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**Parent/Student Handbook**

**Palmetto Baptist Preschool**

**Policies and Guidelines**

**Preschool Information:** The name of this program is Palmetto Baptist Preschool. The address is 6344 North Hwy 29, Palmetto, GA 30268. The phone number is 770-463-5231 and email is pbcpreschool@yahoo.com. Our church website is palmettopbaptistchurch.com and our Facebook page is facebook.com/palmettobaptistpreschool.

**Organization:** Palmetto Baptist Preschool is organized and operated by Palmetto Baptist Church. The Weekday Preschool Ministry is an organization of Palmetto Baptist Church and is a part of the church’s KIDS ministry. The operation of this program is subject to all church policies and procedures.

**Administration:** This program shall be administered by the church preschool committee and the director. The committee shall be nominated by the church. The director shall be recommended by the committee and affirmed by the church.

**Registration Process**: Registration will begin on March 1st of each year. Current Palmetto Baptist Church members and students currently enrolled will be given a two-week enrollment period before enrollment is opened to the public. All applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, according to the date the application and registration fees are received in the preschool office. In the event of withdrawal, one month’s notice should be given to avoid a one-month tuition charge. Failure to notify the preschool after 30 days of consecutive absences will result in withdrawal and a monthly tuition charge. Preschool reserves the right to disenroll a child if they seem unable to participate in group experiences. We have classes for 2 years to 4 years of age. Children must be 2, 3, or 4 by September 1st to enroll in the appropriate class, unless special prior arrangements have been made with the child’s parent/legal guardian and the director.

**Enrollment:** The program director shall review and approve, or deny, all applications for enrollment to the Palmetto Baptist Preschool. It is open to all children on a non-discriminatory basis. Physically handicapped children shall be enrolled only with the approval of the director. A child with mild symptoms of a cognitive disability or serious disciplinary problems shall be enrolled only on the recommendation of an appropriate professional. These decisions will be made on an individual basis based on the available staff, appropriate facilities, the appropriateness of our educational and readiness programs, and coordination with any support staff that is needed.

**Fees:** The non-refundable registration fee that is paid at the time of registration includes insurance and supplies. The registration fee for our 2, 3, and 4 year old classes is $85.00. This fee is what holds your child’s spot for the next school year. The activity fee for our 2, 3 and 4 year old classes is $140.00. This fee due at Orientation and covers the cost of our field trips during the year, special events throughout the school year, your child’s school shirt, and other activities that support our curriculum.

**Yearly Tuition:**

2 & 3 Year Olds: $1,650.00 (payable at $165 per month)

4 Year Olds: $1,950.00 (payable at $195 per month)

* Tuition will be due on the first of each month.
* There will be a $5.00 late charge for each day late, if tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month.
* Make checks payable to Palmetto Baptist Preschool.
* Tuition will not be refunded for temporary absences, illnesses, or withdrawal.
* Families that have more than one preschooler enrolled will receive a 10% discount off a second child’s tuition and a 15% discount off a third child’s tuition.
* **The registration fee must accompany the application and is non-refundable.**
* **If an account falls three months behind in tuition payments, the preschooler of the account holder will be asked to leave the program until the entire amount that is delinquent is paid.**

**Operation Information:** Preschool operates on a nine-month school year. There are no classes during the summer months. School begins after Labor Day and ends prior to Memorial Day. School hours for 2 and 3 year olds is 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and for 4 year olds is 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday.

**Drop-off and Pick-up:** Drive through drop-off begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 9:00 a.m for all classes. If you arrive after 9:00 a.m., please park your car and walk your child into the building. Drive through pick-up begins at 12:00 noon and ends at 12:15 p.m. Please be prompt at drop-off and pick-up times. If you need to bring your child before the listed times, please contact the director to coordinate early arrival. **For parents arriving after the times listed for pick-up, there will be a $5.00 late fee.** A child whose parent has not arrived by the end of pick-up time will wait in the director’s office until a parent has arrived.

**Please do not drop off a child unattended! Always wait for a staff member to be present at drop off times!**

Car tags with the children’s name will be provided by the Preschool. Please be sure this name card is displayed on your vehicle window. The BLUE car tag is for parents, and the GREEN car tag is for any other individual listed as an approved pick-up person. We cannot dismiss a child in a vehicle unless the tag is displayed. If a car tag is not displayed, please park and bring your photo ID to pick up your child from the director. Only those listed on the approved transportation form will be allowed to pick up the child. If a change needs to be made to the transportation form, please notify the Director immediately to fill out a new form.

**Field Trips:** Field trips can be a valuable educational aid for preschool children. In order to participate in field trips, students are required to have a parent or adult chaperone accompany them on every field trip throughout the school year. Field trips are a big responsibility for the staff, and we are very conscious of the safety of the children during these trips. The director, or person in charge of the field trip, has a copy of the emergency card with your signed authorization, should there be a need.

