

PCCH preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHESTNUT HILL PRESCHOOL



8855 Germantown Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19118
215-347-8865



Our Curricular Approach:

PCCH Preschool, known lovingly as Ches Pres, has a long and proud history, thriving in the same location for over 60 years!

We believe strongly in our project approach to play-based interdisciplinary curriculum. Our preschool's innovative program is one of learning through play in an effort to garner and support skills of early mathematics, science, fine arts, literacy, music, Spanish, cultural celebration, and movement.

We embrace an inclusive world-view; one which reflects and celebrates the diversity of the world around us. An especially unique aspect of our program is that the school emphasizes the study of "Famous Folks" in our curriculum, wherein teachers and students learn together about heroes of color, remarkable women, inspiring scientists, famous artists, moving musicians, and social justice up-standers. The Famous Folks program takes place in every classroom at our school throughout the entire school year. As are we, it is ever growing and evolving. If there is a person about whom you believe we might learn and celebrate, we very much welcome your participation and suggestions.

We are absolutely screen free. We believe in childhood unplugged. There will be plenty of inundation later in life from marketing, media, school, social life, and the workforce which will require them to be on screens. Now is their time to adventure un-tethered!

However, we still pursue every opportunity to encourage the critical thinking and intellectual curiosity that are the basis for skills needed of eventual IT technicians, social media experts, and engineers! Without relying on screens, we are quite intentional about exposing our children to the scientific process and the wonders, fun and majesty of science and nature.

We are very proud to be the home of an excellent Interdisciplinary Spanish Club Program! Facilitated predominately in Spanish by native speakers, our teachers will lead the class through a project-based curriculum of Latin American culture, music, science, cooking, fine arts, literacy, mathematics, and dance.

PROTOCOL FOR PCCH PRESCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

We request that you try, when possible, to schedule time to speak with the director or teachers directly. In person communication is always the most effective. If you wish to share a brief message regarding pick up, family information, or other timely requests of the faculty, please do so through the BRIGHTWHEEL messaging tool. This way, all of the classroom teachers and the preschool director will see your message and can be aware of your communication.

- You may email the director, Carla DiOrio James, privately at.: **Preschool@chestnuthillpres.org**
(She will do our best to return emails between 24 and 48 hours if not sooner.)
- You may call the director and other faculty at the preschool landline at: **215-247-8865**
(Voicemails will be played/received and returned during preschool hours.)
- In time-sensitive situations, you may call or text the director's private cell phone at: **610-334-2683**
(Please do so **during normal business hours.**)
- Please do NOT text or call your child's teacher individual cell phone.
- Please do NOT email your child's teacher private email address.

TUITION PAYMENTS: BRIGHTWHEEL AND LATE FEES

Tuition payments are made in 9 payments: 1 month is tuition deposit and the remaining 8 are collected from Sept through April). Payments are made through Brightwheel, the billing and communications management application utilized by PCCH Preschool. Payments are due on the 1st of the month. Families paying through Brightwheel will receive an email reminder 7 days before the money is pulled from their checking account.

Auxiliary programming invoices for early drop off, lunch bunch and afternoon Spanish Club are generated every two weeks. Invoices are sent out through Brightwheel on Friday afternoons with payment being pulled the following Monday. Please note that late fees are billed the same day that they are incurred. A \$25 late fee will be billed if you arrive 10 minutes after the scheduled pick up time.

If tuition or auxiliary payment fails to pull or Brightwheel/check “bounces”, there will be a \$50 fee added onto that invoice when next payment is arranged. Those families who are habitually late with payments or bounce payments may be asked to arrange a new payment plan and may be ineligible to use our auxiliary programming.

BRIGHTWHEEL

Each student has a profile and it is required that you fill in all fields.
(Personal information, address and contacts)

Please turn on “push notification” to receive communications. Brightwheel accept invitation + each child’s code. mybrightwheel.com to set up ACH payments, both Bill Pay and auto pay. Tuition is 9 payments: 1 month is tuition deposit and the remaining 8 are collected from Sept through April).

