

FIRST CHURCH PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2021-2022



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www.firstchurchpreschool.org



Welcome

Thank you for choosing First Church Preschool, where we focus on “*Learning Through Caring ~ For Ourselves, Each Other & Our Earth.*” We also believe that “*Caring Communities are Intentionally Built.*” We welcome you to our caring community.

This Family Handbook is designed to inform families about how our program operates. Being familiar with these general policies and procedures will help make your experience with us more enjoyable, successful, and efficient. Many of our regulations have been established because they are required to maintain Connecticut State licensing. They also serve to provide families with a high-quality early childhood education program. You acknowledge your understanding of our policies when you submit a signed Statement of Receipt of the First Church Family Handbook Form, which is provided along with this handbook. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the information contained in this Family Handbook, please contact us.

Our staff is committed to meeting the developmental needs of your child. The educational backgrounds of our teachers and our wealth of experience make us well equipped to teach young children. Staff members attend workshops, seminars, and educational conferences throughout the year and maintain rigorous standards to ensure the highest quality programming for your child. Our teachers are happy to help you with your early childhood concerns.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child better as the year progresses. Your child will leave First Church feeling confident and with a wonderful foundation for further education.

Sincerely,

The First Church Preschool Staff

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MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that children learn best through supportive environments and caring relationships, and that caring communities are intentionally built. We provide playful opportunities that focus on helping children learn to care for themselves, others, and the natural world.

First Church Preschool Guiding Bodies

The Preschool Board of Directors
The Parent Committee
The State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
Greenwich Department of Public Health
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The Preschool Board of Directors directs the First Church Preschool. The Board sets policies and makes decisions regarding the operation of the program. The Preschool Director works on behalf of the Board to implement the school's policies and procedures and to manage the day-to-day operations of the program.

A Parent Committee composed of parents of children currently enrolled in the program supports the efforts of the preschool through fundraising activities, social events, helping maintain the Nature Classroom, and promoting the school through publicity.

First Church Preschool is licensed to operate by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and subject to the rules and regulations they put forth, as well as the regulations put for by the Greenwich Department of Public Health.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. We are engaged in their national accreditation process to be recognized as a program utilizing best practices in our work with young children.

Non-Discrimination

The First Church Preschool does not discriminate against anyone for any reason. We encourage and support cultural diversity as part of our program. We make every effort possible to meet each child's individual needs.

First Church Preschool Board of Directors 2021-2022

Jennifer DiCarlo	Preschool Director	203-637-5430jend@fccog.org
Peg Wentworth	Chair	203-637-0733thewentworths@mac.com
Patrick Collins	Senior Pastor	203-637-1791patrickc@fccog.org
Frosty Friedman	Budget Comm Rep	203-637-5127frostyfriedman@gmail.com
Liz O'Connor	Member-at-Large	347-325-4030lizmclennan@gmail.com
Heather Sahrbeck	Member-at-Large	203-698-7604 heathersahrbeck@gmail.com
Steve Summerton	Dir Church Adm & Fin	203-637-1791steves@fccog.org
Cydney Van Dyke	Associate Pastor	203-637-1791cydneyv@fccog.org
TBA	Parent Committee Chair	_____

OUR PROGRAMS

All our programs provide a balance of teacher-directed and developmentally appropriate children's choice activities, and group and individual activities. A wide variety of classroom materials engages children in exploration and discovery. The programs include opportunities for musical expression, artistic creativity, imaginative play, and for supporting children's social, emotional, physical, and thinking skills. In addition to their regular classroom opportunities, children have the chance to participate in various music, physical education, and other enrichment experiences led by trained professionals.

The typical daily schedule for our Preschool programs incorporate the following components (not necessarily in this order).

- Arrival time: each child is greeted, welcomed, and assisted with transitioning to class
- Child-directed center time: play, discovery with various materials, social interaction
- Teacher-led group time: story time, class meetings, group games and discussions
- Snack time: Families will provide healthy snacks, lunch, and water from home this year.
IMPORTANT: we are a peanut and tree nut free school
- Clean up time: a class-wide undertaking
- Nature Classroom time: unless the weather conditions are dangerous, each class will utilize our Nature Classroom each day, or take a walk around our campus or the nearby park
- Indoor recess: we will utilize our indoor gym space for large motor exercise, games, and play
- Dismissal time: each child is encouraged to gather their belongings and transitioned back to an authorized adult

Program for 2 Year Olds

First Church Preschool has a program for children who will be turning 2 years of age by December 31st of the calendar year in which they are enrolling. Our "2s" program is designed to be a fun, safe, stimulating time for toddlers during which physical, language, cognitive, and social development are nurtured and encouraged. Children in the 2s program do not need to be toilet trained, but families must supply diapers and wipes for their children to use at school if needed. The children will be encouraged in toilet training during their time in our 2's program with the goal of being toilet trained by the end of the program. Our classes for 2s are held either 2 (Tues/Thurs), 3 (Mon/Wed/Fri) or 5 days per week. We offer ½-day AM classes which run for 3 hours.

Preschool Program for 3 and 4 Year Olds

First Church Preschool follows the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) and the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) for developing and implementing an educational program for children 3 to 5 years of age. We do not adhere to any one specific published curriculum, but rather implement an evolving mix of teaching strategies, experiences, and activities that are empirically shown to embrace best practices and standards currently accepted within the early childhood education field and as endorsed through NAEYC. We implement a play-based approach, believing wholeheartedly in the necessity for play in fostering children's early learning and developmental success.

There are two components within our Preschool program: "3s" classes for children who have or will be turning 3 years of age by December 31st of the calendar year in which they are enrolling, and "4s" classes for children who have or will be turning 4 years of age by December 31st of the calendar year in which they are enrolling. All children entering our preschool programs must be toilet trained, meaning that they have experience with and are amenable to using a toilet. Further, children in our 3s and 4s programs must not wear diapers or "Pull-Up" type diapers to school. Our classes for 3s are held either 3 days per week – Mon/Wed/Fri – or 5 days. Our 4s classes are 5 days per week. We offer ½-day AM classes which run for 3 hours, or Extended Day classes, which run for 5 hours for both our 3s and 4s.

Pre-K Program

(sometimes referred to as a "Bridging" or "Connecting Program")

The Pre-K program is specifically tailored for children who have completed a 4-year-old Preschool program and who are eligible to start Kindergarten, but who, after careful consideration from parents, teachers, and/or other early childhood professionals, may benefit from a delayed start of their Kindergarten experience. The

Pre-K program offers a curriculum that is designed to be challenging, developmentally appropriate, and taught in an atmosphere that is both stimulating and nurturing. The curriculum focuses on language arts, mathematics, science, physical education, and social studies activities. In language arts, the beginnings of writing will be encouraged. The children will become familiar with comparisons, spatial relationships, letter-name recognition, and sound discrimination. Daily program activities and opportunities will foster the development of hand/eye coordination, left/right progressions, and organizational skills. In science, children will participate in hands-on activities that pique their natural curiosity. Children will use their senses to observe their physical environment, predict outcomes, and know the excitement of discovery. In social and emotional development, children will continue to gain confidence, learn independence, and accept responsibilities. The program also provides daily outside experiences and weekly music and movement programs.

Special Add-On Programs (TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED)

Due to the current COVID-related restrictions, we are temporarily suspending our Special Add-On programs until further notice. When conditions improve and we can do so safely, we will resume these popular programs.

Afters Program

Our Afters program is an extension of the school day. Children stay until 1:55 PM. Children who participate in our Afters program first enjoy a lunch brought from home, and then engage in some extra outdoor or indoor large motor activities. The Afters program is offered for an additional fee, running from 12 – 1:55 PM. Our Afters program will be divided into two sessions: session 1 from Sept 13 – Jan 31; session 2 from Feb 1 to June 11. Families will have the option of enrolling by semester at a discounted rate or enrolling as a drop-in on a first served basis by contacting the office 1 business day in advance. Our Afters program enrollees must bring lunches that are tree nut and peanut free.