**Immunization Form:** An immunization form for all students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten at the preschool must be filled out by your child’s doctor indicating any pertinent information and up-to-date immunization records.

**Illness Policy:** If your child is sick, we ask that you keep your child home with any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours: fever over 100 degrees, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, persistent cough, discolored nasal discharge, or any other contagious symptom. This will allow your child to be more comfortable while sick and prevent any other students from becoming ill. \*\*If the teachers notice any of these symptoms or any abnormal change in behavior, a parent will be notified. If your child is sent home during the school day with any of the symptoms listed above, we kindly ask that you keep your child home the following day to follow the 24-hour symptom free policy.

**Student Attendance:** Please contact the preschool director if your child is to be absent from school for more than two days, regardless of the reason. Please notify the school promptly if your child has a communicable disease/illness so that notices of possible exposure can be sent to the parents of the other children in the class. Please bring in a note stating your child can return to school after any sickness.

**Discipline:** If a situation occurs where discipline is needed, the staff will use positive redirection for each situation. Children will be redirected from negative behavior to another activity while the teacher helps them understand the situation in a positive way. We will follow the 6 Steps to Behavior Management when addressing a situation. The six steps are: 1) Approach calmly. 2) Kneel to the child’s level. 3) Ask what the problem is. 4) Repeat the problem. 5) Talk about the problem calmly. 6) Come to a conclusion together.

**Disruptive Behavior:** If a student’s behavior is consistently disruptive the following procedures will be followed:

* The disruptive behavior will be recorded in an incident report. This document will be completed to record any inappropriate behaviors that directly impact other children, staff members, or the preschool. Two copies of this report will be given to the parent/guardian and will explain the behavior and how the behavior has affected others. The parent/guardian must sign and return **one** copy to the Director the next day. The incident report will also explain how this situation was resolved. The director’s copy of the incident report will be placed in the student’s file.
* If a student has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, the parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the child’s teacher and the Preschool Director.
* If the student’s behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive, and/or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a time to be determined. If the student’s behavior cannot be managed, the student may be removed from the preschool program altogether.

The Palmetto Baptist Preschool staff will be aware of all surroundings within the classroom and outside the classroom to provide a positive and safe environment for the students. If a safety issue arises where a student is injured, the staff will notify the director immediately. Once the director is notified, parents will be notified by phone and in writing. All injuries and safety concerns are documented and kept on file.

**Communication:** Communication between home and school is vital to you and your child. Each month we will send home folders with book orders, tuition envelopes, a newsletter/calendar and any other important notes or letters. When you send in a note or money (other than tuition), please enclose it in an envelope with the teacher’s name and child’s name on it. If you need to reach the director during school hours, please call 770-463-5231.

**Parent Involvement:** Special activities and programs for parents will be held throughout the school year. Private conferences will be scheduled by the teacher as needed. Parents are encouraged to visit the preschool at any time. Please reach out to the director if you would like to visit.

**Parent Confidentiality:** All information submitted to the Palmetto Baptist Preschool regarding children and their families is strictly confidential. No personal information will be given out to any individuals for any reason unless there is a safety concern where the child is involved.

**Accidents or Medical Emergencies:** The staff at Palmetto Baptist Preschool will take all precautions to prevent any accidents or emergencies. However, if a situation does arise, the staff will follow this policy.

* If a minor accident happens to a student, the staff will administer First-Aid and complete an incident report. A copy of the incident report will be sent home to the parent/guardian and another copy will be kept on file at school.
* If a serious accident happens to a student, the staff will call 911 if necessary. The staff will transport the child to the closest emergency room or contact the parent/guardian to pick up the child. An incident report will also be completed and sent home to the parent/guardian and another copy will be kept on file at school.

**Emergency Procedures:** In case of illness or accident, the school will attempt to contact a parent for direction as to treatment. In the event a parent cannot be reached, or if it would be detrimental to the child to delay treatment, using the signed authorization card, the child will be taken to the nearest medical facility deemed appropriate by emergency or medical personnel, unless a specific facility has been authorized by the parent.

**Medications:** The staff at Palmetto Baptist Preschool does not administer medication of any sort to the children in the preschool. If a child needs medication, a parent must come by the school and personally administer the medication.

**Allergies:** If a student has a food allergy or any other allergy that may require medical attention, please notify the director immediately. Changes to your child’s allergy or medical condition form can be made at any time to ensure the safety of all students.

**Potty Training:** Any student enrolled in our 3-year-old or Pre-K class MUST be potty trained. We understand accidents may happen, and we know they will, but students in these classes need to be fully potty trained before enrollment.

**Special Services:** Parents of any child with special needs who has been accepted into the program are required to give written description of any special procedures to be followed in caring for the child. Please see the above section entitled “Enrollment” for further explanations on our procedures.