LATE PICK-UP FEE

\$25.00 for every 10 minutes late at 11:30, 12:00, 1:00 or 3:00.

These fees will increase for families that are late more than three times and your child may no longer be eligible for extended programs

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

PCCH Preschool accepts children irrespective of race, creed, religion, and national origin. A diverse environment enriches the learning experience for children by providing exposure to unique cultures and backgrounds.

A parent, who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

Department of Public Welfare Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 223, Health and Welfare Bldg
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

U S Dept of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Children between the ages of 2 and 5 may be eligible for enrollment. There are no admission tests administered. Children must have the developmental maturity to manage the anxiety of separating from their parents.



DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule and the learning areas in each room are basically the same for all age groups. However, the content of the learning areas changes for each age group.

A typical daily schedule is as follows:

FREE PLAY

All areas of the room are available to the children. These areas include books, blocks, manipulative materials, dramatic play, a sand and water table and art materials. Special activities are available. In all groups, teachers work with small groups and individually with children. In 3/X and 5/X week groups, a class meeting may take place to discuss the day's schedule, give each child an opportunity to share an idea or event, present a new area of study, etc.

CLEANUP

Materials are put away. During the year, younger children become more and more involved in this process, learning to care for their materials by helping to put them in place. The older children cooperatively put their rooms in order.

CIRCLE TIME

In all groups this is a time for songs, reading a book, introducing concepts and ideas, and discussions. In addition, in older groups, teachers present special topics and themes for extended work. Children are encouraged to generate ideas and to speak as well as to listen.

SNACK TIME

Children sit at the tables, enjoy a healthy snack and conversation and clean up their spaces.

PLAYGROUND

Playgroup children and teachers have the playground to themselves so that the children may safely enjoy physical activity.

Older children learn to put on their outer clothing before leaving the building. All areas of the playground are available and are supervised by teachers.

On rainy or very cold days, all children have physical activity indoors.

SPANISH CLASS

Each 5X/week class has a conversational Spanish is once a week.

EARLY DROP-OFF

Early drop off fee is \$10; advanced notice is required this year.

EXTENDED DAY

There is a fee of \$10 per day for each child staying until 1PM.

There is a fee of \$30 per day for each child staying until 3PM.

For extended day, please have your child bring a healthy lunch, including a drink.

Your child's name must be on the lunch box.

Children who stay until 3PM should bring a small pillow and small blanket.

Children must be toilet trained to stay for extended day activities.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

The parking lot is often crowded at the beginning and end of the school day. Please use extreme care when entering or leaving the building and the parking lot.

- Drive slowly and carefully on church property. The speed limit is 5 mph on church property.
- Hold your child's hand while traversing the parking lot - do not let your child run ahead of you.
- Remain alert at all times.
- Do not leave children unattended in your car.
- No handicapped parking without proper stickers.

BUILDING SECURITY

The doors to PCCH remain locked. The main entrance doorway is equipped between 9-9:20AM for drop off and 11:50-12:05M for pick up to allow for the usage of PCCH Community only. At other times, access to our school is activated through the audio/video system at the main entrance.

AIRALLOW

Building security is impacted by new COVID procedures: no Air Allow this year.

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP TIMES

- Classes begin at **9AM** and end at **11:30AM**
- 3X/week and 5X/week groups begin at **9AM** and end at **12PM**
- The extended day program has pick-up times at **1PM** and **3PM**

It is important that children arrive at school on time. When children arrive late, they have to join activities that are in progress. This is difficult for them and for the other children.

It is important that children are picked up on time. Children who must wait beyond their scheduled pickup time may become anxious or upset. The teachers are always kind and supportive, but children see others leaving and react.