“Play More” Program (2:00 PM – 4:30 PM)

Children enrolled in our Play More program will enjoy structured enrichment experiences that include indoor and outdoor activities and a snack, all in the context of a playful environment. Our Play More program will be divided into two sessions: session 1 from Sept 13 – Jan 31; session 2 from Feb 1 to June 11. Families will have the option of enrolling by semester at a discounted rate or enrolling as a drop-in on a first served basis by contacting the office 1 business day in advance. Our Play More program enrollees must bring snacks that are tree nut and peanut free.

Summer Program

The Summer Program is a 6-week program starting in mid-June through the end of July, where children engage in warm weather and outdoor activities. Children may be enrolled for any or all the three two-week sessions. Much time is spent outdoors participating in water play, games, and exploration. The program is designed for children ages 3 to 5 years. Children attend Monday – Friday, from 9 – 1 PM. Registration for our Summer Program generally begins in mid to late January.

Tuition for all our special programming will be announced during their respective enrollment periods.

GENERAL OPERATING SCHEDULE

First Church Preschool is open five days per week, Monday through Friday, with office hours beginning from 8:30 AM through 4:30 PM from September through June. We are closed most national holidays, as well as for extended periods in late December, February, and for a spring break or April. All families will receive a school-year calendar that indicates what days we plan to be closed, including school-wide special event dates that will impact the typical operating schedule. This school year calendar can be found on our website:

www.firstchurchpreschool.com

Hazardous weather and other emergency related situations may result in FCP closing for periods of time. If we have more than five days of unscheduled emergency closings, we will make up one day for each day we close beyond the fifth day. We will not make up unscheduled closings of up to five days.

If the Preschool closes by mandate from the Town of Greenwich or the State of Connecticut due to a pandemic, the Preschool will continue remote instruction online.

Our Summer Program, which usually begins mid-June and goes for 6 consecutive weeks through late July, runs 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM for all classes.

Thorough cleaning, maintenance, and repairs usually take place in August. Our office is still open, but on a limited basis. If you need to contact us during this time, please understand that there could be a short delay in response, but we will make every effort to get back to you as soon as possible.

Daily Arrival / Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

We stagger our start and dismissal times to facilitate a safe and more efficient check in for staff and children. The arrival/dismissal schedule is:

2s program: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
3s AM program: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
3s Extended Day program: 9:00 am – 1:55 pm
4s AM program: 9:15 am – 12:15 pm
4s Extended Day program: 9:15 am – 2:10 pm
Pre-K program: 9:15 am – 2:10 pm

At arrival, families/caregivers say goodbye to their child outside. Teachers will escort the classes into the building after all students have arrived. *Experience has shown that if families of children convey a positive attitude and leave promptly at drop off time (without revealing signs of anxiety themselves), then children adjust more quickly and happily to being at school. A smile, kiss, and a quick goodbye work best.* If dropping off your child after their assigned drop off time, please call the office for assistance.

Dismissal

At dismissal, a teacher will walk the class outside to their family member/caregiver. If anyone other than those listed as authorized will be picking up your child, please message your teacher through Brightwheel to communicate the change. Children will not be released to anyone not listed as authorized without our first obtaining your consent. When providing authorization, please provide the person's full name and tell them photo identification is necessary to show to staff when picking up your child.

In order to maintain a safe and secure experience, First Church Preschool reserves the right to refuse to release a child to an adult's care if that adult appears in any way impaired or unable to provide safe transit.

Late Pick Up Policy

Two staff members, age 18 years or older, will remain at the preschool with a child at all times. If a child has not been picked up within 10 minutes of the child's scheduled pick-up time, a staff member will attempt to call the child's parents/guardians using the numbers provided. If they cannot be reached, the staff member will

attempt to call the emergency and authorized alternate adults provided by the parents/guardians in Brightwheel. The police will be called after one hour if parents or other adults specified in Brightwheel cannot be reached. At that time, the child may be released to the police. The non-emergency number for Greenwich Police Department is (203) 622-8000.

Arrival/Dismissal Locations

There will be designated arrival/dismissal locations for each class. Families will receive their specific locations prior to the start of school. Locations may be adjusted in case of inclement weather. Any changes to locations will be communicated to families as soon as possible via Brightwheel.

Parking Lot Rules

PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY THROUGH THE PARKING LOT AND CHECK CAREFULLY BEFORE PULLING IN OR OUT OF YOUR PARKING SPACE.

If at a prolonged stop, please turn off the engine rather than keeping it running. Handicap parking spaces are only to be used by those drivers who have a valid handicap license.

Texting & Cell Phone Use

TEXTING AND CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING IN THE PARKING LOT IS NOT PERMITTED BY LAW. Should you need to use your cell phone or text option, please pull into a parking space, and turn off your car.

ILLNESS POLICIES

Compliance with these policies is required of all families and staff without exception

It is important that all members of our school community understand and agree to comply with our school Illness Policy. These policies have been developed as required by the State of CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Licensing Division, and incorporates guidance issued by the Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for early childhood programs. These policies are in place to ensure that we can provide as safe and healthy environment as possible.

Symptoms of Illness

We require our staff to stay home if they are not feeling well, and we require you to keep your child home if she/he is showing signs or symptoms of illness (Covid-19 or otherwise). This will help keep our community healthy. Our guidelines are based upon best practices to slow/reduce the spread of illness, to minimize the stress levels of our children, families, and faculty as well as to continue to create and strengthen relationships between the school and children/families in the best ways possible.

Per CDC, symptoms of illness that require your child to stay home may include:

Fever or Chills

Congestion

Diarrhea

New loss of Taste or Smell

Cough

Runny Nose (not seasonal)

Fatigue

Shortness of Breath

Sore Throat

Nausea or Vomiting

Headache

Muscle or Body Aches

Children and staff who exhibit symptoms of illness are required by First Church Preschool to test for Covid-19. Please refer to the below Covid protocols on how to proceed.

Colds and infections

Children inevitably catch colds and infections when they first have group experiences. In order to keep these infections to a minimum, we ask that you cooperate with our policies on illness. Please do not send your child to school if he/she:

- Has or had a temperature of 100 degrees or above within 24 hours of class time
- Has vomited or has had diarrhea within 24 hours of class time
- Has a contagious disease
- Has an obvious sign of a cold: sneezing and coughing, with a green discharge coming from the nose, or discharge from the eyes/ears
- Is not feeling well enough to fully participate in the program, which includes outdoor play
- Has not been on their prescribed antibiotic for at least 24 hours of class time
- Has a rash or skin irritation that has a discharge or is bleeding

Health Check Policies and Procedures

All families must complete a **daily, on-line health screening** through Brightwheel before coming to school each day. This will include answering questions about your child and family health and recent travel. If you have any questions about your child's health, please contact the school before coming for arrival.

Notification of Illness During School Hours

Children and staff who develop symptoms of illness while at school will be removed from their classroom and moved to a quiet area where they will be distanced from others. Children with symptoms of illness will be encouraged to rest and cared for by a staff member until they are picked up from school. A staff member will contact the child's parent(s) to notify them of the development of the symptoms that their child is experiencing and to arrange for the child to be picked up from school as soon as possible. Staff members with symptoms of illness will be sent home and coverage will be provided for their class as appropriate.

Children with symptoms of illness are required to be picked up within 30 minutes of notification. Parents should establish a back-up arrangement for picking up their child in the event they, themselves, are not able to pick up within the required time. Further, if a parent is unreachable for notification that their child has become ill while at school, a staff member will attempt to contact those persons whom the parents have listed on Brightwheel as being authorized to pick up their child in their stead and arrange for them to pick up the child.

ENHANCED HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR COVID-19

COVID-19 is a highly contagious illness that spreads easily among groups, especially when prevention protocols are not in place and carefully adhered to. Experts advise that the best way to protect our community against Covid-19 is to establish and strictly follow a detailed safety plan, implementing layers of safety procedures such as getting vaccinated when eligible, enhancing ventilation systems, ensuring proper mask wearing, washing hands frequently, increasing the frequency of cleaning protocols, and ensuring that individuals stay home when not feeling well.

