



## **2024-2025 Handbook**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Pierce Chapel Preschool is to nurture the whole child by encouraging the child's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual growth in a loving Christian environment. A ministry of Pierce Chapel Methodist Church, the Preschool serves children ages 1-4 and their families. Through providing a safe and nurturing place for children, our goal is to help all of our children reach their potential and feel secure in the knowledge that God loves them.

### **OUR LEARNING/TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

We believe that young children learn by doing. They learn about the physical and social worlds in which they live through playful interaction with objects and people. Children do not need to be forced to learn; they are naturally motivated to learn by their own desire to make sense of their world. Therefore, we believe that as teachers, our role is not to lecture or force rote memorization of facts but to serve as facilitators and guides. For example, in our classrooms, you will not find teachers drilling children on their numbers or letters, but you will find children learning in the areas of literacy, language, math, and motor skills. It is our goal to immerse them in quality literature and language experiences. It is our job to prepare the learning environment so that it provides stimulating, challenging materials and activities for children. In a well-prepared environment that fosters hands-on, interactive learning, children learn through discovery in their play experiences.

The Preschool uses teaching strategies, which are both age-appropriate and individually appropriate; that is, our program is appropriate for the age group served and will be implemented with attention to the needs and differences of each individual child. Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) help inform our planning. Our program is designed to support and encourage each child's individual development. Bible stories, Chapel Time, music, learning centers, and "themes of the month" are key parts of our program. We provide a balanced focus on a variety of readiness skills such as reading and writing readiness, beginning math concepts, socialization, and self-help skills. Finally, we look upon each child as a part of our Pierce Chapel Preschool family.

## **ADMISSION PROCEDURE**

Pierce Chapel Preschool is open to children regardless of their race or religious preference. All children are required to be of appropriate age for their class on or before September 1. Pierce Chapel Preschool requires all children to be current on their immunizations and to provide a record of immunization.

We believe that all teachers and staff members are highly qualified and that each classroom provides an excellent experience. Parent requests are only one of the factors considered in making class assignments; therefore, parent requests do not guarantee placement in the requested class. After all factors are considered, the Director makes all class assignments.

All required forms must be completed and returned to the director along with the registration fee on or before the child's first day. Forms include:

- A. Emergency/Medical Release
- B. Authorized pick up
- C. Signed Handbook and COVID Policy Acknowledgement
- D. Immunization Record (Form 3231, the GA DHR certificate of immunization)

## **TUITION**

Most families pay tuition electronically through Tuition Express, using your bank or MC/Visa (\$5 monthly fee for credit cards). If not using, TE-Please make tuition (by check if possible) payable to Pierce Chapel Preschool and send to school **in your child's folder**. *Tuition is due on the **first** of the month and late on the **fifth**.* A \$10.00 late fee should be added to payments received after 12:00 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Due dates may differ if the first occurs on a holiday break.

Each year the August and May tuition payment will be due by June 1 to confirm your spot for the upcoming year. Tuition for the remaining school months is due on the **first** of each month and will be considered late after the **fifth** of each month. A \$10.00 late charge is due if your tuition payment is late. No reduction in fees will be made for absences or holidays. Failure to pay tuition for two consecutive months may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Preschool. A \$32.00 charge is assessed on any returned check, which is charged and collected by our bank. The bank will run the check through again. If a subsequent check is returned, another \$32.00 charge is assessed and all payments thereafter must be paid in cash. A 30-day notice for withdrawal is required in order not to be charged tuition for the month.

The non-refundable annual registration/supply fee is \$115. A \$95 registration fee is due for the second child in the same family. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Tuition rates: 2-day class	\$185.00 per month
3-day class	\$195.00 per month
4-day class	\$240.00 per month
5-day class	\$260.00 per month

**FEI # 58-1537693** (For tax purposes)

## **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE**

A 30 day notice (with payment) is necessary to withdraw your child from the Preschool.

Example #1: If you give notice on February 1 that you will be moving on March 1, then you owe only February's full tuition.

Example #2: If you give notice on February 15 that you will be moving on March 1, then the full March payment is due, even though your child will not attend the Preschool at all during the month of March.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURE**

We use a drop-off/pick-up system for the preschool children. From 8:50 to 9:00 a.m., your child will need to be dropped off in the carpool line to an awaiting Preschool staff member. Please have your child finish all food before drop-off. (A map will be provided to show you how the carpool line will operate.) Please do not talk on your cell phone while coming through the car line. At 9:01 a.m., all doors to

the building will be locked, and parents must park their car in the East parking lot, ring the doorbell by the door under the Porte-Cochere.

