



2025 – 2026 Family Handbook

First Presbyterian Bucket School
130 West Miner Street ~ West Chester, PA 19382
610.696.0554
ESTABLISHED 1982

Table of Contents

I. School Overview

Mission

Educational Philosophy

Administrative Staff

2025-2026 Programs and Hours

School Calendar

II. Procedures and Policies

Registration

Enrollment Paperwork

Tuition

Applying for Tuition Aid

Withdrawing Your Child

Termination of Services/Right to Dismiss a Student

Sick and Vacation Days

Attendance

Weather Related Closings/Delays and Early Dismissal

Drop off and Pick Up Procedures

Late Drop Off and Emergencies/Late Pick Up

Multiple Drop Offs/Pick Ups

Photos, Videos, and Social Media

Recess Rules

Anti-Bullying Policy

Students with Special Needs

Reporting of Child Abuse

Confidentiality and Student Records

III. Education and Classroom Life

What to Bring to Preschool

What NOT to Bring

A Typical Morning

Dress
Bathroom and Diapering
Snacks
Lunch
Birthday Celebrations
Scholastic Books
Religion and Mini Worship
Service Learning and Christian Values
Behavior Management

IV. Partnering with Parents

School and Family Communication
Parent/Teacher Conferences
Progress Reports
School Visitors and Volunteers
Preparing Your Child for Success

V. Health and Safety

Healthy Policy
Immunizations
Head Lice
Notice of Exposure and Reporting of Communicable Disease
Medication Authorization
Allergy Policy and Students with Food Allergies
Documentation of Accidents/Incidents/Inappropriate Behaviors
Documentation of Special Health Care Needs
Emergency Drills
Emergency Plan

VI. Supporting Our School

I. School Overview

Mission

As a ministry of First Presbyterian Church of West Chester, it is our mission to provide a positive preschool experience in a safe and loving Christian environment, where a child can thrive, gain a love of learning, and cultivate a sense of self.

We value a child's natural curiosity about the world, embrace creativity, and encourage independence. Our school is built on a community of strong relationships among students, families, teachers, our church, and the local community.

Educational Philosophy

At The Bucket School, we pride ourselves on small class sizes, development of Christian values, and a play-based learning philosophy to help young children build a solid foundation to become lifelong learners. Our curriculum is aimed at nurturing the whole child through developmentally appropriate, hands-on thematic units. It is our goal to foster a child's growth in mind and spirit – “to fill our buckets,” so to speak, with knowledge, love, joy, generosity, and wonder. Our programs are grounded in the Pennsylvania Standards for Early Learning and utilize multisensory curricula such as Foundations and Handwriting Without Tears to help prepare young learners for the next step beyond our school. Specials such as music, library, PE class, and mini worship offer enriching opportunities to gain developmental skills in an engaging way.

Administrative Staff

Mrs. Jennifer Rosenberg, Preschool Director jrosenberg@firstpreswc.com, 610.696.0554 x121

Mrs. Laura Szilier, Assistant Director, lszilier@firstpreswc.com

2025-2026 Programs and Hours of Operation

The Bucket School provides educational programs for children ages 2.7 years through age 5. Each program supports our mission and educational philosophy while promoting developmentally appropriate skills and milestones.

2025-2026 Programs:

3 day 2s (M/W/F) & 2-day 2s (T/Th) & 5-day 2s (M/W/F & T/Th) - 9:15 to 11:45

3-day 3s (M/W/F) & 2-day 3s (T/Th) & 5-day 3s (M/W/F & T/Th) – 9:30 to 12:00

2-day Pre-Kindergarten (T/Th) - 9:00-2:00

3-day Pre-Kindergarten (M/W/F) & 4-day Pre-Kindergarten (M/T/W/F) – 9:00 to 12:00

READ/STEAM Enrichment (Th) – 9:00 to 12:00

Combining PreK classes for a 5-day PreK experience is possible.

Extracurricular Activities:

Included in our morning programming and tuition are the following extracurricular activities: mini worship in the sanctuary (once per month), music (once per month), library lessons/book exchange (every week), and PE (every week).

