



Great Bridge

PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

Parent Handbook

333 Cedar Road, Chesapeake, VA 23322

757-549-4303

gbprespreschool.org

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PHILOSOPHY GREAT BRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

Our Preschool sets forth as its basic tenant "Children are for loving and guiding."

Each and every child in this world should feel loved.

To love is:

- To be truly concerned about the individual child;
- To listen with a view to understanding (this does not always necessarily mean approval or agreement);
- To care about successes and failures;
- To be a comforter in times of stress, sadness, or disappointment;
- To rejoice during periods of happiness or jubilation;
- To be a silent, unwavering, and available ballast in contemplative, reflective moments;
- To be attentive during all interactions;
- To be consistent in reactions and expectations.

To guide is:

- To acknowledge the developmental level of each individual child;
- To give direction (as opposed to directions);
- To attempt to lead, as well as accompany, a child toward a real understanding of where he or she wants to go and to where he or she needs to go;
- To set reasonable limits on physical behavior and promote the development of personal ethics.
- To help him or her progress with self-assurance, self-discipline, intellectual curiosity and competence.

Interwoven with self-concepts and skill-building is a belief in God and His love for each of us. Another necessary inclusion is the building of a moral code based upon honesty - to self and to others. An appreciation of basic etiquette is also a part of each child's experiences within the Preschool program. Enrichment in the fields of fine art, music, foreign language, architecture, philosophy, and technology is enmeshed within our curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool*. We consider it a privilege to have you in our school family and hope that this year is one of growth and many special blessings.

As a ministry of the church, we are exempt from licensure by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Social Services. We annually submit documentation to retain our exempt status. Our compliance with the Code of Virginia is detailed in this edition of our Parent Handbook.

We have an "open door" policy and encourage families to participate in all areas of school life. With the home and school working together, each child will have an opportunity to grow and develop in a loving and supportive atmosphere.

HISTORY AND MISSION

Established in 1973, our goal is to provide a warm, loving, Christian environment where all children will know that God loves them, as the staff guides each child toward reaching his or her highest potential. Our program is designed to expand and develop the child's interests, teach basic skills, promote communication and encourage a healthy sense of self-worth. We believe that each child is unique, and we dedicate ourselves to fostering a love of learning, creativity and individuality.

STAFF

The staff of *Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool* consists of experienced, caring, and creative individuals who have demonstrated their abilities to further each child's emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual growth.

All staff members have demonstrated competency in early childhood education and meet or exceed qualifications as set by the church. Each staff member has a background in early childhood education through college certification, professional mini-courses and workshops, and/or experience. The director oversees the program, including financial and curriculum aspects. The PK2 teachers have extensive background in early learning and childcare. The PK3 teachers hold college degrees and have experience in early education. The PK4 teachers have degrees in early childhood or early education and have experience teaching. The Kindergarten teacher must hold a degree in education and a Virginia teaching license.

Each staff member has passed a criminal background check by the Virginia State Police, as have church staff personnel, and all staff are certified in CPR and First Aid. Two staff members have EMAT Certification.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF

Staff employed at GBPP MUST be certified by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Documentation is on file at the Center.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool is covered by public liability insurance which provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of the preschool as a result of negligence.

DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

The Center is located at 333 Cedar Road, Chesapeake, VA. The preschool utilizes one wing of the church, including 10 classrooms and the director's office. The kitchen facilities are not available for use by the Center. We also utilize the playgrounds located outside of the preschool wing of the church, including the smaller playground designed for use by the two year old children. For special programs, we also use the church sanctuary and fellowship hall.

ENROLLMENT/CAPACITY

The maximum number of children that the preschool will enroll is 136. The maximum number of children to be in care at any one time (as dictated by the local building inspector) is 116.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We rely on parents to help us in many ways. Your child is always happy to have you at school. Please note the volunteer opportunity sheet handout, sign up for something of interest, and return it to your child's teacher. A signup sheet for the holiday parties held throughout the year is located outside each classroom door, and field trips throughout the year offer additional opportunities for volunteering.