In the event of severe weather during arrival/departure time and we feel it is unsafe for the children to be brought in or out, we will wait for the weather to pass before removing or placing children in vehicles. In the afternoon, we will begin bringing the children outside as soon as the severe weather passes. If dismissal is delayed or the porte cochere side will be used for shelter, all communication will take place through the ProCare app.

Children will need to be picked up in the carpool line between 11:50 to 12:00 p.m. Pick-up after 12:10 is considered late. **For pick-up past 12:10 p.m., a \$25.00 late fee will be charged and billed to your account.** There will be no exceptions regarding this fee. If picking up a child late, parents will need to go to the Porte-Cochere and use the buzzer. Your child will be brought to you. This is necessary so our staff can complete their clean-up/preparation responsibilities and leave the Preschool at a reasonable time. No staff members are expected to supervise children after their workday is completed. The Preschool is not responsible for delays as a result of road construction or other obstacles.

Children will be released only to those listed on the Pickup Authorization form. We ask that you make us aware of any changes throughout the year. If the person picking up the child differs from the normal routine, he/she will be required to show identification. Changes in pick-up should be communicated through a written note or ProCare message. The Preschool staff will only load children into appropriate child safety seats, as mandated by GA law. No child will be allowed to leave Pierce Chapel Preschool if there is not a safe, properly installed car seat.

## **CAR LINE SAFETY**

Car line procedures will be distributed at Meet and Greet. Safety is a top priority for children and staff who are near or between cars. We ask that you do not use your cell phone in the car line. Please place your car in park while we are removing children from cars. Please do not simply place your foot on the brake with a car in Drive, as this can result in an accident with children/staff between cars. Appropriate speeds and modeling of courteous behavior to other drivers is expected. Children are watching.

## HOURS OF OPERATION AND HOLIDAYS

The Preschool operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 12:00. The Preschool will follow the holiday schedule of the Muscogee County School System. Our school year begins after MCSD and ends earlier. In the event of delayed starts, we reserve the right to cancel Preschool classes due to staff being unable to report to work at normal times. These cancellations will be communicated through the ProCare app. Full fees will be due for the months in which holidays occur. In the event of inclement or severe weather, the Preschool will close when Muscogee County Schools close. If the severe weather occurs during school hours, we have an alert radio and are prepared to move the children to a safe hallway until all is clear to return to the classrooms.

## CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable play clothes and shoes (sneakers with good soles are ideal) suitable for indoor and outdoor wear. **Sandals and slides (like Crocs) are not allowed.** Shoes with slick hard surfaces slip very easily and we ask that they not be worn. Please be aware that children will be playing outside and will be engaging in art activities that can be messy, so clothes do get dirty. Girls wearing skirts and dresses should wear shorts underneath. During the winter, be sure to send a coat with your child because we continue to play outdoors daily, weather permitting. Coats, sweaters, hats and mittens should all be marked with the child's name.

Each child must have a complete change of clothing (including underwear and socks) at the Preschool to be used for emergencies. All clothing must be marked with the child's name. Be sure to change this clothing as season or size changes. Children who are not potty trained must be in disposable diapers; we do not allow cloth diapers due to sanitary reasons. We are unable to send home any items with fecal matter due to hygiene and odor.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

The program provides all materials necessary for a happy Preschool experience. Personal toys, books and other items should **not** be brought to school unless requested by the teacher (Show & Tell). Toy weapons, sharp objects, and small toys that are choking hazards should not be brought to the Preschool. The Preschool is not responsible for lost or broken items. No gum, candy, or food should be brought to the Preschool without the permission of the teacher. Pets are not allowed in the building.

## **SNACK/BIRTHDAYS**

Snacks are provided; please send in a refillable water bottle for daily use. Our typical snacks include Goldfish, Pretzel Crisps, Cheez-Its, Vanilla Wafers, graham crackers, and Veggie Straws. Please inform us of any food allergies. If you are interested in donating snacks, they must be packaged so we can verify ingredients. We may have food allergies in the classroom so homemade items may not be sent. Teachers will communicate special requests for parties or special snacks to support the curriculum.

If parents wish to bring cupcakes, cookies or muffins, they must be purchased and brought in their original packaging. Party arrangements should be made with the child's teacher in advance. Nuts of any type are not permitted. Birthdays will be celebrated during the scheduled snack time only and is limited to food, with no balloons or live flames.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The Director must approve all written material (letters to parents, email, advertisements, etc.) before distribution to parents and children.