The transition between the morning program and the extended day program is carefully planned. There is also a transition at 1PM, when some children leave. Children who are waiting to be picked up must be incorporated into the transitions. No matter how gracefully this is done, children may be uneasy because they are expecting to leave. At 3PM, a child who is waiting after all others have left is not happy. Furthermore, at 3PM, teachers expect to leave as they have their own families and responsibilities.

Please make it a priority to pick up your child on time. It is a simple way to build trust with your child.

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. **If you are going to be late, please message us through Bright Wheel.**

People Authorized To Pick Up Children From School

Each family has given the school a list identifying by name and relationship people who are authorized to pick up their children from school. **If a person's name is not on that list, we cannot release your child without a prior written note from a parent.** A verbal request by phone is not adequate.

You may add or delete names whenever necessary.

CELL PHONE COURTESY

Parents, please refrain from talking on your cell phones during pick up and in the parking lot. Thank you!

BITING POLICY

Depending upon a variety of factors, the child will have a discussion with the teacher. The parents will be informed. The child may be sent home. In rare cases of an escalating pattern, the school may request additional support personnel and/or the child may be asked to leave the school.

BEHAVIOR ISSUES

As a relational and inclusive, community of learners, teachers work tirelessly to support and accommodate all students. In very rare cases, even given our dedicated concerted efforts, it may not be in the best interest of the child involved or other children in the classroom to continue the school year with us. As such, at any time, the director with the support of PCCH's governing board, a family may be asked to leave to due to behavior issues.



WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL

Children at PCCH Pre-K have active, busy days, They move around indoors and outdoors, climb, use a wide range of art materials, play with sand, water and other sensory materials, and eat. Teachers are watchful, but keeping children neat and totally clean is not possible

Dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing. Sneakers **OR** rubber-soled shoes work the best and are the safest.

We encourage self-help skills and want children to be able to manage their clothing. Clothing that has belts, buckles and other complicated closings make it difficult for a child to use the bathroom successfully. Outdoor jackets with zippers or buttons that are hard to use make children helpless, frustrated and dependent on adults.

Long dresses and party shoes are not safe during active play.

We want your children to feel free to play and engage in activities comfortably and safely. Please dress them so that this is possible.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

CHANGE OF CLOTHES

Provide a complete change of clothing for your child. Include a shirt, pants, underwear, socks and a sweatshirt or sweater. **Label everything.** This clothing should be put in a clear plastic box, which fits in a cubby. **We ask you to update these clothes after the winter and spring holidays.** If your child is in a playgroup or 3X/week group and wears diapers, leave a plastic bin of diapers and wipes in your child's cubby.

EXTENDED DAY REST TIME EQUIPMENT

Provide a small pillow and a small blanket or soft towel for your child to lie on during rest time. These items should be placed in a pillowcase. **Label the pillowcase and the items.** We have found that sleeping bags are too bulky and hard for the children to handle; therefore we ask that they not be sent for rest time.

COLD WEATHER CLOTHING

We plan to go outside on all but rainy and the very coldest days: **Make sure your child has a warm coat, snow pants, a hat, mittens (with grips for climbing) and waterproof boots. Label everything.**

NO NUT SCHOOL

NO PEANUT, TREE NUT PRODUCTS FOR SNACK AND LUNCH TIME PLEASE.

Each child should bring his/her own snack and drink for snack time. We recommend sending a reusable water bottle that is labeled with your child's name.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Any child with a food allergy requiring Benadryl or an Epi-Pen, must have a written permission from the parent giving any staff member permission to administer the medication as well as written instructions from the child's physician.

The Parent must alert staff and fill out allergy protocol paperwork (please see Teacher or Director). The child is **NOT ALLOWED** to attend school without an updated Epi-pen/medication and the allergy protocol form completed. The Epi-Pen and medication must be in the original prescribed box by a physician. It is the Parents responsibility to know when their child's Epi-Pen or medication expires. They must provide a new one once the Epi-Pen or medication expires.

