up a plan that will work for both child and classroom. The teacher should know **ahead of time** when children are going to start wearing “big girl” or “big boy” pants. As it is difficult for children to distinguish the difference between diapers and “pull-ups”, we ask that your child remain in diapers until potty training with underwear is initiated.

## 9. Birthdays

Birthdays are a wonderful part of childhood culture. The preschool staff will plan a small celebration to make each child feel special for their birthday. *As a result of a policy change this year, no food including cake, cookies or any food items, goodie bags, or decorations, may be brought from home.* The children **may not** distribute birthday or other invitations at school. We strongly suggest mailing birthday invitations. Children are very astute at recognizing them, and talk about them at school. If you are limiting the number of invitations, please handle the entire matter outside of school. Please consider the possibility that birthday parties may be an opportunity to participate in our preschool mission of reflecting Christian love for all our children.

Q: My daughter wants to hand out her birthday invitations to just the girls in the class. Can she do that this morning in school?

A: No, this type of situation would only cause hurt feelings. We have a parent directory available each year with names and addresses for easy mailing of birthday invitations or other celebrations.

## **10. Volunteering in the classrooms**

All parents are welcome to volunteer and visit at the preschool. As the result of a new policy from child care licensing, a notarized affidavit must be on file for all volunteers, including parents. To volunteer or visit, please let the director or assistant director know what day you would like to come in, and they will put you on the schedule. You will be assigned to the classroom where you are needed most, or help with any tasks that need completing by the teaching staff. Teaching staff reserves the right to assign visitors to a class. Sometimes one's child's class may be negatively affected by having a parent volunteer, and class time must work for all students.

**Palma Ceia Presbyterian is committed to administering all educational programs and activities, and hiring, without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, or handicapping condition.**

License #CTA430547

## Health, Safety, and Nutrition

At PCPC Preschool, we take seriously the health, safety and nutrition of our children and staff. There has been a growing awareness of the ways in which many infectious illnesses are spread. The close contact of young children, especially of those who are not potty trained, can lead to the spread of bacteria and viruses from one to another. It is our intention to run the safest, most sanitary and healthy preschool possible. We believe our families want those practices to continue and so our policies reflect those community standards. To do that, we must abide by all national and local health standards, as well as set policies which support that goal. By following our policies, you join with us in accomplishing our goal.

At the preschool, we adhere to the following standards:

- \* The preschool is disinfected daily. Bathrooms and tables are cleaned with a CDC specified bleach solution, and are cleaned after usage as well.
- \* Disposable paper products are used for snack, water, and drying hands.
- \* Staff is trained in and follows protocol for safe and sanitary diaper changing, and hand washing. Hand washing is the best way to ensure a healthy program. Ongoing supervision makes sure they follow standards set by licensing, and best practice standards. Staff will wash their hands upon entering the building each morning.
- \* When any of our children (to our knowledge) have been exposed to any recommended reportable communicable disease, notices will be distributed to parents with information about what to expect, incubation, symptoms, and exclusion guidelines.
- \* Appropriate health records are maintained for staff and children.
- \* Mouthed toys are disinfected daily, others as needed.
- \* Toys are constantly checked for small parts that may break off, such as eyes and noses on stuffed animals, buttons or shoes. Please help us keep on top of chokeable items.
- \* Staff has required training in First Aid and CPR.
- \* An accident insurance policy is maintained for each child.
- \* Fire drills are held once a month.
- \* Health records are checked once a month.

- \* One recent study showed that one source of infectious agents in the preschool is germs from parents and children as they come in. Washing your child's hands, and yours, before they come would help us keep the preschool healthy.
- \* Pest control is handled on a monthly basis, by a licensed pest control operator when the children are not here.
- \* Any hazardous materials are locked up.
- \* Classroom materials are laundered as needed.
- \* Child/staff ratios are maintained for the children's health and safety.

### Ratios

<u>Age level</u>	<u>Hillsborough County</u> Ratios	<u>Palma Ceia</u> Ratios
1 year olds	1 adult / 6 children	1 adult / 4/5 children
2 year olds	1 adult / 11 children	1 adult / 6 children
3 year olds	1 adult / 15 children	1 adult / 7 children

## 1. Health and Registration Forms

**Before your child's first day of school** all medical and registration forms, including Health form 3040, all immunizations and a physical, must be **complete**, up to date and on file at the preschool. Parents should make a note of the date their child's health card expires, and note that on their calendars so that they can make another appointment. These records must be on a specific Florida form available at most physicians' offices and at the county health department. Please be aware that we have our own legal requirements, and sometimes must expire a health form before your Doctor does, requiring another visit. As a courtesy, we will try to let you know the date of expiration and after that date by law, your child will no longer be allowed in school.