Afternoon Lunch Bunch & Enrichment:

Beyond our morning programs, The Bucket School offers lunch bunch M/T/W/F from 12:00 – 1:00, and enrichment through 2:00. Students in our 3s and PreK programs can attend lunch and enrichment if they are fully potty trained. Additional registration for afternoon lunch bunch and enrichment is necessary. Lunch is brought to school from home.

School Calendar

The Bucket School generally follows the West Chester Area School District calendar, with a few exceptions. To view our school's full calendar, please visit our website under forms and newsletters (www.firstpreswc.com/forms-and-newsletters).

II. Procedures and Policies

Registration

Families seeking admission for their child(ren) to The Bucket School must submit an application form, found on our website, and \$150.00 for the first child and \$100 for the second child with the family cap being \$250 (non-refundable) application fee. Priority is given to returning families, siblings of students, and children of church members.

Wait list policy:

If a program's capacity is met, the admission application will be placed on a wait list. Notification of wait list status will be communicated via email. When a space in our school's program becomes available, applications will be reviewed in the order they were received.

Non-discrimination policy:

The Bucket School of First Presbyterian Church of West Chester does not discriminate in the administration of educational programs, admission, financial aid, or employment practices based on race, color, sex, age, religion, marital status, socio-economic status, disability, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, or citizenship.

Enrollment Paperwork

The following required forms for enrollment **MUST** be on file at the school no later than August 1st:

1. *Parent Handbook Acknowledgement (submitted in the Permission form)*
2. *Permission Forms (submitted online)*
3. *Signed bathroom policy form (can be downloaded from our website)*
4. *Immunizations Records (scanned, mailed or dropped off at the school)*
5. *Emergency Medical Plan for allergies and/or asthma, if applicable (can be downloaded from our website)*

Tuition

Tuition is payable in advance of services rendered. The first tuition payment is due by **June 9th**. Monthly tuition is due on or before your child's first school day of each month. Tuition is subject to a late fee, and repeated failure to pay tuition by the due date may result in termination of services. Checks can be written out to First Presbyterian Church. Please send checks in your child's folder. To pay by credit card, please visit

<https://www.shelbygiving.com/app/giving/firstpres> and select Preschool Tuition under "fund."

All tuition and fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change.

Discounts: *The Bucket School provides a 2% discount for advance payment of the full tuition amount, made payable by June 9, 2025. A 5% discount is given to the younger sibling/s attending the school.*

Applying for Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance is available to those families that may not otherwise be able to afford private preschool or for those that are experiencing temporary hardships. Please speak with the director if you are interested in learning more about tuition assistance. Since funds are limited, all applications for assistance must be received by May 15, 2025.

Withdrawing Your Child

If you withdraw your child's enrollment from The Bucket School, after the start of the school year, you forfeit your registration fee and any tuition payments made. You will be held responsible for your child's yearly tuition except in extenuating circumstances such as moving out of town.

Termination of Services/Right to Dismiss a Child

To create a safe and respectful environment for all children and teachers, The Bucket School reserves the right to unenroll any child as deemed necessary or appropriate at any time, with or without notice. Termination might be due to (but not limited to):

1. Delinquent payment of more than 2 months and after receiving notice.
2. Failure on the part of the parents to cooperate with the staff, the policies and/or the procedures of the Preschool and failure to acknowledge communication or communicate with teachers and/or administration.
3. Three (3) incident reports during the school year of inappropriate behavior are filed. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to physical or verbal abuse of any person or property.
 - Parents/Guardians are informed of each occurrence that requires an incident report to be written up.
 - After two incident reports, a conference will be held to discuss a behavior management plan, ways to support the child, and consequences if a resolution is not found.
4. Inability to meet the child's needs or behavior that requires more attention than our adult/child ratios allow (the child takes more than their fair share of the teachers' attention or requires one on one assistance from a teacher for the majority of the day), or excessive separation anxiety.