PROGRAM

Educational opportunities for "whole child development" are provided in many areas including spiritual, social, intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, and physical. A close relationship between family and school is encouraged to enhance this process.

We value the importance of play in each child's development. Through free play and directed play activities, teachers encourage children to reach developmental milestones that will help them succeed in all areas of life.

Spiritual needs are met by caring Christian teachers who value each child as a special gift of God and teach and model Christian values. There are worship experiences once a month to enrich devotional life.

Social needs are met in limiting class size and by working and playing in small and large groups. These varying environments provide experiences to promote genuine caring and respect for others and opportunities for the development of *self* skills as both "leader" and "follower."

Intellectual needs are met by providing a developmentally appropriate program of activities in language arts, math, science and social studies in all classes. Each child moves at his or her own pace along a continuum of increasingly challenging activities. Virginia's Developmental Milestones and Foundation Blocks for Learning guide the curriculum of the PK2, PK3 and PK4 classes. We follow the curriculum of the Chesapeake Public Schools in our kindergarten class, ensuring that all Standards of Learning have been covered and the children will make a smooth transition into first grade.

Emotional needs are met by encouraging the child to fully develop individual talents and abilities in a loving environment where success and growth in self-confidence are fostered. Varying interactions with peers and adults add further dimension and opportunity for maturation.

Aesthetic needs are met by art, music and movement experiences integrated within the curriculum in individual classrooms as well as the opportunity to participate in "end of school" programs.

Separate enrichment classes are offered in music and foreign language for all ages (PK2 through Kindergarten).

A computer lab is offered in 4- and 5-year old classes to introduce the technical expertise necessary in the future and provide a different venue for skill development and creativity.

Physical needs are met by daily play on a safe, well-equipped playground and through classroom activities. An indoor playroom is available and especially utilized during inclement weather.

REGISTRATION POLICY

All classes will be based on the child's age as of September 30th.

Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool offers the following programs:

- PK2-year olds - choice of two-day classes (M,W) or (T,TH).
- PK3-year olds - choice of two-day classes (T,Th) or a three day class (M, W, F)
- PK4-year olds - three day classes (M, W, F) or a five-day class
- PK5-year old class - five day class
- Kindergarten - five day class. This class follows the curriculum of Chesapeake Public Schools.

All 3 year olds and older must be completely potty-trained. NO DIAPERS OR PULLUPS WILL BE PERMITTED.

Registration for the upcoming school year will proceed as follows:

- During the first week of January, enrollment will open for current students and their siblings and alumni.
- Children whose parents are active members of Great Bridge Presbyterian Church may register next.
- Registration for the general public will open next.
- Exact dates will be printed in the December and January Preschool Newsletter, the January *Church Chat* (church newsletter) and the Preschool online calendar. Please call the office if you have any questions (549-4303).

HOURS OF OPERATION SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY

Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool operates from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. each school day. The kindergarten class will meet 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. to provide quality instruction time, as well as a smooth transition to a full day in first grade.

If Chesapeake Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool will also be closed. If public schools open one hour late, the Preschool will open on time. If public schools are open two hours late, PK2 through PK5 classes will be cancelled but Kindergarten will be one hour late and will begin at 10am. You will be notified of any other changes in schedule.

You will be notified concerning make up days.

FIRST DAYS SEPARATION PERIOD

Starting school is exciting for everyone, but separation time on those first few days of school can create anxiety for both parent and child. If your child initially experiences some degree of distress at your departure, do not be alarmed. This is expected behavior for some preschoolers. We find that children settle down more easily and quickly when the good-byes are brief. This is often difficult for parents, but our experience tells us it is best if you do not linger.

ATTENDANCE

The staff and administration of Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool believe that parents have selected our school because of the quality curriculum, Christian environment and loving staff. We strive to provide the best possible educational experiences for your child and are committed to using every minute of every day wisely.