Please advise the staff of any allergies, physical difficulties, or health related information which may be important to know in an emergency or may cause problems in your child's daily activities.

In case of an emergency, the parent/physician will be notified. Please be absolutely sure that we have your current contact information. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain this information in an up to date manner. Every year we attempt to reach

parents who have new numbers and have not told us. This could be very dangerous so please remember to notify us when you have changes.

## **2. Medication**

Medication will not be dispensed, as this is a part day program, unless it is prescribed medicine necessary for a life threatening condition. If this is the case, such as an inhaler for asthma, or an EpiPen the medication must be given directly to an administrator, not a teacher for storage or refrigeration. We will be able to dispense medicine under the following conditions:

**\* Medication must be delivered to school in the container in which it was purchased. It must be prescribed by a doctor.**

\* The label must indicate the child's name, the name of the medication, the physician's name, the dosage, and the frequency of dosage.

\* A separate supply of medication must be kept at school. Medication cannot be transported back and forth daily.

\* If medication requires equipment for administration, (measuring spoon, dropper) the parent is responsible for supplying them. Please mark with the child's name.

\* The parent or caregiver must deliver the medicine. Under no circumstances may it be left in the child's backpack or bag.

\* Parents must fill out a form from Hillsborough County childcare licensing.

\* Medicine cannot be mixed with any food.

\* No topical medication or treatment, such as diaper rash cream, disinfectant, or sunscreen can be applied by our staff or left at school.

## **3. Minor Accidents**

Because of their age, size, and developing coordination, active children tumble about frequently. If your child receives a bump that leaves a mark, a scrape, scratch or bump, you will be notified in writing and you or your designated caregiver will be asked to sign an accident report. As a courtesy, particularly in the case of a babysitter, we may follow with a phone call. Please let your alternate caregivers know that you wish to get any such information that was reported to them by the school.

If we observe any health related change in your child, we will discuss it with you. There may be an instance where a tumbling child who looks fine at the time may later bruise.

Or, if a child does not cry, or tell the teacher, the teacher may be unaware that the child has been hurt. If you are at home and wondering, please feel free to call us at home. We do not want you to worry. We will always tell you if we think a child has been hurt, but sometimes it is hard to tell if physical activity is fun or causes an unseen hurt.

If your child is hurt and we think it is not an emergency, but might be significant, as in a bumped tooth, possible need for stitches, etc. we will get in touch with you so that you and your physician, if desired, can decide.

If you are concerned for your child, that he or she may have been hurt or need information regarding a serious concern, you may call Nancy Little at home, 251-0376 or Doreen Altieri, 960-4205. We ask that you reserve these calls for matters of a serious nature.

## 4. Emergencies

In case of more serious accidental injury or illness, we immediately try to contact you, and if you are not reachable, we will call your emergency contacts. If necessary, we will also call your child's physician, 911, ambulance, or paramedics. Staff is not allowed to transport a child to the emergency room. Parents will be financially responsible for any decisions made before their arrival. We will maintain a signed Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment for this purpose.

## 5. Illness

**If your child is not able to fully participate in school activities, or if staff is unable to provide any special care needed without compromising the classroom ratios and activities, children should be cared for at home. If staff feel this is the case, children will not be received, or will be sent home if symptoms of illness appear during the day.**

As a teacher greets a child in the morning, she is also performing a daily health check. If your child has not slept well, has allergies, bites, injuries, is on medication, or has any other health issues, first thing in the morning is the time to make us aware of them. **To best serve your child, we must know about these.**

In her sole discretion, the director, or her designee, will decide if a symptomatic child may be received or may continue at school.

Following are symptoms for parents to consider when determining whether a child will be able to participate in all school activities and will not require special care from staff. In our experience, the following are examples which prevent children from full participation.

- \* fever
- \* cold with a frequent colored nasal discharge
- \* constant cough
- \* diarrhea,
- \* rash
- \* irritability, fussiness, lethargy or generally out of sorts
- \* vomiting
- \* reddened eyes, eye or ear discharge, sore throat, headache, or abdominal pain

We understand that it may be an inconvenience for your child to miss school, but we are committed to running a healthy program. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Please notify the school if your child is ill and staying home. We worry! If we don't hear from you for a few days, we will call to check. Children should be well at home for 24 hours (without fever suppressant) before returning to preschool. If your child has been recently ill and you are not sure if he or she can return to school, you should call at 8:30 a.m. and check with an administrator.

