

# Oglethorpe Presbyterian Preschool & Kindergarten Parent Handbook

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## I. OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Oglethorpe Presbyterian Preschool & Kindergarten (OPP), we believe children are among God's most precious gifts. It is, therefore, our responsibility and mission to foster the growth and development of each individual child. Each child is encouraged to develop socially, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically in a nurturing Christian environment.

We see children as worthy, capable individuals and encourage self-esteem through developmentally appropriate practices which meet individual needs. We acknowledge that learning is sequential and happens at different stages according to each child's growth and maturity.

We recognize that children learn best by doing. We offer an environment that invites children to learn, discover and explore through hands-on activities. Children are encouraged to question and experiment as they strive to understand the world around them. Our teachers encourage this sense of wonder and discovery by designing the classroom environment to meet the individual needs of the children in the class. Through observation, teachers assess the needs of the children and then create child-centered environments, offering activities that encourage children to learn and grow at their individual paces.

We believe the family plays the most important role in the development of each child. We strive to reinforce this relationship by working in a cooperative and supportive manner with families and the community. We strive to serve as a resource to parents for parent information and services available in the community, which support families and promote the welfare of children.

We strive to provide the highest quality early childhood education in a Christian environment. While striving to give every child a sense of belonging, regardless of religious background, we encourage children to respect Christian values through activities and modeling the love of God through our love for the children and their families.

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## II. OUR PROGRAM GOALS

- To foster self-esteem through love and acceptance of each child.
- To encourage creativity and independence.
- To educate the whole child, cognitively, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually through developmentally appropriate materials, activities and practices.
- To provide a knowledgeable and well-trained staff that is loving and nurturing to children.
- To promote a strong relationship with families through communication and programs to encourage parent involvement in the preschool.
- To provide a safe, healthy and stimulating environment for children in a loving, Christian atmosphere.

## III. OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To serve the community by providing a preschool for families of young children which fosters individual growth and achievement, promotes the love of learning, and prepares children socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually and cognitively for future educational experiences.

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## IV. POLICIES

The following policies are designed in the best interest of the children to help our staff best meet the needs of the children in our program. Staff and parents will be advised in writing of any changes to these policies during the year.

### A. ADMISSIONS

Children 6 months to 5 years of age are eligible for admission to our program subject to space availability.

**All children are accepted without regard to race, sex, religion or national origin.** Registration dates are announced in advance. Returning students and church members have an opportunity for priority registration. Open registration dates are announced through the OPP Website.

#### REQUIRED FORMS AND RECORDS FOR REGISTRATION

By the first day of school we are required to have the following forms for each child:

- Registration Form
- Confidential Record
- Emergency Medical Form
- Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231)
- Tuition Contract
- Parental Agreement
- 2 Emergency Cards

**A child will not be able to remain in school beyond 30 days unless the Certificate of Immunization is updated and on file with the preschool.**

Parents are responsible for informing the preschool of any updated information concerning the child during the school year. This may include, but is not limited to; address, telephone numbers, work locations, emergency contacts, child's physician, child's health, child's special needs and individuals with authorization to pick up your child.

### B. CURRICULUM

OPP uses a comprehensive researched based Creative Curriculum, allowing exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, **creativity**, and lifelong critical thinking skills. Each age group has objectives and goals fostering



positive self-concept, social skill development, self-help skills, language development, and encourages children to think, reason and experiment. Additional objectives include enhancing physical development and skills; demonstrating sound health, safety, and nutritional practices; appreciating creative expression and cultural diversity. Our curriculum includes age appropriate monthly themes and units which are adapted into our learning centers.

## **C. INCLUSION**

OPP believes all children should be supported despite their learning differences. Inclusion incorporates children with learning differences together with their peers without learning differences; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities. This applies to all young children with differences, from those with the mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities. Inclusion is facilitated by individualized accommodations, using evidence-based services and supports to foster a child's overall development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional) as well as a focus on friendships with peers and sense of belonging. Therapists are encouraged to be a part of our program, as needed. All children benefit in a learning environment adapted to assist with all needs of our children.