First Church Preschool has always maintained stringent health safety protocols with our children and staff and encouraged proper handwashing and cleaning protocols. With the onset of Covid-19 last year, we enhanced our health safety measures and introduced several new practices. The Preschool is very fortunate to have large classrooms with ample space for distancing, and many windows that we keep open throughout the school year to provide fresh air circulation. We have installed a new filtering mechanism in our ventilation system, and each classroom is cleaned several times throughout the day and fogged every night. We also have the luxury of utilizing our extensive outdoor learning space every day ... whether in the Nature Classroom or other areas within our vast campus.

All these actions, combined with the conscientious adherence of our safety protocols by our families, teachers, and staff, enabled First Church Preschool to operate, in-person, last year without having any in-school Covid transmissions ... and we plan to do the same again this year!

Covid-19 Vaccination Requirements

With the goal of ensuring the best learning experience for our children while maintaining the safety of our entire First Church Preschool community, FCP will require all teachers and staff to be fully vaccinated with an FDA authorized Covid-19 vaccine. This decision was made in consultation with our expert advisors and based upon guidance from many sources including the CDC, American Academy of Pediatricians, state and local Departments of Health, and the CT Office of Early Childhood (our licensing agency).

Our policy is compliant with Governor Ned Lamont's Executive Order #13D signed August 19, 2021. Per the terms of the Executive Order, if not fully vaccinated by September 27, the first dose must have been administered (for those that require two doses), with the second dose scheduled.

As advised by outside counsel and required by the Executive Order, we will grant exemptions for those who are unable to receive a Covid-19 vaccination due to medical reasons or sincerely held religious or spiritual beliefs. Any staff member who is granted an exemption will be required to submit to weekly Covid testing and will be required to adhere to stricter Covid protocols than their vaccinated counterparts as outlined below.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we must maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information, such as documentation or other confirmation of COVID-19 vaccination. Consistent with these obligations of confidentiality, we are not permitted to disclose the vaccination status of any staff member, including whether staff members have received a medical or religious exemption from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement. We ask that our parents and other community members respect the medical privacy of our staff and refrain from asking teachers if they are vaccinated.

Covid-19 Screening Test Requirements

When schools implement testing combined with other prevention strategies, they can detect new cases to prevent outbreaks, reduce the risk of further transmission, and protect students, teachers, and staff from Covid-19. To help ensure our entire community stays safe, FCP will require the following screening tests:

- **Weekly testing:** any staff member who has received an exemption from the mandatory vaccination requirement must complete weekly PCR testing with results submitted to the Preschool Director
- **Periodic testing:**
 - **Before School Starts:** All children and staff must take a PCR test prior to starting school. **Children should test no earlier than September 5th, 2021 and submit negative results via Brightwheel by the evening of September 8th to attend school on September 9th.** Teachers should test no earlier than August 28th, 2021
 - **After December Holiday Break:** We will again require PCR testing of all staff and children following the December holiday break. Individuals must **submit a negative test by the evening of January 3rd, 2022 (but test no earlier than December 30, 2021) to return to school on January 4th, 2022**
 - **Other Holiday Breaks:** FCP will reevaluate the need for “return to school testing” for the second half of the year after January 4th, 2022 based on current Covid-19 trends. We will share testing requirements, if any, for the February and April breaks once we assess the need.

Covid-19 Quarantine Protocols

The following protocols stipulate the quarantine and testing requirements that First Church Preschool has established to ensure the safest learning environment for all.

An unvaccinated child or staff member who....

- has **tested positive for Covid-19** can return to school after:
 - the individual isolates for 10 days (return on day 11) from the date symptoms first appeared or the date of the test if no symptoms **and**
 - the individual is at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
 - the individual is symptom free **and**
 - the individual is well and energetic enough to fully participate in all areas of the program day, including outdoor times
- has been **in Close Contact* with someone who has Covid-19 (suspected or confirmed)** (including household members such as parents, children, siblings) can return to school after:
 - the individual quarantines for 14 days after the last exposure to that person (return on day 15; last date of exposure being day 0) **and**
 - the individual is at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
 - the individual is symptoms free **and**
 - the individual is well and energetic enough to fully participate in all areas of the program day, including outdoor times
 - *Please Note: while some schools may be allowing for an earlier return with interim negative testing, FCP will be following the CDC’s more conservative guidelines requiring a 14-day quarantine. When the currently elevated Covid infection rates return to lower levels, FCP may, in consultation with its advisors, reconsider this requirement.*
- has **symptoms of Covid-19** can return to school after:
 - the individual receives a negative PCR test and submits a copy of the test results to the Preschool Director prior to the child’s return **and**
 - the individual is at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
 - the individual is symptom free **and**
 - the individual is well and energetic enough to fully participate in all areas of the program day, including outdoor times

* **Close Contact** is defined as being within six feet of a Covid-19 positive person for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, within two days prior to that person developing symptoms.

A vaccinated staff member who....

- has **tested positive for Covid-19** can return to school after:
 - the individual isolates for 10 days (return on day 11) from the date symptoms first appeared or the date of the test if no symptoms **and**
 - the individual is at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
 - the individual is symptoms free
- has been in **Close Contact* with someone who has Covid-19 (suspected or confirmed)** (including household members such as parents, children, siblings) shall:
 - take PCR test 5 days following contact and isolate per protocols if test positive
 - no quarantine required
- has **symptoms of Covid-19**
 - take PCR test; if negative, no need to quarantine, if positive, follow Covid positive protocols

Covid-19 Reporting Protocols

It is important that all members of our community are aware and conscientious about our individual and collective responsibility to do all that we can to protect ourselves and others. Communication is an important piece of a prevention plan, and especially so during the COVID-19 pandemic. Open communication between families and our administration for reporting COVID-19 is vitally important for helping us maintain a safe and healthy environment for us all.

Please report the following to the office as soon as possible upon learning:

- A member of your household has tested positive for COVID-19
- A member of your household has developed symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or is presumed positive
- Travel is planned for your child
- A member of your household has been advised to self-quarantine

If we receive a report that a suspected sick child or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, we will:

- Immediately notify the Greenwich Department of Public Health. The officials within this department will help us to determine the best course of action for our preschool.
- Notify families of the confirmed case and continue to maintain open communications regarding follow-up procedures at an appropriate time based on the situation and discretion of the office and under the guidance of the Greenwich Department of Public Health.
 - All Close Contacts (defined as someone who was within six feet of the person for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, within two days prior to the individual developing symptoms) will need to quarantine for 14 days
- Initiate a short-term closure of the classroom(s) and/or school for 2 – 5 days to allow a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the facility and allow the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the Preschool.
- Continue to work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal is needed; communicate next steps to all families.

If local health officials have determined there is substantial transmission of COVID-19 within the community, they will provide guidance to administrators on the best course of action for our Preschool.

Covid-19 Closure Policy

In the event of a classroom or school closure, teachers and children will continue learning remotely, including large group, small group and individual interactions between children and teachers. An on-line schedule will be distributed to families at that time.

Classroom Closure: In the event of a child or teacher testing positive for Covid-19, that entire class must quarantine at home for 14 days and that class will convert to remote learning 48 hours after the first day of closure. The entire school will close for at least 48 hours for deep cleaning, but classrooms with students not required to quarantine will reopen following cleaning.

School-wide Closure: In the event of a school-wide public health decision to shut down due to Covid-19, we will revert to remote learning, beginning 48 hours after the first day of closure.

Covid-19 Travel Policy

The following CDC Travel Guidelines as of August 19, 2021 have been adopted by First Church Preschool. The CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated. As our preschool children do not yet have the opportunity for vaccination, the following policy is in place until further notice.