There may be circumstances when a physician's note is required for reentry into school, if, in the directors' judgment, such a note would be helpful.

Q: My child had a fever last night but woke up fever free. He wants to come to school.

A: He needs to be well at home for a day, before returning. Fevers often return later in the day.

## **6. Nutrition**

Snack is served at 10:30.

Snack is paid for by the parents, and supplied by the preschool. A menu of snacks is posted on classroom doors. More than one choice is available each day, along with fruit juice, served daily. If children are allergic, or if their parents have placed them on

exclusion diets, the preschool will have available at least one snack choice that meets their needs. No food from home will be allowed under any circumstances.

## 7. Choking

Children may choke during meals or playtime because they use their mouths to explore and experiment with unfamiliar objects.

Objects that are smaller than 1 1/4 in. in diameter should not be accessible to preschool children. This includes edible food such as peanuts, marshmallow, popcorn, hotdog pieces, whole grapes, hard candies, gum, and cough drops or any other food which resembles these in size or shape. Please examine your child's backpack or lovey for small decorative items which may pose a choking risk.

## 8. Severe Weather Safety and Emergency evacuation Plans

We live in an area that experiences various forms of severe weather including severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. In order to protect children, we have a written emergency procedure to address each kind of weather emergency. These procedures are shared with staff and parents. Drills are held to test these procedures.

PCPC Preschool will be closed if the Hillsborough County schools are closed due to such an occurrence, or if some other circumstance precludes operation. If the public schools are open but we must close, we will post a sign on the front door of the preschool and use any other means of communications available to notify parents.

The National Weather Service usually gives us enough warning when a hurricane is approaching. However, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes can occur rather suddenly. A storm is classified as "severe" when one or more of the following conditions occur: winds 58 MPH or higher, hail 3/4 or more in diameter, or developing tornadoes. A severe thunderstorm or tornado "watch" means that a severe thunderstorm or tornado is possible. A severe thunderstorm or tornado "warning" means that a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar.

If the National Weather Service gives our area a hurricane or tornado watch, you will immediately need to pick up your child. If a warning is given, hurricane or tornado has been sighted, you should remain at home and we will take care of the children according to our procedures. Be assured that we will take all necessary precautions when dealing with this type of situation. We are prepared and trained for severe weather.

1. We have a battery operated weather band radio in the preschool secretary's office to stay in touch with current weather conditions and emergency instructions.

2. If pick up from preschool front doors is impossible, we will fly our storm flag from the door on Himes Avenue where the road is most likely to be open. If the flag is out, please form a pick up line on Himes by the flag.
3. We have assembled a “survival” kit with first aid supplies, flashlights, extra clothing, and non-perishable foods.
4. We have identified and posted evacuation routes if full evacuation is ordered. The shelter will be identified at the time of the emergency. Our flood evacuation center is: PIERCE MIDDLE SCHOOL 5511 N. Hesperides (north of Hillsborough Ave.)
5. If we had to take the children to an alternate pick up point that would be: Bayshore Presbyterian Church, 2515 Bayshore Blvd. (Access is from Palm Dr.)
6. Attendance and nametags would be taken.
7. We would put into place the disaster plans on file for each emergency.

Local radio and television stations will have weather and evacuation information.

# THERAPIES AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

We currently have a contractual arrangement with Dr. LorRainne Jones and Associates, Kid Pro Therapy, for Speech and Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy. They collaborate with us on behalf of children, but for ongoing therapies families or insurers pay the fee. Our students are able to be seen by top quality therapists at school, and their consulting relationship with us allows teamwork on behalf of a child. We are not able to allow other therapists who may be seeing a child enrolled here to practice on our premises at all. Therapists may have student interns who work with them from time to time.

1. Referrals: A therapy referral form is completed by the director or assistant director and forwarded to therapists to initiate the process. A permission slip must be signed.

2. The therapist(s) follow up on referrals by first talking with the parents and then classroom staff. With written parental permission, a screening is completed. If the child does not pass the screening, a comprehensive evaluation is completed with written parent permission. Based on the results of the evaluation, treatment may or may not be recommended. In some cases, monitoring with a reevaluation in 3-6 months is recommended. In others, initiation of therapy is recommended.

3. Fees for therapy are as follows:

Screening: \$20.00

Evaluation: \$120.00

Therapy: \$45.00/30 minute session.