All preschool and kindergarten classes start promptly at 9 a.m. Tardiness is discouraged as it does not model positive behavior and causes the child to miss the beginning of class. We ask that parents honor the beginning of the school day by observing the 8:50 to 9:00 a.m. window for bringing students to school at the playground entrance so that all students will be in the classroom ready to begin class on time. Doors will be open at 8:50 a.m. and will be locked at 9 a.m. (or as soon as all cars in line at that time are unloaded). After 9:00 a.m., entrance is through the sanctuary area doors facing Briarfield Drive.

PK2 through PK5 classes dismiss promptly at 12:00. These classes will begin loading cars at this time on the playground side of the preschool. Kindergarten will dismiss at 2pm and will be loaded into their cars in the small parking lot on the corner of Briarfield Drive and Cedar Road.

If a student is not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal, a charge of \$10 will be assessed to the family.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE SAFETY PROCEDURES

Safety is always our first priority. Please keep the following foremost in your mind when arriving and departing Preschool.

NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED IN YOUR VEHICLE FOR ANY REASON.

We encourage each child age 3 and older to enter and leave school independently. To ensure this happening as safely as possible, please follow the car pool information sent to you at the beginning of each school year and the following procedures for arrival and departure. *Note: two-year-old children may not participate in the pick-up and drop-off lines due to safety concerns.*

Never leave your car unattended in the car pool lane.

School staff will be available in the car pool line to help your child into and out of the car.

Upon arrival, an aide will open the vehicle door and help the child exit. Aides and teachers will guide students to their individual classrooms.

When picking up a child, wait in your vehicle for an aide or teacher to help your child enter the vehicle. Make sure you have the car tag showing clearly. If you do not have a car tag, you must walk in to pick up your child so that we can check you ID with the list of individuals allowed to pick up the child.

Leave the car pool line as soon as your child is safely placed in your vehicle and pull up to secure his or her seat belt. Aides will not secure children in their seats.

To keep the car pool line moving smoothly, do not take the time to speak to your child's teacher about particular problems. You may send a note, call the teacher, and/or schedule a meeting.

If your child gets into your vehicle and discovers that something was forgotten, please do not remain the car pool line. Park your car and walk your child back into the building.

If you would like to walk in to drop off or pick up your child, you must use the sanctuary area doors facing Briarfield Drive. The doors by the playground are used during car pool arrival and departure times only; otherwise, they are kept locked.

Never remove a child from the preschool without first signing out and speaking to the teacher or aide. When coming in to pick up your child, you will need to enter through the sanctuary area doors facing Briarfield Drive and walk down the hall to the Preschool wing. A booklet will be available for you to sign and provide your child's name, car pool number, and teacher's name. Please bring your car tag with you to show and/or bring your ID so that we can check the list of approved individuals allowed to pick up the child. You are asked to wait by the double doors for your child to be brought to you.

If your child is to ride home with someone other than the usual ride on a particular day, you **MUST** send a note giving permission (place it in your child's lunch box). For the children's safety, we must have a note and not a phone call except in emergency situations.

The Great Bridge Locks Bridge often opens at noon, making the Route 168 Bypass an excellent alternate when coming to pick up your child.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

With our age-appropriate curriculum and a stimulating, organized school environment, there is usually little need for disciplinary action. Our Preschool strongly supports building the child's self-esteem while encouraging the development of respect for self and others. All behavior management actions are directed toward these goals. Consistent with our developmental approach, teachers use varying techniques to help children learn appropriate behaviors (i.e. stories, puppets, role-playing, etc.). With support and guidance from the teacher, each child is encouraged to try to solve his or her problems. Redirection, guidance and positive encouragement are the main forms of behavior management, as well as role modeling and teaching. A "time out" is sometimes utilized to provide an opportunity for calming and quiet thought. Acceptable behavior is recognized with positive verbal rewards that reinforce the child's feelings of self-worth and self-discipline.