**Due to privacy concerns, please do not post photos of children other than your own on any social media or website. We utilize the ProCare app to ensure that communication is private.**

## **SERVICE PROJECTS/DONATIONS**

We will have service projects during the year to collectively demonstrate Christian love. Requests are for simple items to share with outside organizations and participation is optional.

## **PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION**

We value your input and suggestions and seek to foster an open line of communication with all parents. Teachers will be happy to talk with you about your child's adjustment and progress and will schedule parent-teacher conferences as needed. We ask that you not use the car line as the time to engage in lengthy conversations, as we are trying to remain on schedule. Please feel free to express

concerns and ask questions regarding your child's Preschool experience. Any classroom concern or issue should first be addressed with your child's teacher. If you need additional assistance or if an issue cannot be resolved at that level, you may contact these persons in the following order:

Preschool Director – Debbie Korytoski at 706-575-1607

Preschool Board Chairperson – Resa Lord at 706-888-8324

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our goal is to help children learn appropriate behaviors and eventually develop the ability to control themselves and act responsibly. The Preschool staff wants to work cooperatively with parents to deal with any behavior problems that occur at the Preschool. No corporal methods of punishment will be used at any time in seeking to correct behavior issues. Initially, one of several methods will be used to bring about changes in behavior:

- a. rewards for good behavior
- b. redirection/removal from the situation
- c. loss of privilege
- d. time out
- e. phone call to parents to pick up child for the day (such as acts of aggression toward other children or adults)

You will be notified of any serious behavior problems and will be involved in a collaborative effort between parents, teacher, and child to find solutions.

While we value every child as unique and deserving of our love and attention, we are not equipped to serve every child in the way that is best for that child or the overall classroom. If in time we discover that your child requires continual one on one attention because of developmental or behavioral issues, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child and seek a learning environment that can provide the appropriate level of supervision or services. We are unable to provide individual Special Education services.

## **HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

All children are required to be current on their immunizations prior to enrollment. The parent must provide a record of immunizations (Form 3231, the GA DHR certificate of immunization) prior to the first day of school. Parents are responsible for keeping immunizations current and providing updated records to

the Preschool when your child receives an immunization. Immunization exemptions must be presented on a form.

Pierce Chapel Preschool has an infectious disease policy in place. A separate document will be shared with parents.

Children will not be allowed into the Preschool or allowed to remain at the Preschool if they have any contagious symptoms, including but not limited to:

- fever of 100 degrees or higher (taken in the ear)
- vomiting and/or diarrhea within 24 hours-without medication
- severe cold symptoms-cough, sneezing, runny nose
- undetermined rash or spots
- sore throat
- symptoms of eye infection (e.g. blood-shot eye color, drainage, etc.)
- lice-re-admission per Muscogee County School policy
- any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, chicken pox, whooping cough, or mumps

Parents will be notified to pick up children immediately if signs of illness occur during the day.

**Readmission following an illness:**

Children may not return to the Preschool after a communicable disease without a doctor's written release or until the following conditions have been met:

Fever-no fever for 24 hours without medication

Vomiting and/or Diarrhea-have been absent for 24 hours-without medication

Strep Throat or other Bacterial Infections-on an antibiotic for 24-hours

Chicken Pox-all lesions crusted over

Lice-after medicated shampoo has been used and no signs of lice or nits remain

Conjunctivitis-no drainage or redness

In the event of a life-threatening accident or illness, the staff will call 911 and secure emergency medical care. The child will be transported to the hospital of the parent's choice if possible (indicated on the medical release form). Every effort will be made by the director to contact the parents immediately to inform them of the situation and the location of their child.

If a minor injury occurs, an incident report will be completed within the ProCare app and based on the injury, the parent will be called.



*It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify the Director in writing of any change of address, phone numbers, doctor, schedule or emergency contacts.*

## **PRESCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD**

The Preschool Advisory Board provides the framework for the operation of the Pierce Chapel Preschool. Members of the Board include the Chairperson, Preschool Director, Pastor or designee, church members-at-large, and a parent representative from each age group. Parent representatives must include at least two parents who are not members of Pierce Chapel. The Preschool Board meets quarterly to receive updates, modify and set policies, address any concerns presented by the Director on behalf of staff or parents; and to give overall guidance and support to the program.