## **D. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Our teachers are trained to guide your child positively and create an environment in which your child can successfully learn to respect him/her, others, and the property around them. The greatest behavior management tool is a developmentally appropriate classroom, which is engaging and interesting to children. If a child is behaving inappropriately, they have an opportunity to "relax their bodies" and if they are still hurting themselves or others, they may be removed to the Director's office for a "cooling down" period. Corporal punishment is absolutely prohibited by anyone on our premises. Positive redirection and substitution are also used to assist with behavior.

## **E. CHILD ABUSE**

We are required by law to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to the Department of Family and Children Services. Oglethorpe Presbyterian Church and Preschool are stewards of children and all employees are certified with Darkness to Light.



## F. WELLNESS

To ensure the protection of the children and staff, please do not bring your child to school if they show any of the following symptoms within 24 hours. **Children must be 24 hours free of these illnesses without medication before returning to school:**

- Fever
- Runny nose with colored discharge
- Rash
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained itchy scalp
- Excessive coughing
- Red, itchy eyes

**OPP does not administer medication of any sort to children, except for first-aid.** If a child needs medication, a parent must come to the preschool and personally administer the medication. Epi – Pens are allowed if provided and can be administered with a written note of permission signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Epi-Pens will be carried in the class first aid bag, clearly labeled with the child’s name.

**Please do not send your child to school if he/she is sick**

## G. APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Being a kid is dirty, messy, and noisy work; dress your child appropriately for “their work”. Children should be in comfortable clothes that will allow them to play and explore the world around them without fear of ruining their “good clothes”. Please keep in mind fostering independence in your child when dressing them. Complicated straps and buttons are often difficult for little hands.

We recommend tennis shoes or other hard rubber-soled shoes for active play and washable clothes for messy discovery. Please do not send your child to school with “croc” style shoes that tend to cause injury.

As the weather changes, please keep in mind that we make every attempt to have children play outside each day. Sweaters, jackets, and long pants will make children more comfortable outside as the weather gets cooler.

## H. SNACKS

Parents of all children will send nutritious snacks appropriate for their child’s individual needs. A Healthy Snack Guideline and list of ideas will be provided in your orientation packet. Parents will send in a full water bottle with each child.

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## **I. BABYSITTING/NANNIES**

Our staff's official capacity with your children ends when their school day is over. Any continued supervision by a staff member must be contracted independently and is not an extension of their employment. We do not promote a teacher/nanny relationship if the child is a student in the teacher's class.

Any relationships with staff that is created in this capacity are outside the scope of the preschool. In accordance with our child protection policy, supervision in these said capacities are not to occur in any of the buildings, including contact with teachers, unless there are other adults in close proximity who are notified and present. Arrangements must be made for at least two adults to be present with the supervision of a child.

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## V. PROCEDURES

### A. HOURS OF OPERATION

School hours: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm: 3-year olds and under  
9:00 am - 1:00 pm: Pre-K  
8:30 am - 1:30 pm: Kindergarten

Arrival time: 8:55 - 9:10 am. If your child arrives late, please bring them to the preschool office for assistance to class.

Dismissal time: 11:55 am - 12:10 pm: 3-year olds and under  
12:55 pm - 1:10pm: Pre-K  
1:30 pm - 1:40pm: Kindergarten

Early Drop-off (Optional): 8:30 - 9:00 am

Lunch Bunch (Optional for 3s and under): 12:00 - 1:00 pm OR 12:00 - 2:00 pm

Extended Day (Optional for Pre-K and Kindergarten): 1:00 - 2:00 pm

**Your child's sense of security and socialization depends upon your promptness with morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up.** Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are expected to pick children up on time. If an emergency occurs, contact the office immediately so arrangements can be made until you arrive at the school. Any child not picked up by the end of carpool will be taken to lunch bunch until your arrival. In the event that the office is not notified of a late pickup, the following rate applies: **\$5.00 for the first ten minutes and \$5.00 for every 5 minutes thereafter.**

### B. FEE AND TUITION PAYMENT

Registration fees are due upon acceptance into the program. Monthly tuition is due by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Any fees received after the 10<sup>th</sup> are subject to a late fee of \$20.00. SmartCare is an online childcare platform that allows OPP to process payments on your account. Upon acceptance of your child's registration, your family will be entered and the primary account holder will be invited to the SmartCare system. You may set up an ACH draft from your bank at no cost, pay by credit card with a fee, or pay by check or cash in-person. Returned checks will incur a \$25 fee.