VACCINATION POLICY

All students must be completely immunized, including mandatory flu shots, and up to date according to her/his age requirements, before admission. This is a requirement of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Philadelphia County Board, and the Philadelphia School District.

HEALTH POLICY

PCCH Pre-K keeps a health form signed by your child's physician in your child's file. It is important that you share with us information about your child's health. **IF YOUR CHILD HAS ALLERGIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS, WE MUST KNOW ABOUT THEM.**

DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL WHEN SICK. Our rule of thumb is if you wouldn't want another child in the group to look the way your child looks (i.e., red eyes, heavily running nose, coughing, lethargic, unusually tired or cranky) keep your child at home.

Children may not come to school if they have a very bad cold cough, any contagious disease (strep throat, pink eye, etc.), an undiagnosed rash, diarrhea, or even a slight fever.

Your child must be free of fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child has lice, the school must be notified and the child kept at home until no nits are found.

COVID POLICIES CAN BE LOCATED ON THE WEBSITE.

HEALTH POLICY CONT.

If your child becomes sick while at school, you will be called to pick up your child. While waiting, children rest in the school office.

Medication cannot be administered by our staff.

When your child is not coming to school, please call to let us know.

BIRTHDAYS AT SCHOOL

Children's birthdays are acknowledged as special days for each child. Children who have birthdays during the summer of holidays have celebrations at chosen times. Arrange with your child's teachers to bring a birthday treat for snack time.

Please be mindful of allergies. We request that the families of students with allergies provide a safe alternative for their child which we may keep frozen at school.

SCHOOL AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION

We want to keep open the lines of communication between families and the school. The following are a number of ways in which we try to do this. We welcome parents' suggestions and questions and want to hear your concerns as well as positive feedback. Feel free to call the school to talk to the director or the teachers.

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Although teachers cannot hold extended conversations at arrival or pickup times, please use these moments to quickly give pertinent information. These are good times to let a teacher know that you need more extended time to talk and to set up a meeting or phone call. Teachers will do the same. We want to share children's progress and positive growth as well as concerns.

FRIDAY NOTES

We will email Friday Notes that will give you information about curricula, special projects, and topics of interest to parents of young children. A preview of the upcoming week is included.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The teachers of 3, 4 & 5 year old classes schedule conferences in the fall and/or spring. However, parents and teachers are encouraged to schedule meetings whenever needed.

POTLUCK DINNERS

No Potluck dinners this year.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

All current PCCH parents will be invited to join the private Instagram and Facebook pages of Ches Pres Pre-School for photos, updates on classroom learning, fellowship invitations, general information, and community outreach resources. Grandparents and other family and/or friends can also be included for invitation. During school activities, children will be photographed and shared among the Ches Pres community. If you choose to share photos of your own child on your private social media, we ask that you not include other children in the posts. First time offenders will be warned, second time offenders will be uninvited to follow of social media. As always, if you have concerns or issues regarding the school policy, please discuss with the director.

PARENTS VISITING THE SCHOOL

Allowing parents visits to the school is on hold this year. No Potlucks of visiting guest readers in the classrooms.

CLASS PARENTS

One parent in each group is asked to be a class parent. These parents meet with the director to plan school events, such as potluck dinners, class parties, holiday and end of the year celebrations, and fund-raisers. Feedback from class parents concerning the programs is welcome, as it is from all parents.

THE COURTYARD

The courtyard near our school entrance is a LOVELY, inviting space. However, people working in the church offices next to the courtyard should not be disturbed. Please walk as quietly as possible to the parking lot and do not use the courtyard as a play space.

The church's Memorial Garden is in the center of the courtyard. Children should not step into, or run around in, this garden.

One last caution! Be sure you hold your child's hand when nearing the curb by the parking lot. Cars go through the lot to the exit and you should not trust that young children will stop at the curb. We want them to be safe.

**This September 2020, all handbook policies are subject to change.
Due to COVID we appreciate extra patience and flexibility.**