Domestic and International Travel for Children and Unvaccinated Staff:

Children and unvaccinated staff traveling domestically and internationally via plane, bus, train, or other forms of public transportation must:

Prior to travel:

- Report the travel plans via email to the Preschool Director PRIOR to travel.

After travel:

- Take a PCR test no sooner than 5 days after return (date of return is considered day 0); negative test results must be emailed to Preschool Director prior to return to school. **AND**
- Stay home and quarantine for a full 7 days (back to school return on day 8) after travel, even with a negative test result **OR**
- If individual doesn't get PCR tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days (back to school return on day 11) after return (date of return is considered day 0).

Domestic Travel for Vaccinated Staff:

- After travel, monitor symptoms and get tested if indicated
- No quarantine or testing required

International Travel for Vaccinated Staff:

- Get PCR test 5 days following return and isolate per protocols if test positive
- No quarantine required

Additional information and traveler guidance issued by the CDC can be found on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

Covid-19 Policy / Protocols are Subject to Change

First Church Preschool reserves the right to revise, supplement, rescind or deviate from any policies or portion herein from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion, and with or without advanced written notice. Notifications of any changes will be provided to families and employees of our program, and the most recently revised document will be in effect.

ADDITIONAL MEDICAL SITUATIONS TO CONSIDER

New medications and injuries: Children and staff **cannot attend school** if either of the following events have occurred **within the past 24 hours**:

- Started a new medication/treatment
- Injuries at home requiring medical intervention such as sutures; blows to the head; injuries limiting physical activity

In these instances, children and staff can return to school:

- Once they are fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicine, or
- At least one full dosing day has passed without incident or evidence of side effects after beginning a new medication / treatment for any condition

Head Lice: Children who are at school and found to have live head lice and/or more than 4 nits will be sent home to help curtail the spread, and they must be treated for lice before re-entering school. Children who have been found to have lice must report directly to the school office upon returning to school to be screened before going to their classroom. Children will be allowed to attend school when there are no more than 4 nits present, and no live lice for at least 3 consecutive days, by which time they must have received treatment for lice before they may continue to attend. For each of the 3 days, if school days, they must stop in the office for screening before going to class. Children who are found to still have lice one week after having been first discovered to have them will not be permitted to return to school until they are completely free of all nits and live lice.

Chicken Pox: Children who are diagnosed with Chicken Pox must be excluded from school until all blisters have scabs (usually 6 – 8 days), have no fever or other symptoms, and feel well enough to participate in physical activities, including outdoor activities.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): A child who develops pink eye must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Fifth's Disease: A child with Fifth's Disease is most contagious before the rash appears — either during the incubation period (the time between infection and the onset of symptoms) or when experiencing only mild respiratory symptom. In order to help curtail the spread, children should not attend school during this period.

Coxsackie Virus: Children who have been diagnosed with Coxsackie shall be excluded from attending school until a note from a physician which states that the child is well enough to return is supplied.

Strep: Children who have been diagnosed with strep must be excluded from school until after at least 24 hours from the time they received a first dose of antibiotic (not just the next day), and they also feel well enough to participate in the physical activity, including outdoor activity, typically engaged in at school.

If your child is diagnosed by a physician with any of the above conditions or some other significant medical condition, please notify the preschool office as soon as possible.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS / FIRST AID / CPR

Members of our staff participate in state approved first aid and CPR trainings so that they may respond appropriately to a variety of emergency situations that may arise with children during school hours. In the case of a serious medical emergency, the office will call 911 first, and then contact the parents of the child involved. In case of a lesser medical problem, attempts will be made to contact the parents first, and then those listed by parents as authorized contacts.

Members of our staff also attend state approved trainings to learn to administer medications for children who require them due to chronic health conditions, such as allergies, asthma, and diabetes. These types of medications must be approved by a physician for use and, therefore, require a prescription. Individualized health care plans will be established for children who may need to have medication administered during school hours because of medical conditions like these. All individualized health care plans must specify the type of medication, the right dose, route, and time for giving a child the medicine, and correspond to the instructions given by a physician via a written prescription.

Children who require medication prescribed by a physician as treatment for temporary illnesses often can have the administration of those medications timed in such a way that they can be given by family members at home and need not be given by teachers during school hours. If, however, a need arises that a child needs a dose of medication during school hours for a condition that is not already approved on an individualized health care plan for that child, then parents or guardians of the child must give full written consent to staff members to administer that medication or be present themselves to give the medication at school. Our staff does not give over-the-counter medication to children unless it has been prescribed by the child's doctor. First Church Preschool will not administer the first nor the second dose of any medication, either prescribed or over the counter, including sunscreen, in case a child develops an adverse reaction with initial contact with the unfamiliar substance.

Please apply sunscreen at home before coming to school. Our staff members do not routinely apply sunscreen; only per doctor's orders and with written authorization from parents.

All medications kept onsite must be in their original containers and with the prescription label and/or administration instructions intact. Our staff will not administer medication that is beyond its expiration date.

We do our best to notify you if medication kept onsite for your child is about to expire.

Administration of Emergency Medication Policy

First Church Preschool will only administer emergency medications which include prescribed inhalers and pre-measured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e. Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), nonprescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl). The parental responsibilities include providing the center the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the center.

The medication authorization form must include information, such as:

- The child's name, address, and birthdate
- The date the medication order was written
- Medication name, dose, and method of administration
- Time to be administered and dates to start and end the medication
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur
- Notation whether the medication is a controlled drug
- Listing of allergies, if any and reactions or negative interactions with foods or drugs
- Specific instructions from prescriber how medication is to be given
- Name, address, telephone number and signature of authorized prescriber ordering the drug
- Name, address, telephone number, signature and relationship to the child of the parents giving permission for the administration of the drug by a staff member

Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration form and care plan that medical providers have access to. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the forms clearly state that it is for licensed child-care centers. Please understand that your child may not be able to attend if he/she does not have the proper authorization.

All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with child's name, name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for nonprescription medications, pre-measured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e. EpiPens), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

Staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration and care plan forms are complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed.

First Church Preschool staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not limited in the documentation are:

- Name, address, and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of authorized prescriber
- The date & time the medication was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medications errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Parents will be notified when/if a child has been administered any prescription medication. Staff are trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every three years. Training for pre-measured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications.

All unused or expired medication shall be returned to the parent/guardian or disposed of if it is not picked up within one week following the termination of the order, in the presence of at least one witness. The center shall keep a written record of the medications destroyed, which shall be signed by both parties.

Health Forms

The State of Connecticut requires that First Church Preschool maintain accurate early childhood health assessment records for each child. This includes having a current (within 1 year) health exam and list of current immunizations submitted by the first day of school for participation in programming for that school year. Should your child's health form expire during the school year, it is your responsibility to make sure that a new health form is submitted to the preschool office. We will notify you if your child's health assessment is about to expire. No child will be admitted to class without completed and up-to-date health assessment forms.

Hand Hygiene Policy

All individuals will wash their hands at the following times, as applicable:

- Upon arrival for the day, when moving from one group of children or classroom to another, or coming in from outdoors.
- Before and after:
 - Eating, handling food, or feeding a child
 - Giving medication
 - Playing in water that is used by more than one person, such as a sensory table filled with water
- After:
 - Diapering and toileting
 - Handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit) and wiping noses, mouths, cuts and sores, and sneezing or coughing
 - Cleaning
 - Handling pets and other animals or animal waste
 - Handling raw meat, poultry, fish, or eggs
 - Whenever hands are noticeably soiled

All individuals will wash hands as follows:

- Scrub hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Include between fingers, under and around nail beds, backs of hands. Liquid soap is required for children
- Rinse hands well under running water with fingers down so water flows from wrist to fingertips. Leave the water running.
- Dry hands with paper towel or approved drying device. Drying devices will not be used unless there is a faucet that does not require the user to touch the faucet after the hands are washed.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet and, if inside a toilet room with a closed door, use the towel to open the door. Discard the towel in an appropriate receptacle.