4. Parents and their insurance carriers will be billed directly for evaluations and therapy. If the payer of last resort in Medicaid or Part C, they will be billed in accordance with their billing policies and procedures. Questions or problems regarding therapy or billing should be directed to Dr. LorRainne Jones at 964-8481.

Kid Pro Therapy Services  
16546 Dale Mabry Highway North  
Tampa, FL 33624

5. At PCPC Preschool, therapy may be provided in a variety of places including the classroom, a therapy room, or the playground, depending on what is determined to be the best location for meeting the child's therapy goals. In an attempt to integrate as much as possible, PCPC staff will sometimes attend sessions, and family members are welcome. If your child is not attending school on a day when therapy is scheduled, please contact Kid-Pro Therapy as soon as possible, so they do not make the trip here if not needed.

6. Written therapy session summaries will be sent home on a regular basis. These reports will list therapy goals worked on that day and how the child did in therapy. Carryover activities for home may also be listed. Other messages including notification of a therapist's scheduled absence, change in schedule, or comments and questions about your child may also be included. Please be sure to read those reports! Comprehensive reevaluations are completed annually. Generally, we attempt to have these coincide with the IEP reviews.

7. As often as possible, therapists will attend I.E.P. meetings at Palma Ceia. We will make every effort to attend off-site meetings or staffings for your child. However, if we have to cancel treatment sessions with other children and are unable to reschedule those, we will have to charge for our time.

8. Finally, we are committed to providing for your child's speech, physical and occupational therapy needs while he or she is at PCPC. However, once your child leaves the preschool, we will only be able to continue providing therapy if your schedules permit. If therapists are unable to continue with your child, referrals to other therapists in the community will be made.

## ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Application for admission may be made at any time by completing a wait list form. This form is available in the church office, preschool office, or may be downloaded via the Internet. A \$25 nonrefundable application fee must accompany the submission of this form. A child is placed in the pool of applicants when the form and fee are received. Children are accepted for admission with considerations noted by the Admissions Committee for the following: (alphabetically listed) children of administrators, pastors, and staff, children of church members, children with special needs, and siblings of PCPC students. The Director, together with the Admissions Committee, oversees and maintains sole authority for the admissions process. Classrooms are composed with discernment to ensure balance with respect to the following factors: gender, children with special needs and typical children, optimal birth date ranges and other considerations. Application should be made with a waiting period in mind. Placement on the waiting list does not guarantee entry.\*\*

Families should be aware that first choice of days may not be available.

The preschool serves those who are 1 on or before September 1, through those who are 3 on or before September 1. Those children who are 4 by September 1 are not eligible for entrance in that year, except that exceptions may be made for the developmental placement of special needs children.

Children are placed in classrooms by the following table:

**One**-year-old class: born on or before Sept. 1, 2006

**Two**-year-old class: born on or before Sept. 1, 2005

**Three**-year-old class: born on or before Sept. 1, 2004

The minimum number of days a child may be enrolled at PCPC is two days a week. Students are placed in a class according to the dates above. Families will be able to choose only a Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Tuesday/Thursday, or a five-day schedule. The staff at PCPC Preschool believes in a high degree of continuity yet we must be flexible to meet the many demands of running such a specialized school. To this end, we must, in our sole discretion, decide the makeup of classes. PCPC Preschool does not honor requests from parents for a teacher or classroom.

A non-refundable \$100.00 per child registration fee is due annually upon submission of the Enrollment Request Form. This fee is paid first by registered students in the spring, and then by new students, to guarantee a space for the next year.

In addition, with the Enrollment Agreement each family must pay a non-refundable \$400.00 per child tuition deposit, which will be credited toward tuition in the final months of the school year (March, April, May) for which the child is registering. If the child

withdraws from the program at any time subsequent to submission of the Enrollment Agreement, the \$500.00 will not be refunded.

PCPC Preschool's Enrollment Agreement is made for the full academic year. Both parents/guardians are responsible for the entire tuition, based on the assigned class schedule, and other fees as specified in the parent handbook (including art and snack fees), for the full academic year. Full payment of the entire 2007-08 tuition and fees is required even if the child withdraws from the school subsequent to submission of the Enrollment Agreement. However, if a child must withdraw subsequent to submission of the Enrollment Agreement, the family will be relieved of its financial obligations to the extent the preschool is able to replace the child with another who assumes the leaving family's financial obligations. Every effort will be made by the preschool to find a replacement for the withdrawing child.

