



# **Sandy Plains Baptist Preschool**

## **Parents Handbook**

**2023-2024**



### **Philosophy**

Our preschool program, established in 1969, strives to meet the needs of families in our community by providing a safe, Christian environment. Our goal for the children is to help them develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually. We strive to help the child to become self-reliant and to be able to take directions or instructions from someone outside the home. We want to help a child become a comfortable member of a group of other children of the same age.

Developmentally appropriate activities will be provided to improve large motor skills, fine motor skills, pre-writing, pre-math and science concepts. We will strive to help the child build a growing vocabulary and be able to verbally share thoughts and ideas with other children and with the group.

### **Teacher:Student Ratios**

Our teacher:student ratios fall well below Georgia State requirements. At the Director's discretion, some classes may occasionally exceed these ratios by no more than two children.

1-year-old class	2:6
2-year-old class	2:10
3-year-old class	2:12
4-year-old class	2:14

### **2023 – 2024 Fees**

REGISTRATION FEE .....	\$100.00
Monthly tuition 2 days.....	\$180.00
Monthly tuition 3 days.....	\$210.00
Monthly tuition 4 days.....	\$230.00

### **Licensing Exemption**

Sandy Plains Baptist Preschool is registered with GA DECAL (Dept of Early Care and Learning). This program is not a licensed program and is not required to be a licensed program. We are exempt from licensing because we do not have children in our care more than 4 hours per day and are not funded by the state. There are still regulations and safety protocols we are required to follow, and we put safety and cleanliness as a top priority. We are listed with GA DECAL as a Bright from the Start “Quality Rated Child Care program”.

## **Registration and Enrollment**

1. Registration begins each year on February 1<sup>st</sup> for church members and current preschool families. Registration is open to the community on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Some of our classes fill up fast, so keep this date in mind. Siblings of alumni can register February 8<sup>th</sup>.
2. SPBP welcomes children of any race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, and religion.
3. Children must have attained the appropriate class age on or before September 1st to enroll.
4. All children accepted for enrollment will be on a trial basis for the first two weeks. If, during this period a child demonstrates physical or emotional issues, which, in the judgment of the preschool staff renders the child unsuitable for preschool, the enrollment will be cancelled. At any time during the year, if a child repeatedly causes harm to others, the enrollment may be cancelled. Our goal is to do what is best not just for one child, but also for the group as a whole.
5. If a child is to be withdrawn from preschool, two weeks notice must be given. If a child is withdrawn the last month of the preschool year (May), the full month's tuition must be paid. If a child will be out for a whole month during the year, full tuition is still expected to be paid for that month to reserve your child's spot in the class. Teachers still have to receive their full paycheck.

## **Required Records**

**The following documents must be on file by the first day of school:**

- 1. Online Enrollment application and paid registration fee**
- 2. Immunization Form 3231, not expired, from your child's physician. A notarized religious exemption form is acceptable.**
- 3. Emergency Form (one time and it is good until they leave our preschool)**
- 4. Parent Handbook Agreement (needed every year in case of changes)**

## **Classroom**

1. The daily preschool session begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 12:00 noon, except for the first week when the session will end at 11:00 a.m. for the 1s, 2s and 3s classes.
2. Holidays and other "no school" days of Cobb County schools apply to preschool. Class time lost due to adverse weather will not be made up.

If Cobb County announces that they will have a "Virtual Learning Day" due to weather or any other situations, we reserve the right to close preschool for the day. Many of our teachers have children in Cobb County Schools and will have to be home for them on these days. If there is any question as to the safety of the children, due to weather or low numbers of staff, we will notify parents of our closure as soon as possible. We do close on election days when our facilities are used as a polling place, for the safety of the children.

3. Please have your child to preschool on time. After 9:15 a.m. is considered late. A child coming in late can be distracting and disrupt the other children's activities. It can also be difficult for the late child to adjust when rushed through morning routines.

4. Your child will receive a tote bag to bring to school each day. No other bags or back packs are permitted. If your child needs a replacement bag, it is available for \$10. There is a clip on each bag. This is where you clip notes the teacher needs to see. A replacement clip is \$1.
5. Children in our 3s and 4s classes must be potty trained and independent in their toileting needs. Reminders and verbal instructions will be given as needed.
6. Christianity is an integral part of the preschool program. We use prayer and bible stories to help the children relate to God's world and His love and care for them. The 2s, 3s and 4s classes will attend chapel each week. Chapel is led by the Sandy Plains Baptist Church Family Pastor.