If a child is too heavy to hold for handwashing at the sink, and cannot be brought to the sink for handwashing, disposable wipes or a damp paper towel moistened with a drop of liquid soap may be used to clean the child's hands. The child's hands will be wiped with a paper towel wet with clear water and dried with a fresh paper towel. *Note: this method is less satisfactory than washing at the sink where the soil can be rinsed off in running water.* **When soap and water are not available, and hands are not visibly soiled, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used in place of handwashing.**

DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Our staff strives to make each family's adjustment to our preschool a pleasant one. At the beginning of each school year, we offer a Visiting Day during which children and parents together visit their new classrooms for about one hour to meet teachers and classmates and get acclimated to the environment. We endeavor to get you the information you will need to transition smoothly into our school community.

We understand that children react to new environments differently. We will make every effort to help your child thrive at preschool. Experience has shown that if families of children convey a positive attitude toward their child going to school and leave promptly at drop off time (without revealing signs of anxiety themselves), then children adjust more quickly and happily to being at school. A smile, kiss, and a quick goodbye work best. If you are concerned about whether your child is experiencing separation anxiety, please know that you are welcome to call the office and we will be happy to give you a progress report.

Toileting

One focus of our curriculum for the 3s is to support the children's increasing independence in completing basic self-care routines, such as dressing, washing, and toileting. We do understand that children can and do have toileting accidents sometimes, no matter their age or level of competency with using the toilet. We do not shame a child for having an accident, nor would we penalize them somehow. We offer verbal assistance through instruction, reminders, and support to encourage the children to complete as much as they can on their own first, however, we will also provide hands-on assistance if needed. If a child is having chronic instances of toileting accidents, is resistant to using the toilet at school or receiving hands-on assistance from a staff member or is otherwise struggling with the safe and hygienic use of the toilet while at school, we may need to contact parents or someone designated by the parent to come to the school to assist.

Children are not allowed to wear diapers or "Pull-Up" type diapers at school. We feel that the Pull-Ups are so absorbent that they can hinder a child's awareness of their own body signals that they need to use the toilet and in realizing that they have wet themselves. We ask that you please provide a clean change of clothing just in case a child has an accident.

The Zero to Three website offers some very helpful guidance and resources about toilet training: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/266-potty-training-learning-to-the-use-the-toilet>

Communication

A weekly newsletter will originate from the Director and is designed to keep you informed of events taking place on a school wide basis. This newsletter will be sent via Brightwheel. Additionally, families will receive daily, via Brightwheel, a photo of their child and communication of some of the activities from the day.

If there is a need to pass specific information to your child's teacher, we suggest sending a message through Brightwheel, an email, or scheduling a call during a mutually convenient time so all are informed. We respectfully ask that communication at arrival and dismissal be limited so our teachers can welcome and successfully transition all our children.

Plans for an Open House experience are in development and will be shared with families as soon as they are finalized. During the Open House Night, teachers give an overview of their plans and goals for the school year, parents have the opportunity to visit their child's classroom either in person or virtually, and speak informally with the teachers.

Family conferences are scheduled for October 27, 2021 and May 4, 2022. They will be held either virtually or in person (yet to be determined). Children do not have school on family conference dates. These meetings are a great opportunity to discuss your child's acclimation and progress within the program. Should you wish to speak with your child's teacher at other points in the school year, appointments can be arranged.

Supervision of Children

The staff/child ratio is 1 staff for every 4 children under the age of three years old and/or 1 staff for every 10 children over the age of three years old. At no time shall the group size exceed 8 children under the age of three years old and/or 16 children over the age of three years. Group size shall be observed in the classroom, gym, bathrooms, and outside. Children must be supervised by sight and sound at all times including nap time and during transportation. Staff shall position themselves to see as many children as possible.

Per COVID health safety guidelines, we will not be mixing groups within classrooms, hallways, the gym, or the Nature Classroom. Once we return to non-COVID times, where there is a mixed age group such as in additional special programs, the lower required teacher/child ratio and group size for the age of the youngest child shall prevail.

Field Trips - Staff/child ratios will be maintained while outside of the building. All children must have signed permission slips prior to leaving the campus. Staff must bring each child's emergency contact information and the first aid kit on the field trip.

Bathrooms - Staff must supervise children while they are using the bathrooms.

Transportation to/from school - All children will be supervised by sight and sound while getting on and off any mode of transportation.

Nature Classroom/Outdoors - It will be the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety of children on the Nature Classroom and church campus. Supervision of children will include the following:

- A head count will be taken before leaving the building.
- Children will be escorted by the staff to their designated play areas.
- Staff will encourage and demonstrate proper equipment usage and play.
- Staff will circulate through the play areas, supervising and interacting with the children in a positive manner.
- Staff will coordinate positions so that all play activities and equipment are supervised. No staff person is allowed to sit or socialize with other staff or other non-staff adults who may be present.
- A head count will be taken before re-entering the building.
- Staff may not leave children unattended or out of state-permitted ratios and group sizes.
- Children may not go inside for any reason (including to the bathroom), nor may they go back outside unless accompanied by program staff.

When there are woodchips as surfacing on the playground, accessible to children under age three years, we shall:

- Be sure that all staff are aware that the woodchips pose a choking hazard to children under the age of three.
- Have a phone outside at all times in case of emergency.
- At least one CPR certified staff member will be on the playground whenever there are children under the age of three using the playground.

Snacks & Lunches

Your child's teacher will make you aware of any food allergies in the room. Children will not be allowed to share their food with each other. Please be aware that **all foods** must be **TREE NUT AND PEANUT FREE**.

All lunches or snacks must be sent from home and must be **TREE NUT AND PEANUT FREE**. Families are requested to provide healthy choices for lunch and refrain from including candy or sugary treats. We suggest including an ice pack to help keep the food fresh. You may also want to use a thermos container for keeping foods warm. Please be sure to label all containers included in your child's lunch with their name.

Peanut / Tree Nut Free School Policy

According to the Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) organization, 32 million Americans are living with potentially life-threatening food allergies. For those with serious sensitivities, certain types of foods can cause a severe, even potentially fatal allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. Peanuts and tree nuts are among those foods that may cause anaphylaxis in some people. Therefore, for the safety of those within our preschool community, no foods containing peanuts or tree nuts may be brought into our preschool for snacks or lunches. In addition, please note the following:

- No food items will be accepted to share with other children in the classrooms.
- Food products with labels that indicate the product was manufactured in a facility that also produces products with peanuts/tree nuts may not be sent in for snacks or lunches, as they may contain trace amounts of the allergens and, therefore, be harmful to those who are sensitive.
- All food must be sent in original packaging with the labels intact so that staff can refer to the list of ingredients if necessary.
- Different countries have different laws concerning packaging labels. Please be aware that foods purchased outside the US may not clearly indicate whether or not they contain allergens.
- There may be children with food allergies other than peanuts/tree nuts in your child's classroom, therefore, please consult with your child's teacher at the start of school regarding safe snack and lunch options.
- We must be informed if your child has any type of food allergy, and an individualized care plan must be established relevant to your child that outlines an appropriate response should your child become exposed to his/her allergen. Our staff is trained in emergency medication administration (including EpiPen) and first aid response for allergic reactions.
- We teach the children about food allergies, explaining that some foods might make some people sick, and that they should not share their food, nor eat food belonging to another person unless a trusted adult says it is safe to do so.

You can find a wealth of information published on the Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) website on how to manage food allergies, including how to read food labels and avoid purchasing products that may contain peanuts and tree nuts, as well as other major allergens. You can find their website at <https://www.foodallergy.org/>. We hope this information will assist you with selecting peanut and tree nut free foods that are safe for your child to bring to class. If you have any questions about foods that are acceptable for sending to school, our staff is very happy to assist.