We know that parents want to be advised of any unusual occurrence during the school day. We will contact you if your child has been involved in a situation involving biting, hitting, pushing, pinching or using of inappropriate language, etc. Parents and teachers can work together to determine how best to help the child model more acceptable behavior.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child may celebrate his or her birthday with classmates. Parents are welcome to bring special birthday treats. Please let the teacher know several days in advance if you plan to celebrate the birthday in the classroom. No gifts may be brought to school for the birthday celebrant.

If you are planning a birthday party away from school to which you are inviting all the classmates, you may distribute invitations at school. Do not send invitations for classroom distribution to less than the entire class as hurt feelings and misunderstandings may result.

BOOK ORDERS

The Preschool offers parents opportunities to purchase books other educational items from *Scholastic Books*. Selection forms are sent home with students each month. Parents

who choose to place orders may do so by completing the order form, attaching a check written to *Scholastic Books*, placing both in an envelope and returning it to the classroom teacher. Online payment is also available and convenient. *Please DO NOT make checks for orders payable to the Preschool.*

CAMPBELL'S LABEL PROJECT and BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

The Preschool collects Campbell's labels throughout the year to obtain playground equipment and classroom teaching aids. A collection box is in the Preschool office. We appreciate your help and the help of our family and friends.

Labels collected are Campbell's, FrancoAmerican, Marie's Dressings, Mrs. Paul's Frozen Foods, Pepperidge Farm, Prego Spaghetti Sauce, Sanwa Ramen Pride Soup, Swanson, V8 Juices, Vlassic, Early California and Open Pit BBQ.

CHANGE OF CLOTHING

Each child needs to keep a complete change of clothes, appropriate for the season, at school. This should include socks, underpants and outerwear. Use a shoebox with your child's name printed on the outside of the box. Remember to send a fresh set if this clothing is used.

CLOTHING

Any clothing that might be removed during the school day must be labeled, particularly jackets, sweaters, hats, and mittens. Young children do not always recognize their clothing (many times there are duplicates of popular lines in the same size).

Your child should wear safe, comfortable clothing that allows free movement of arms and legs. Clothing should be easy for the child to handle when using the bathroom. Play clothes that can withstand a little paint, sand, water and dirt will help your child enjoy his or her day at school. Remember that play is the work of children!

Weather permitting, our children enjoy the playground each day. Shoes that will enable them to play safely on all playground equipment are the best choice. Shoes with smooth leather soles, flip-flops, clogs and other backless shoes are not conducive to safe play.

Remember: All children over the age of 2 must be completely potty-trained. NO DIAPERS OR PULLUPS WILL BE ALLOWED.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Ongoing communication is important to us; please feel welcome at any time during the school year to interact openly and often with the Preschool staff and administrators.

Parents or teachers may request a meeting to discuss any problems or concerns regarding your child at any time during the academic year. In January, an in-depth progress assessment conference will be scheduled. We ask that your child not be present for any parent-teacher conferences.

We ask that you do not use arrival or departure times to confer with your child's teacher about concerns. This not only slows down the process, but the child or another parent might overhear discussion better kept private between parent and teacher.

We will try to keep you apprised of all that is going on with your child at our Preschool. Let us know of any events that might be stressful and/or cause changes in behavior at school (i.e. military deployment, the illness or death of a family member or pet, the birth of a new sibling, or an impending divorce). If you keep us aware of any dramatic changes, we can better support and reassure your child.

DUE DATES

When any due date is given (tuition, book orders, pictures, field trips, T-shirts, etc.), please be sure to return forms and/or fees by the due date.

FIELD TRIPS

If your child is under the age of eight, he or she **MUST** ride in a car seat or booster seat on all field trips. Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool must comply with all state guidelines, regulations and laws regarding the use of car seats and seat belts.

Educational field trips are planned for all of our classes. Field trip choices are carefully made by the teachers to enhance their thematic units of study.

Each parent signed a general field trip permission form when completing registration forms. Parents will receive timely notice of any field trip, either in the monthly newsletter or by written notice from the teacher. Please note the date, time, and any special instructions as to fees, snack, clothing, etc. When due dates are provided for payment of fees, please remit on time to help make the process smooth for all field trip preparations.