### **Communication**

1. Most communication will be through the Procure App and through email. Keep your email address current and turn on notifications from the Procure App. At least one parent/guardian must be signed up for Procure.
2. The teacher cannot accept verbal messages brought by the children. Please attach a note to the outside of your child's tote bag and a reply will be sent home the same way.
3. A class list will be sent home with each child's name, parent email address and cell number for inviting others to play dates, etc. If you don't want either your email address or cell phone to be shared with other parents of your child's class, email [terri@sandyplains.org](mailto:terri@sandyplains.org) within 2 weeks of starting preschool to have the information removed from the shared list.

### **Drop-off and Pickup**

1. The door will be opened each morning at 9:00 a.m. Morning carline ends at 9:15. Please stay in your car. You do not have to unbuckle them for us. We often try to unload 2 cars at a time to speed up the line. Please pull past the cover so that the 2<sup>nd</sup> car is unloading at the steps.
2. Children are not to bring toys, candy, purses, backpacks, money, umbrellas or breakfast food to school. If we see these items in carline, we will ask the child to leave them in the car.
3. Whoever is picking up the child must have their assigned carline number or be prepared to show ID. A child will not be permitted to leave preschool with anyone other than parents unless parents have given permission by a written note, an email, or have the person listed in Procure as an authorized pickup.
4. By law, we are not allowed to buckle your child into the car seat. Please pull through to a parking spot and buckle your child in.
5. Parents who walk up to get their child instead of using the carline will need to wait across the drive for us to walk the child over. The yellow carline number is still required. Have the card in hand and wait in a line so we can call the children in an orderly manner. Cars in carline will be given priority to keep our line moving. We prefer everyone to use the carline.
6. Parents are expected to pick up their children on time. If you arrive after 12:15, a \$1 late fee will be charged for each minute you are late. Everyone will receive 3 warnings before they are charged to allow for extenuating circumstances.
7. The 1-, 2- and 3-year-old classes will be picked up at the same door as drop-off. The 4-year-old classes will be picked up by the playground. If it is raining, pickup will be at the preschool entrance with the other classes.

## **Lunch Bunch**

We will offer a lunch bunch program for children enrolled in our 2s, 3s & 4s preschool classes. Children must be potty trained to stay for lunch bunch. The extended days will be each Monday thru Thursday that the children attend classes. Once a month, we will not have lunch bunch due to a staff meeting. We also don't have lunch bunch the last day before a holiday week or the last week of school. Lunch bunch begins after Labor Day.

Children who stay for lunch bunch will bring a lunch, including water or drink (no fast food, candy, or soft drinks). Labeling containers and ice packs with masking tape is good, since children sometimes don't recognize which is theirs. Please cut up grapes and other round foods as they can be a choking hazard. We will let you know if we have peanut allergies in the school and need to ask for no-peanut-butter lunch. Children will have a supervised lunchtime and playtime.

**Lunch bunch is an extra benefit. If a child's behavior repeatedly causes the lunch bunch session to be an unpleasant or unsafe experience for the children, they may be suspended from lunch bunch for 1 month.**

Each child must be picked up at 1:00 P.M. Pick up will be by carline which goes very quickly for lunch bunch. It is very important that you pick up on time because teachers have schedules to meet. The child becomes very concerned if a parent is late for pick-up. If a child is picked up after 1:10 P.M., a \$1 late fee will be charged for each minute you are late.

You do not need to sign up or pay in advance. If your child will be staying, send in lunch that morning. The cost of each session will be \$3.00 per child.

We will enter lunch bunch attendance into Procare each morning and you will be invoiced the following month for the days your child stayed for lunch bunch. Lunch bunch fees for the month of May will be charged to the payment method on file before the end of May.

## **Security**

1. The building has a security system, including exterior and hallway monitoring cameras and an alarm system. Doors are locked from the outside. If you need to enter, ring the buzzer and church staff will ask your purpose before buzzing you in.
2. Please sign in at the office. The staff can help to contact the director or assist as needed. To make things more efficient for all, please let us know ahead of time if you plan to pick up your child early and bring your yellow pickup card.
3. All preschool and church staff, and anyone with security access to the building, have background checks conducted.