If parents determine a need to make a change in the enrollment agreement subsequent to the submission of the signed agreement, they may submit a request for an amended enrollment agreement. Forms for this purpose are available from the preschool secretary and are accepted on or after September 30<sup>th</sup>. Submission of this form cannot provide any assurance or guarantee that your requested changes will be accommodated. A family may submit one request per child per enrollment year. A nonrefundable administrative fee of \$25 per child must accompany this form. This fee is nonrefundable regardless of whether or not the preschool is able to grant your request. Your request expires at the end of the current enrollment year. An administrator will notify you if your request is approved.

If a child is sick, the family is still required to pay for that day.

Children are enrolled for set days. The preschool cannot provide random additional days (drop ins) for convenience. Our classes are fully enrolled each day of the week, and to allow drop ins would compromise our very high quality child/staff ratios.

Referral of a child in special need of support may be made by a parent, physician, therapist, community agency, or our school may determine that a child has special need of support. Placement and classification is at our sole discretion and is decided on the basis of what services most would benefit the child. Families will be asked, and must provide, all diagnostic reports so that sound educational planning can take place.

\*\* Approved by PCPC Session 2/8/05

## **Tuition and Fees**

### Preschool Fee Structure (as of 08/07):

Tues./Thurs. monthly tuition:	\$212.00
Mon./Wed./Fri. monthly tuition:	\$318.00
M/T/W/Th/F monthly tuition:	\$525.00

### Preschool Fee Structure (08-09 School Year):

Tues./Thurs. monthly tuition:	\$218.00
Mon./Wed./Fri. monthly tuition:	\$328.00
M/T/W/Th/F monthly tuition:	\$541.00

Monthly tuition includes tuition, snack fees, and arts and crafts fees.

Tuition is due on the first of the month, and becomes late on the tenth, after which a late fee of \$15.00 is charged. All payments must be brought to the school or mailed to the church office.

The mailing address is:

Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool  
3501 W. San Jose Street  
Tampa, FL 33629 Please mark attention: preschool.

**Tuition Assistance** may be provided by the preschool to those special needs children who are unable to afford our services otherwise. Parents may speak to the director and she will gladly discuss this. Offers of assistance are at the discretion and judgment of the director and preschool committee, and are based upon financial need. Parents must be willing to make their financial records available. Funds for these scholarships come from the Charles Greenwood Scholarship Fund, and are gifts from those in the church and community.

The preschool has monthly requirements to meet; therefore, monthly charges are consistent, regardless of absences or illness. Parents should not expect a courtesy statement. The director has been instructed by the committee to notify parents of termination of services if tuition is not paid in a timely manner.

Q: My son has had the chicken pox for the last two weeks. Due to such an extended illness, do I have to pay tuition for those days?

A: Yes, monthly charges are the same even in the case of illness.

## Discipline and Guidance

Hillsborough County Ordinance 86-35, Section 2.6, "Child Discipline" requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary practices used by child care facilities. PCPC supports this law, and submits the following:

Guidance is about helping children to learn internal controls for their behavior. At PCPC discipline is taught in conjunction with respect for the child's developing self-esteem and with specific knowledge of child development. Children may make wrong choices and need guidance to follow the rules of the community, and knowledge of child development is necessary to set appropriate guidelines for behavior. Palma Ceia Presbyterian utilizes school wide Positive Behavioral Support, and our staff are trained in its techniques.

Staff uses positive techniques of guidance, including logical or natural consequences applied in problem situations, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement of appropriate behavior rather than competition, comparison, or criticism. Consistent, clear rules are developmentally appropriate, developed in conjunction with children and are discussed with them to make sure they understand.

Emphasis is on building a kind and ethical Christian school community.

Staff describes the situation to encourage children's evaluation of the problem rather than impose a solution. Staff and children generate ideas for solutions. Staff helps children recognize another child's feelings. We abstain from corporal punishment or humiliating, frightening or shame based discipline techniques. Food or beverage is never withheld as a disciplinary device. If an occasional "time out" is needed, one minute per year of age is the guideline used.

Staff will communicate with parents concerning behavioral issues, and their possible cause. If needed, functional behavioral assessment may be done. Working together, a plan will be developed to support the child's needs for behavioral intervention. We will use community resources and collaborate with other experts to develop strategies for support. With encouragement and mutual problem solving, most behavioral and developmental issues can be resolved. If further problems endanger the safety of the other children or staff, or the future of the program, a parent may be required to withdraw the child.

Version Date: June 29, 2007