### C. CARPOOL (PLEASE NO CELL PHONES)

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Please exercise caution while moving in the parking lot at all times. All children will participate in carpool. Specific procedures are provided in the orientation packet and email correspondence.

For the safety of your child, **only persons with written authorization will be allowed to pick up your child. Anyone other than a parent requires permission from parents/guardians and should be prepared to show a photo ID to pick up children.**

## D. LUNCH BUNCH/EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Lunch bunch is offered Monday through Friday. Extension of your child's day includes a nutritious lunch and drink from home, free play in classroom, playground time and/or transition to extracurricular activities. The children eat with their friends and socialize. You may sign up on a month-by-month basis. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25.00. The program rate is based on the number of days selected for attendance. Lunch bunch registration will be emailed on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## E. ABSENCES/WITHDRAWALS

Please call the school if your child is not attending on a regularly scheduled day. No refunds will be made for short or long absences. In the case of extended absences, monthly tuition must be paid to reserve space in the class and avoid additional registration fees. Thirty days' notice is required if you withdraw your child from OPP. Withdrawal from the program at any time for more than 30 days or more requires a re-registration fee upon return.

## F. EMERGENCY CLOSING

The preschool will generally follow the DeKalb County school calendar with some special exceptions that are announced during the year. Emergency closings due to weather will follow the same procedure as DeKalb County Schools. **If DeKalb County Schools are closed due to weather, we will be closed. If DeKalb County Schools open late, we will still remain closed for the day.**

## G. ACCIDENTS

Our staff is trained in first aid and CPR. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated by the staff, and you will receive an "ouch" report indicating the injury and the treatment the child received. In case of a more serious accident or illness, the parent will be contacted for the direction of treatment. In the event the parent cannot be reached, and the judgment



of the school is that the delay would be detrimental to the child, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to Children's Health Care of Atlanta, SCOTTISH RITE CAMPUS.

#### H. CORRESPONDENCE

Staff will pin or place notes on/in your child's school bag periodically. Please check every day for newsletters, permission slips, or letters. Any correspondence that you want to send us, including tuition payments, should be sent in the same manner. Email, texts, and private Facebook pages or other communication platforms may be used within each class to streamline communications.

#### I. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All personal items should be brought to school in a tote bag, encouraging children to carry their bags themselves. Oglethorpe Presbyterian Preschool bags will be available for preorder at Orientation and throughout the school year. Small backpacks are acceptable, although tote bags are preferred over backpacks to better allow children to drop and pick up items inside while still on their shoulders.

Bags should always contain a change of clothes, labeled and appropriate for the anticipated weather. Children wearing diapers should bring at least 3 diapers labeled with their name. Parents of infants should provide any bottles and snacks that children will need during their time at OPP. The prepared bottles should be labeled with the child's name and the date. Remember it is better to send too many bottles than too few.

Children are allowed to bring security items to assist with the transition but are discouraged from bringing those items inside the classroom or to the playground. Toys and special treasures should be left at home so they are not lost or broken. The preschool cannot accept responsibility for toys lost or broken at school. Occasionally, teachers will provide opportunities for the children to bring special items to school to share with their friends. Children are always encouraged to bring special items discovered in nature to share with their class. All loose items should be labeled with your child's name.

#### J. BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special days and we will recognize each child during this special time. **We cannot have birthday parties at school.** We do enjoy special treats like small cupcakes or cookies, but encourage a fun healthy snack to be brought as well. We will sing and give recognition to each child on their special day during normal snack time. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school unless every child in the class is invited.

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Thank you for sharing your beautiful children with us.