## **Parent Involvement**

We encourage parents to be involved in our preschool. Holiday parties and other special activities for 3- and 4-year-olds are good times for parents to help. If you have special talents, hobbies or resources that can be shared, please contact the director or your child's teacher.

Parents, grandparents and caregivers are welcome to join the Preschool Volunteer Group. The Volunteer Group will meet early in the year to discuss opportunities. We might need extra help at a class performance, to organize Teacher Appreciation week, with a building project, to provide baked treats or to organize a Spirit Day at Chick Fila. This group will be a great way to meet other parents. You can choose which areas you wish to be involved in.

## **Photo Policy**

1. Photos will be taken and used in the classrooms for things such as labeling cubbies and in art projects. Teachers include photos of children in class activities when communicating through Procure with parents of the preschool.
2. If we ever plan to post a photo of any school activity on our church or preschool's public website or social media, we will obtain parent's permission if their child might be easily identified.

## **Tuition and fee payments**

Monthly tuition will be payable on the first day of each school month, beginning in September. Payment is due no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. After the 10<sup>th</sup>, a \$10 late fee will be invoiced unless prior arrangements have been made. Tuition is based on an annual cost which is divided into nine equal monthly payments. No deductions or refunds are given for absences.

Billing and payments will be managed in our Procure software. On the first of each month, an invoice will be emailed to the parent. There are different ways to make a payment.

1. ACH withdrawal. This has very low fees associated, so the preschool will pay the fees. You will need to set this up and have your account verified once, then you can pay online with this method all year.
2. Credit card. You can enter your card information into Procure and pay online. You will be responsible for paying the transaction fee charged to use this method. Debit card is listed as an option because I can't turn it off, but please don't use a debit card.
3. Check or cash sent to school, in an envelope, clipped to your child's bag. Make checks payable to Sandy Plains Baptist Preschool. Returned check fee - \$10.00.
4. Set up Bill Pay from your bank. The bank will automatically send us a check each month. This only works if your child will not be attending lunch bunch and the payment is the same each month. Otherwise you will pay separately for lunch bunch.

After you pay an invoice online, you may choose to set up "automatic payments" for the remainder of the year, so you don't have to remember to make the payment each month.

### **Snacks for 3 & 4 Year Old Classes**

If your child's name is on the calendar, you will be responsible to furnish snack for the class on that day. Your calendar will list how many servings you should send in to serve the kids and teachers. We ask you not to send things that are overly sweet or things that might easily choke a child. Packages and boxes should not be opened before sending to preschool. If you send a snack that needs to be eaten with a spoon or fork, please send those items with your snack. Please do not send drinks. We will serve water and provide napkins.

Please do not send in snacks containing peanut butter or peanuts. If there is a specific allergy in your child's class, your teacher may give you a long list of approved snacks and brands to choose from.

Suggested snack foods:

GRAHAM CRACKERS	CHEEZ-ITS
ANIMAL CRACKERS	TEDDY GRAHAMS
GOLDFISH CRACKERS	VANILLA WAFERS
CHEESE	GRANOLA BARS
BABY CARROTS	RAISINS
PRETZELS	POPPED RICE SNACKS
MINI MUFFINS	
DRY CEREALS- Cheerios, Cookie Crisp, Golden Grahams, etc.	
FRUITS (washed and cut up in advance)	

(Snacks do not need to be individually packaged. If they are, they should all be the same. If you send in assorted packages, the teacher will open them all, mix them together, and serve as a snack mix.)

### **Snacks for 1- & 2-Year-Old Classes**

Snacks will be provided for the 1- and 2-year-old classes. Snacks will be low-sugar and rotated for variety. We will also include cheese, fruit, etc. in the rotation.

### **Birthday Snacks for all ages**

On the day your child's birthday will be celebrated, you may send in a special snack. Please no party hats, balloons or goody bags. You may send in special plates or napkins if you wish, but most kids only send in a snack. Please do not send in gifts for other children having a birthday. Parents are not expected to attend. This is just a small recognition during snack time.

For 1-, 2- and 3-year-old classes, please DO NOT send in full size cupcakes! They become a huge mess and many kids don't eat the whole thing. We reserve this privilege for the 4-year-olds!