Birthdays & Celebrations

Invitations to birthday and other parties held outside the classroom may not be distributed within the Preschool unless the entire class is invited. If you want to celebrate your child's birthday in school, please make arrangements with your child's teachers directly. First Church Preschool will allow only non-food item birthday and event celebrations due to potential food allergies.

Clothing

At school, children engage in a variety of activities that can be messy, so please dress your child in clothes suitable for both indoor and outdoor play and for getting dirty, particularly on our Nature Classroom. Since we venture outdoors in a variety of weather conditions, you may want to keep a pair of boots or all-weather shoes in the classroom. We find it best to wear sneakers or rubber soled, closed toed shoes for use on the playground, and request that no flip-flops or open back shoes be worn.

Outdoor play is an integral part of our program throughout the year. Classes may spend up to one hour each day on the Nature Classroom. During the winter months, the children should be dressed for cold weather. Please label all hats, sweaters, mittens, boots, and jackets with your child's name.

Please bring a complete change of clothes in a large zip-lock bag labeled with your child's name on the first day of preschool. These will be kept at school for use as needed. We ask that you periodically update the items to account for changes in seasons and your child's rapid growth during the year.

Classroom Pet Policy

Some of our classrooms adopt class pets for the enjoyment and education of the children. We make efforts to ensure that the pet is healthy. The pet will be kept in an environment that will be cleaned at least weekly by a staff member. Any litter or debris used or left by the pet will be discarded directly to the outside garbage receptacle. A staff member will supervise children when feeding and providing water and/or other necessities for the pet. Anyone who handles the pet will be required to wash his or her hands before and after the handling. A pet care plan will be posted near each pet in the classroom outlining the proper care for the pet. Dogs and other personal pets are not allowed inside the school premises unless prior arrangements have been made with a teacher and/or director.

Discipline Policy

The goal of discipline is to help a child develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior.

Our staff uses positive discipline techniques with the children. This includes positive guidance, praise and encouragement, redirecting the child, setting clear limits from the beginning of the relationship with the child, and continuous supervision of the children.

Our staff is specifically prohibited from using abusive, humiliating, neglectful, corporal, or frightening punishment. They may not hit, embarrass, or scare a child. They may not deny the child snack or recess time as a punishment.

When a child misbehaves, a staff member may remove the child from the group as long as the child remains under constant supervision. The child must be given the opportunity to return to the group when he or she has calmed down or is ready to participate appropriately in the class activity. A child may only be restrained if it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child him or herself, or another person.

Follow-up to disciplinary incidents should include talking to the child, the director, and appropriate members of the families of the children involved in an effort to prevent such an incident from occurring again.

We welcome a healthy exchange of information regarding limits and discipline routines and would gladly discuss our policies and practices with any interested families and caregivers.

Dismissal from Program

First Church Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child at any time the Preschool deems necessary. Reasons include, but are not limited to, the following: excessive disruptive behavior by the child or parent, excessive and continuing physical aggression toward other children, adults or property, failure to pay tuition on time, excessive lateness in picking up the child, failure to submit necessary school forms, or any other conduct determined by the preschool to be inappropriate or endangering.

That being said, we make every effort to avoid resorting to a child's dismissal from the program. In order to do so, we utilize the following system for children who present challenging behaviors at school:

1st occurrence: teachers will address the behavior using positive discipline techniques and best teaching practices within their classroom.

2nd – 4th occurrence: appropriate family members will be made aware by staff concerning the issues surrounding the incident and staff will investigate factors that may possibly be affecting the situation. Staff will document reporting the issues to the family members as well as all findings regarding the potential contributing factors to the situation. Based on any findings, the staff will make any accommodations deemed necessary and appropriate to alleviate the situation and will communicate those accommodations to the family members.

5th occurrence: appropriate family members will be made aware of the persistence of the situation at hand. Staff will share the past and present incidents with the Preschool Director. A meeting will be called at a mutually convenient time for the director and appropriate staff and family members to collaborate in establishing a plan for addressing the problem. At this meeting, all parties involved will determine goals for rectifying the situation, specific strategies to be taken to address the problem, specific modes for communicating the progress being made within the process, and a timeline for achieving desired results and goals. This meeting must be held within one week of the documenting and sharing of the fifth occurrence with the family members. If the meeting does not take place, the child will not be permitted to attend school unless and until it does.

Additional occurrence: if the problem persists after attempting to put the plan for addressing the situation into place, then the child's enrollment may be suspended and subject to possible dismissal. Family members will be notified in writing if their child's enrollment is suspended.

The period of suspension will be determined by the director and shall not exceed three weeks in length. During the suspension, the child will not be permitted to attend school. If, during the period of suspension, family members of the child can produce evidence of resolving the problem situation, then the child may resume attending. If no satisfactory resolve has come about during the suspension, however, the child may be dismissed from school. Family members will be notified in writing if their child has been dismissed.

If it is determined that a child must be dismissed from our program, we will attempt to assist a family in finding a program that may be more suitable for the child's and family's needs.

Parents or guardians have a right to appeal the Preschool's decision to dismiss a child from the school. They may initiate an appeal by contacting the Preschool Board Chairperson, whose contact information is posted on a bulletin board in the main hallway of the preschool and in this handbook.

Abuse and Neglect Policy

All our staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center.

Definition:

- Child Abuse includes:
 - Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
 - Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
 - Neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
 - Emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
 - At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him/her by abuse or neglect)
- A child may be considered abused when:
 - Non-accidental physical injuries are inflicted upon him/her
 - Injuries occur which are at variance with the history given of them
 - The child is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment
- A child may be considered neglected when he/she has been:
 - Abandoned
 - Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally
 - Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions, or associations injurious to his/her well-being (CT statutes 46b-120)

Staff responsibilities: As adults who work with young children, we are mandated by law to report **any suspicion** that a child is being abused, neglected, or at risk.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect:

- Call the Department of Children and Families DCF (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288
- The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential
- Information needed:
 - Name of child / date of birth
 - Address of child
 - Phone number of child
 - Name of parents or guardians
 - Address of parents or guardians
 - Phone number of parents or guardians
 - Relevant information, such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment, or neglect
 - Exact description of what the reporter has observed
 - Time and date of incident
 - Information about previous injuries, if any
 - Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
 - Name of any person suspected of causing injury
 - Any information reporter believes would be helpful
 - Any action taken to help or treat the child
 - Seek medical attention for the child - if needed

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF - 136) to DCF.

Staff members are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the preschool. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich (FCCOG) and the Preschool Board that manages the First Church Preschool program support a zero tolerance for abuse or neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.

The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program.

Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

Staff Training: Staff will be required to complete DCF's online Mandated Reporter Training at the time of hire and prior to starting their work with the children. Staff will also receive a copy of this policy and will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings - one at the start of the school year in August or September, and one at the start of the summer program in June - which include reviewing the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter.

Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy: A copy of this policy is in this Family Handbook, and each family will be given a copy upon the start of the school year, or at the time of enrollment. A copy of this policy will also be posted on the informational bulletin board in the hallway of the preschool.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the director must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to assess the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

Grievance Procedure

Concerns regarding your child's experience at the First Church Preschool should first be discussed with the classroom teachers and then the Preschool Director. If the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact (in this order) the Preschool Board Chairperson, the Associate Pastor, the Greenwich Department of Health, or the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The grievance procedure, along with the names and phone numbers of those to contact, are posted in the preschool on the bulletin board in the main preschool hallway.

Diagnostic Services

In the event that our teachers believe that an outside expert can provide useful information regarding practices or strategies to assist a child, we reserve the right to ask for permission to contact outside resources. No outside program or individual will be contacted without parental permission.

The Greenwich Public Preschool Program provides speech and language evaluation and/or development assessment of children attending First Church Preschool. The assessment may be followed up with regular speech and language therapy, if deemed appropriate. These services are offered free of charge through the public schools and may be obtained by speaking with your child's classroom teacher and/or the director.