**Emergency Closing:** Palmetto Baptist Preschool will follow the Coweta County school calendar, other than for announced exceptions. Emergency closing of school due to storms, snow, etc., will follow the same procedure as Coweta County Schools. Informational announcements are broadcasted from local radio stations, local news stations, and will be posted on the Palmetto Baptist Preschool Facebook page at the time of the closing.

If Coweta County Schools are closed, we will be closed. If, at any time, driving conditions are hazardous, let the general rule be, “Do not bring your child to school,” regardless of the decision of the Coweta County Board of Education. If driving conditions threaten to become hazardous during the hours of school, we urge you to come for your child as soon as possible.

**Major Emergencies:** Contingency plans for major emergencies are posted in each room of the preschool. Fire, bomb threat, and tornado drills are held regularly during the school year. Parents on the premises at the time of the drill must participate. If there are building malfunctions that would threaten safety, comfort, or hygiene of our school, including heat, light, or water for over a thirty-minute duration, parents will be notified to pick up their children from our designated safe place. In the event of a bomb threat or gas leak, the same evacuation procedures as used for fire will be in effect. One of the staff members will be designated to take the students to our designated safe placed and call parents to pick up their child.

**Abuse and Neglect Reporting:** Palmetto Baptist Preschool staff will follow all requirements when there are suspicions of child abuse or neglect. All personnel working in the education field are required by law to report any suspicions to Child Protective Services. Documentation will be made and kept on file. Any incident of child abuse or neglect reported in a childcare setting must be reported to the proper authorities.

**Documentation of Legal Status:** If there are any circumstances regarding legal issues with parents, it must be documented and given to the director. These circumstances may include restraining orders, custody/guardianship, power of attorney or court orders. A copy of this type of document must be given to the director immediately. These documents must be clear as to who has permission to remove the child from preschool. Please make sure they are precise to ensure we can enforce these requests.

**Clothing:** Please have your child wear comfortable play clothing that is washable and is appropriate to the weather and season (especially since we go outside to play unless it is extremely cold or raining). Please label coats, sweaters, mittens, etc. with your child’s name. The school cannot be responsible for damages or lost articles or clothing or jewelry. Rubber-soled shoes are needed for playing on playground equipment. We recommend tie or Velcro shoes that stay on feet. Flip flops and sandals sometimes seem to restrict the student’s abilities during outside play time.

Parents of all students are asked to send a change of clothing, including underpants, in a plastic zip-lock bag, labeled with the child’s name on the outside of the bag. These will be kept at the school in case they are needed. Accidents do happen! Please remember to change the clothes as the weather changes. Clothes will be sent home at the end of the year.

**Snack Time:** Each child will need to bring his/her own snack and drink in a lunch box or other container. Please send in only water or juice for their drink. Due to time constraints, please limit snack choices to no more than two items. **Please put the food items in containers that are easy for the students to open themselves and do not require a fork or spoon.**

**Personal Items:** Please keep your child’ personal toys, books, and any other special items at home unless instructed to bring in by the teacher. We know these are important to your child and we do not want anything ruined by being brought in.

**Birthdays:** A birthday is a special day, and we will treat it as such. We will sing to the birthday child and give recognition in their honor. We will have a special surprise for the students celebrating their birthday!

**Holiday Parties:** Parents are asked to help with Holiday parties and other special activities, such as Fall Fun Day, Thanksgiving activities, our Christmas program, Valentine’s party, Easter Egg Hunt, and the end of the year program. Teachers will let parents know in advance what is needed. Be on the lookout in the monthly newsletters.

**School Pictures:** Individual student pictures and class group pictures will be taken in the fall and spring. The price of these pictures is not included in each child’s activity fee.

**School T-Shirts:** School t-shirts will be provided for each child. They are fun to wear, especially on field trips, when each child needs to be easily and quickly identified, and on Spirit Days. The cost is included in the activity fee. Parents are encouraged to express their school spirit by purchasing a preschool t-shirt as well.

**Returned Checks:** If a check is returned to the preschool for insufficient funds or a closed account, the Director will contact the person writing the check to seek payment. Payment in cash is expected in place of the check, all bank fees incurred, plus $25.00. If payment is not made within one week of notification by phone, the Preschool director will send home a letter, which informs the parent there is a ten-day timeframe to have the amount of the check, plus the fees paid. See Preschool Director to set up a payment plan prior to this policy’s enactment.

**Director’s Information:** The director of the Palmetto Baptist Preschool is Andrea Pharis. She has a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education from North Greenville University. She also has a master’s degree in education with a focus on Divergent Learning from Columbia College. She is a former schoolteacher in both South Carolina and Georgia. She was previously the director at a State funded preschool in New Mexico. She is an active member of Palmetto Baptist Church with her family. The director can be reached at the preschool during the hours of 8:15am and 1:00pm Monday through Thursday at 770-463-5231.