Suggested birthday snacks:

COOKIES	RICE KRISPIE TREATS	DONUTS
MINI CUPCAKES	ICE CREAM CUPS	

## **General Expected Behavior and Guidelines**

Appropriate behavior develops in an environment of encouragement, acceptance, understanding and consistency. We want preschool to be a safe and enjoyable environment for all. Any action which causes or has the potential to cause harm to others or damage property will not be tolerated. Behavior is a form of communication. In the case of aggressive behavior, we will attempt to discover what the child is trying to communicate and partner with the family to figure out strategies for improvement.

It is the policy of Sandy Plains Baptist Preschool to clearly state basic rules and limits of acceptable behavior to the children and guide them in following these rules. When a child's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher or assistant will handle the situation as positively as possible by following these steps:

1. Redirect a situation. Often the child is acting out of frustration or not understanding something and redirecting them to another activity or giving them another option is all that is needed.
2. Removal from the situation. If redirection is not working, the next step might be to separate the child from the group and offer the child a quiet activity alone or with a teacher. This might include discussing the situation with the child and showing examples of expected behavior.
3. Office visit. If the behavior continues, a trip to the Director's office might be necessary. The Director will discuss with the child what a better choice might have been. A calm down activity or tool will be offered. Often a few minutes outside of the classroom helps the child to regroup. After two consecutive trips to the office, the Director will contact the parents to inform them.

Biting and similar behaviors may be more common in the 1s and 2s classes and often occur when a child is unable to verbalize frustration. Staff members are responsible for monitoring school environments to ensure that those opportunities for frustration are minimized and to try to anticipate and prevent the aggressive behavior.

## **Notes home to parents**

Communication with parents is essential. A note will often be sent home describing repetitive inappropriate behavior and actions taken. For an isolated minor issue that was resolved with redirection, such as grabbing a toy away, it is at the teacher's discretion as to whether to send a note. For aggressive behavior, incident reports will be given to both the parents of the child misbehaving and the parents of a child who has been harmed. Names are confidential.

## **Developmental Concerns**

Teachers routinely observe every child's behavior and development. We will bring to your attention any developmental concerns. A conference may be scheduled to discuss these concerns and develop a plan of action in partnership with you. Our staff is not trained to make a diagnosis, only to inform you of our observations. Community resources are available for further evaluation and may be suggested.

## Health and Safety

### **KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME:**

1. **FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS AFTER FEVER/VOMITING/DIARRHEA HAS LAST OCCURRED.** These conditions leave a child weak and make him not suitable for a group environment.

2. If the following symptoms are present:

- |                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Acute cold              | g. Vomiting and/or diarrhea       |
| b. Sore throat or earache  | h. Skin eruptions or rashes       |
| c. Swollen glands          | i. Signs of listlessness,         |
| d. Severe runny nose       | weakness, drowsiness,             |
| e. Sneezing and coughing   | flushed skin, chills, or headache |
| f. Red or discharging eyes |                                   |

3. If he is unable to participate in the full program, including outside play.

### **Sickness or Injury at Preschool**

If your child should become sick at preschool, or exhibit any of the symptoms above, we will call you or the persons listed to be called in emergency to come and pick up the child as soon as possible.

If your child becomes injured at school, an incident report will be filled out and sent home. We may ask you to sign a copy of the incident report upon pickup. For a severe injury or a head injury of any kind, we will call you immediately.

Be sure that we have at least two local emergency phone numbers, in addition to the primary guardian, that we can call in case your child gets sick or hurt at preschool.

### **Medication**

If your child has a medical condition or severe allergy that may require medication to be given at school, you will need to fill out an emergency action plan and medication permission forms. We are not allowed to administer medication of any kind without these forms.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Please notify us at once if your child has a contagious illness or one the following communicable diseases: Fifth Disease, Hand/Foot/Mouth Disease, Pink Eye, Hepatitis A or B, Measles, Mumps, Meningitis, Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever, Thrush, Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, COVID 19, or if your child has Lice, Scabies, Impetigo, Pinworms, etc.

### **Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

Teachers are required by law to report suspected child neglect or abuse. If the teacher suspects abuse or neglect has taken place, a report will be made to the Preschool Director, who will then immediately contact the Department of Family and Children's Services and file a report.