Plan For Expert Consultation

First Church Preschool has contracted with an early childhood educational consultant, a licensed nurse, a licensed social service consultant, and a licensed dentist in order that they may advise and support our program, staff, and families. Each consultant shall be available for making reviews of pertinent policies and in-service education programs, providing advice regarding relevant problems, and visiting the facilities, staff, and families to consult either individually or as a program seminar. Our consultants are not actual members of our staff but provide services to our program to help enhance our overall quality.

List of our Consultants:

1. Educational Consultant: David Cohen
203-258-0383
davidcohentrumbull@gmail.com
2. Nurse Consultant: TBD – Nurses for Day Care
(844) 438-6332
bill@nursesfordaycare.com
www.nursesfordaycare.com
3. Social Service Consultant: Susan O'Brien, LCSW
203-216-8824
sobriensearch@cs.com
4. Dental Consultant: Greenwich Pediatric Dental Group, L.L.C.
Tel: (203) 422-5437
greenwichkidsdds@aol.com
<http://www.greenwichKIDSdentist.com>

DUAL RESIDENCE FAMILIES

For those children whose parents or guardians reside at separate addresses, First Church Preschool presumes that both parents (and guardians) share joint legal and physical custody of their child. As such, we

will not prohibit either parent from picking up their child from preschool unless a court order is issued directing us to do otherwise. If a court order comes into play, all appropriate paperwork must be presented to and discussed with the director as soon as it is determined. Please keep the office staff and director aware of any changes that we will need to know and follow.

PHOTOGRAPHS / INTERNET – SOCIAL MEDIA

Teachers often take photographs of children for use in the classroom for pedagogical purposes. If you prefer not to have photos taken of your child for these purposes, you will be able to indicate so on a permission form.

Sometimes we take photographs of the children that we feel might lend themselves for advertisement and/or promotional and informational purposes for our program. If we would like to use a photograph that includes your child in it, we will first ask for your written permission before posting or publishing it.

The posting of photos of children, their families, or staff members of the First Church Preschool to any website or social media website without the written permission of all those represented within the photos is expressly forbidden. Comments on discussion threads posted on social media websites may not disclose information of a confidential nature, nor may they make disparaging remarks against any child, family, or staff member in First Church Preschool.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Families are encouraged to be engaged in the classroom and school wide activities in a variety of ways. If you have a talent or interest that you would like to share, please contact your child's classroom teachers or the director. There are additional opportunities to volunteer through the Parent Committee.

The Parent Committee is a group of family volunteers who work together to enrich the experience of First Church Preschool children and their families. The committee provides social events throughout the year such as Harvest Fest and Family DJ Night. In addition, they provide supplemental educational programs and raise funds for school equipment. The Parent Committee also supports the teachers through establishing class parents and organizing teacher appreciation events throughout the school year. The Parent Committee welcomes all parents and their involvement in making First Church Preschool the best place possible for our children!

PLANS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Medical

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional staff will be called in, if necessary, to maintain required ratios.

In the event a child becomes ill while at the Center, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area, usually the director's office, where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times.

Fire

In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the fire exit. Immediately, the group will walk to either the cemetery area or front lawn (Sound Beach and Forest Avenues) area, depending on which side of the building presents the nearest safe egress, until safely away from the building, and line up to take a name-to-face attendance. Teachers will be responsible for taking the sign-in and out records via Brightwheel,

portable first aid kit, cell phone and/or walkie talkie, and emergency files via Brightwheel with them. The director, administrative assistant, or other person in charge will conduct an inventory of the evacuation to ensure that all children are present and accounted for once outside, and again if allowed to re-enter the building. Should it not be possible to return to the building, staff will walk the children to the Perrot Library. Parents will be notified.

Weather

Sometimes, severe or hazardous weather or other emergency situations arise that affect our typical daily schedule. We try our best to make determinations about any changes to our regular schedule by 6 AM. We send out Brightwheel notifications to alert our families of any changes to our schedule as close to that time as possible. You may also check www.connecticut.news12.com on the Internet, or tune into channel 12 on the television, where you can find school closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal announcements for our programs. In the event that we must institute a delayed opening, all morning classes will start at 10:00 AM. In the event of an early dismissal, children should be picked up as soon as possible after the early release is announced, ideally within 30 minutes from the time you are notified of the early dismissal. You may need to enlist someone you have authorized to pick up your child if you cannot get to the school within a 30-minute time frame. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff 18 years or older will remain on the premises with the children until all are picked up.

The following is a list of resources you might refer to for more information during an emergency or hazardous weather situation:

Television stations: Channel 12

Websites: First Church Preschool: www.firstchurchpreschool.org

News 12 Connecticut: www.connecticut.news12.com

In the event of other serious weather emergencies, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. First aid staff will be on hand to administer first aid, as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

Evacuation

In the event that the facility must be evacuated, the children will be walked to the Perrot Library, and families will be notified if this occurs. Advanced contact has been made with the town's Civil Preparedness Unit, adding the Center to their list for emergencies.

During the school year the staff and children practice a safe and orderly evacuation from the building in the event of a fire or other building issue. This is done in a calm, non-threatening, matter-of-fact way so as not to alarm the children. Children exit the building with their teachers and remain on church property while performing practice drills.

ENROLLMENT AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Enrollment

First Church Preschool begins an Open Enrollment period each October 1st for the next school year's enrollment. Families wishing to enroll their child during that time must submit a completed application and the appropriate deposit and application fees. Open enrollment will be conducted on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the total amount of spaces available for a given program are accounted for, a family may request to have their name added to a waiting list in the event that a spot they desire for their child does become available. If a spot opens up in a program in which a wait-listed family wishes to enroll their child, the family must then submit the requisite deposit (and application fee, if not already paid) in order to secure the spot for their child. Application forms are available online, and deposit fees may be paid online by credit card or by check made payable to *First Church Preschool* and submitted either in person or via postal mail, or by calling the preschool office and giving credit card information over the phone.

Classroom placements will generally be completed within a few weeks before the start of the school year. Much careful consideration is put into these placements; factors include class choices (morning or extended day; number of days per week), classroom capacities, previous teacher recommendations for returning children and family surveys. Teacher classroom assignments may vary from year to year and are not determined until after class lists are generated. Families may provide input with respect to your child's placement via email to the Director, however, requests for specific classrooms or teachers are not guaranteed.

Payment Policies

Deposits and Fees

A \$500 deposit fee for all 2- and 3-day programs or a \$1000 deposit fee for all 5-day programs, and a \$35 application fee, all non-refundable, are due at the time of enrollment for all preschool and Pre-K programs in order for a child to be considered officially enrolled and for a spot to be saved for that child. If registering more than one child per family, a deposit and application fee must be paid per each child being enrolled. If a family wishes to enroll a child at a point in time after the initial tuition installment payments become due, then an alternate payment schedule may be established with that family.

Tuition

First Church Preschool uses a Tuition Fee Lock-In system. With Tuition Fee Lock-In, whatever the tuition rates are for our programming for the school year in which a child is initially enrolled, those same rates will apply for as long as he or she remains enrolled in our preschool. For example, if a child is enrolled with us for the first time in a 2s program this school year, his or her family will pay whatever this year's tuition fees are for our 3s programming for that child for the next school year. This will apply to all the subsequent years in which that same child is enrolled in our programming. Current tuition rates are available on our website at <https://firstchurchpreschool.org/tuition-fee-lock-in/>.

Refunds

Once a family has submitted an application, registration and deposit fees, and signed a placement agreement, no part of the deposit payment will be refunded because of absence, failure to continue, or withdrawal of a child from First Church Preschool. Further, unless a family provides written notice to the director that they plan to revoke their child's enrollment prior to the date that the first tuition installment payment is due, families are unconditionally obligated to pay the tuition and fees for the full school year and no portion of such tuition and fees will be refunded or cancelled, notwithstanding their child's absence, withdrawal, or dismissal from First Church Preschool for whatever reason, and notwithstanding any waitlist for the particular program in which their child is hereby registered. In the event a family withdraws before they have paid their tuition in full, then all unpaid tuition and fees will become payable immediately.