Because of child safety seat regulations, we ask each parent to bring his/her child to the field trip location. If you are unable to attend with your child, you may make

arrangements with another parent to drive your child and provide the driver a car seat. Teachers and aides cannot be responsible for installing car seats.

FIELD TRIP DRIVER PROCEDURES

A field trip is a very special way to share an enriching experience with your child, and parents are encouraged to participate.

- Check in with the teacher at the field trip site and remain with her during the trip.
- Keep children in sight at all times during the trip.
- Hold hands when crossing streets or moving from one area to another.
- Do not allow children to enter a restroom unless they are accompanied by an adult. Team with another adult to safely supervise restrooms.

FIRE SAFETY/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire pulls, fire extinguishers and smoke alarms are located throughout the building as well as in the Preschool wing. In compliance with the Chesapeake Fire Code, the Preschool will hold monthly practice fire drills. Procedures for this and other emergencies are detailed in the Preschool Emergency Preparedness Manual, available upon request.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS SAFETY POLICY

In order to protect all children at Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool, we have very stringent policies concerning sick children.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you and ask that you pick up your child immediately or make arrangements for someone else to pick him or her up within 30 minutes. Children must be free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school after an illness.

Do not bring your child to school when he or she has:

- A sore throat
- Discharging eyes
- A constant cough
- Diarrhea
- Heavy and/or colored nasal discharge
- A rash
- A fever
- Any symptoms of communicable disease
- Lice/nits

These guidelines offer protection for your child and all others present.

No medicine will be administered by the staff of the Preschool with the **exception** of life threatening emergency procedures, such as epipens and inhalers. Medication in its sealed original container will be accepted by the office only after parents have completed the Medication Consent Form and provided written instructions from the child's health care provider. Only staff who have been MAT trained will administer these medications. It is the responsibility of parents to bring and administer these medications when the preschool is on a field trip.

Notify the Preschool office if your child has a contagious illness or disease. Only if staff is cognizant, can they notify other parents to be alert to symptoms.

If your child has food allergies, provide a list of them for the teacher and the Preschool office. If a parent wishes, they may provide a supply of safe snacks for their child to have in place of a birthday treat brought in by other parents. **We cannot guarantee a peanut free or allergy free classroom, as our classrooms are used by other groups during after school hours.**

HOLIDAY CLASSROOM PARTIES

We celebrate all major holidays of the year with a party, which our parents plan and carry out. Please sign up on the *party list* outside your child's room so that the teacher can coordinate with the "party moms." We also ask that you plan to stay and help clean up after the party.

NEWSLETTER

Communication between home and school is very important. The Great Bridge Presbyterian Preschool newsletter is emailed at the beginning of each month. These monthly newsletters include information common to all classes as well as information relative to individual classes. Retain your newsletter and refer to it throughout the month.

SNACKS

The morning snack should not be a meal substitute, except in special circumstances. Do not send carbonated beverages in thermos containers. Think healthy snacks. Some examples are listed below.

Fruit (bananas, apples, seedless grapes, etc.)

Cheese

Crackers with peanut butter
Granola bars
Carrot sticks
Celery with cheese and peanut butter
Graham crackers
Muffins
Fig Newtons
Fruit juice

Clearly mark your child's lunch box with his or her name.

Lunch boxes not only carry snacks; they are also for communication both to and from school - portable message centers.

If there is a peanut or other food allergy in a class, the teacher will inform you.

TOYS

Do not send toys to school with your child before checking with the classroom teacher.

TUITION

Tuition is based on the annual calendar and is divided into equal monthly payments for convenience. You may also opt to pay in one annual payment or two semiannual payments. Please register for online tuition payment plans through the tuition links on the preschool website at gbprespreschool.org. There is no tuition reduction for school vacations, snow days, holidays or days absent. Tuition payments are due by the fifth of each month - September through May. If you have questions concerning tuition payments, please call the Preschool Director (549-4303).

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