Withdrawing A Child

Families must notify the director in writing if they will withdraw a child from enrollment at the preschool for any reason. If possible, the written notification of withdrawal should be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than two weeks before the anticipated date of withdrawal.

Discounts

First Church Preschool offers a tuition discount for families enrolling more than one child concurrently in our programming. Families will pay full tuition for the child enrolled in the program with the highest tuition and receive a 10% discount for each child thereafter enrolled in a program of equal or lesser value.

Children or grandchildren of current, active members of the First Congregational Church, our sponsor, will receive a 10% discount off the total tuition incurred. First Church Preschool must first receive written verification from the First Congregational Church that an enrolled child is indeed a child or grandchild of a current, active member before the discount will be applied. The parent or grandparent must be a current, active member at the time the child is enrolled in order to receive the discount. Families who qualify for the church member discount and who also have enrolled more than one child concurrently will receive a 10% discount off each enrolled child's tuition.

Children of currently employed preschool and church staff members receive a 25% tuition discount, and their grandchildren receive a 10% tuition discount. Preschool and church staff must be employed at the time their child is enrolled in order to receive the discount.

A discount of 5% may be applied if a family who has enrolled during our Open Enrollment period (beginning October 1st) submits their entire tuition obligation for the school year on or before the due date of their first tuition installment payment (January 31st). Families should request the discount at the time they submit the payment in full. Paid-in-full discounts cannot be applied when paid by credit card, only when paid by check.

To Make a Payment

First Church Preschool accepts payment by credit card or checks. Tuition checks should be made payable to "First Church Preschool". They may be mailed to *First Church Preschool at 108 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, CT 06870*. Checks may also be hand delivered to the preschool office.

Late Payments

Families who find themselves unable to keep current with their payment schedule are encouraged to speak with the director and/or administrative assistant as soon as possible so that a financial agreement can be worked out. Reminders will be sent out in advance of when tuition installment payments are due. There will be a 10 business-day grace period from the date the tuition installment payment is due. On the 11th business day after a tuition installment payment is due, if the payment has not been received, a late fee of 1.5% of the total payment due amount will be compounded on a daily basis for up to a maximum of another 10 business days. If payment still has not been received at that point, the child will be withdrawn from the program and vacancy will be offered out to be filled.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available to families in need of partial assistance with tuition. Individual scholarships are intended to be one-time awards, but families may reapply for future academic years. Applicants may be either first-time or returning First Church Preschool families. Applications are reviewed by the Preschool Director and the First Church Preschool Board of Directors. Please contact the Preschool Director for more information on how to apply.

APPENDIX A (Covid Measures)

FIRST CHURCH PRESCHOOL CONTROL MEASURES DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

Currently, our Preschool population does not have access to a Covid-19 vaccine. First Church Preschool continues to function with the goal of keeping our unvaccinated children and staff safe and returning to in-person learning. We acknowledge that there are families who have vaccinated members. However, the children attending our program are not yet qualified for vaccinations. Therefore, FCP continues to function under the guidelines and requirements for unvaccinated individuals. Due to the unvaccinated population in our school, our Covid precautions and policies will remain in effect until further notice.

First Church Preschool follows the Covid-19 guidelines as determined by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, the Greenwich Department of Health and the CDC to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus. These include daily health screenings, classroom design, handwashing practices, individual snacks/lunches, minimizing points of contacts, social distancing where possible in shared spaces, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, wearing face coverings, opening classroom windows and more. Through implementation of these guidelines, we believe all children can explore, learn, and socialize safely.

The following are control measures the school is using to reduce the risk of spreading any infectious disease. Many of these measures have already been in place as part of our health and safety policies and procedures, however, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, additional and heightened precautions have been added and shall remain in place for the foreseeable future.

All Staff

- Follow/Enforce the First Church Preschool Daily Health Screening Measures
- Follow/Enforce the First Church Preschool Illness Policies
- Follow/Enforce the Hand Hygiene Policy

Face Masks

- All staff are required to wear a mask or other cloth material that securely covers their mouth and nose while in the workplace, except to the extent the staff member is using break time to eat or drink.
- In workplace settings where staff are working alone in segregated spaces (i.e., private offices, etc.), employees may remove their masks; however, they shall wear a mask or face covering from the time they enter the building until the time they arrive at their office or workstation and at any time they are leaving their office or workstation and moving around common areas (i.e., in hallways, going to the restroom or break room, etc.).
- Children ages 2 and older are required to wear a face mask while in school as per the CT Office of Early Childhood. Staff members will do their best to assist the child(ren) with safely wearing their masks according to the protocols listed above. Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance, no cloth coverings should be placed on children under 2 years of age

Daily Health Screening

- All children and staff must be checked prior to entering the program for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, and to confirm temperature BELOW 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Staff and children who have a temperature of 100 degrees or above will not be permitted to attend school or work
- All staff and children will be screened for risk as needed throughout the day

All Teachers

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the classroom with CDC approved cleaning and disinfecting solution
- Ensure that all used toys and appropriate classroom materials are cleaned and sanitized daily
- Cover coughs and sneezes and teach and encourage children, when appropriate, to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow

- Dispense of soiled tissues immediately after use

In addition, First Church Preschool implements the following health and safety procedures to help keep our community safe, including:

- Consistent **cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day** for highly touched areas such as door handles, bathrooms and hand railings throughout the building and Nature Classroom.
- **Deep cleaning** of the classrooms and the gym every day utilizing electrostatic sprayers with approved disinfectants.
- **Maintaining daily cleaning logs** to ensure the highest quality of cleanliness as possible.
- **Cleaning all HVAC systems** and installing UV lights in air handling systems; opening classroom windows to provide greater outside air circulation.
- Completing regularly scheduled **annual water testing** in August.
- **Maximizing use of outdoor classroom areas** as much as possible: tents and partitions will be utilized to assist with social distancing.
- Providing **face coverings and other personal protective equipment (PPE)** to staff; training staff how to properly use and discard PPE, social distance, and conduct cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
 - Face coverings will be required for all employees whenever they are within six feet of children.
 - The CT Office of Early Childhood, our licensing agency, requires children ages 2 and older to wear face masks at school. Should this requirement change, First Church Preschool will amend its policies accordingly.
- **Hand washing procedures** will be required at scheduled times throughout the day as detailed in this Handbook. Hand sanitizer will also be made available throughout the building.
- **Health and safety signs** about hygiene, physical distancing, face coverings and cleaning will be posted throughout the building.
- All teachers, staff and children will complete a **daily health screening** before coming to school.
- **Temperature checks** may be taken throughout the day, and if a child's temperature is 100 degrees or above, a parent will be called, and the child will have to be taken home.
- **No outside observers or visitors** (parents, caregivers, etc.) will be allowed in the building without an appointment. Visitors will be required to sign in at the Preschool office and non-parent/guardians will be required to present identification for tracking purposes.

APPENDIX B (FCP School Calendar)

2021-2022 First Church Preschool Calendar

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

8 Visiting Day
9 Orientation
16 Yom Kippur (school closed)

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

11 Columbus Day (school open)
27 Family Conferences (no classes)

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

2 Staff Development (no classes)
11 Veteran's Day (school open)
24-26 Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

20-31 Holiday Recess (school closed)

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

3 Holiday Recess (school closed)
4 School Resumes
17 MLK, Jr. Day (school closed)

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

14-18 Winter Recess (school closed)
21 President's Day (school closed)
22 School Resumes

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

25 Staff Development (no classes)

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

15 Good Friday (school closed)
18-22 Spring Recess (school closed)

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

4 Family Conferences (no classes)
30 Memorial Day (school closed)

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

8 Last Day for 3-Day 3's and 2's
9 Last Day for 5-Day 3's and 2-day 2's
10 Last Day for 4's & Pre-K (Moving Up Day)
30 First Day of Summer Program

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

4 Independence Day (school closed)



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