In the event that The Bucket School would need to terminate a child's enrollment, a refund will be offered pro rata for the time not attended in the class.

Sick Days and Vacations

If your child needs to miss school due to illness or for any other reason, please send an email to your child's teachers with a copy to the director. Please note that tuition is not adjusted for absences, sick days, or planned vacations.

Attendance

For optimal learning and socialization, regular and punctual attendance is critical. The first fifteen minutes of the preschool day are designed to help the child transition smoothly into the activities for the day. **Due to the nature of our carline, we need to know in advance if your child will not be attending school for the day.** Our teachers wait for everyone to arrive before heading to their classroom, so it is important for us to know who to expect each morning. Please email the teachers, with a copy to the director, if your child will not be in school due to illness, vacation, or other reason. It is helpful to receive this information at least 15 minutes before your child's start time.

Weather-Related School Closings/Delays & Early Dismissals

If WCASD (West Chester Area School District) has a snow day or virtual day due to weather, The Bucket School will be closed. If WCASD has a 2-hour delay, our programs will be delayed by 1 hour but end at the regular time. If WCASD schools dismiss early due to weather, parents will be contacted and expected to pick their child up at the announced closing time.

If we need to have a delayed opening, or close school due to inclement weather, we will provide that information in the following 2 ways:

- An email sent to parents.
- A post on our school's Facebook and Instagram pages.

Drop Off/Pick Up

General Instructions:

1. Please remain in your car unless otherwise requested by a teacher.
2. Put your flashers/blinkers on while waiting.
3. A teacher will help your child in and out of his or her car seat.
4. If possible, please have your child's car seat positioned on the passenger side of the car.

5. Please refrain from cell phone use while you are dropping off or picking up. We have had some fender benders as a result of cell phone use. Please use your best judgement.
6. Please notify us by a note in your child's folder or by email if someone different is going to be picking up your child after school. We will not send a child home with anyone else unless we have a written note from you, or you have personally spoken to the teacher or Director (voice mail messages will NOT be honored as verbal permission). We understand that emergencies arise during the school day, so in this case, please contact the director and/or teachers via an email.
7. If your child is riding in a carpool, please email the Director as to which children will be riding in the carpool, and who will be providing transportation.
8. Please display your child's name sign, or if car-pooling, have the children's name signs on the sun visor or hanging from the rear-view mirror of the vehicle. We cannot see the name sign laying on the dashboard. We request you continue to do so throughout the entire year. This will assist the teachers in keeping the car line moving, especially if a substitute teacher is assisting.
9. Do not cut into line by pulling in front of the cars already waiting. We see the order of cars as they arrive and that is the order we call the children. When you pull to the front of the line, it does not allow the other cars to pull forward.
10. When waiting, if a space opens up in front of you, please pull forward. This keeps the line moving.
11. If a car is parked across from the church allow enough space for cars to get around you.
12. Drop off and pick up time is not the time for your child to practice working the seat belt. The teachers will buckle your child into the car.
13. Please be patient. If we all work together, drop off and pick up times go much more smoothly, and we can ensure the safety of our children.
14. When dropping off on S. Darlington St., if there is not a spot for you to pull into, please drive around the block. The Bucket School is very lucky the Borough allows our carline and blocking traffic looks bad on the school.
15. Always follow the directions of the teacher holding the stop sign at the intersection of S. Darlington St. and Hemlock Alley.

Classroom Specific Instructions:

The following sections contain our Drop-Off/Pick-Up Protocol by Program. This has been developed in cooperation with local residents and the police department to maintain safety and traffic flow.

IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, THAT WE STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING PROTOCOL.

Pre-K Classes:

These children will enter the building using the door closest to the intersection of S. Darlington and Miner Streets. Walkers will meet outside of the gated area. Pull all the way up to the

mailbox unless cars are parked across the street. Please leave enough room for other cars to go around you.

Drop Off/ Pick Up on S. Darlington Street.

- **Do not arrive too early.** If you sit there for a period of time you are parking illegally and can be ticketed. **Be sure to put your flashers on while waiting.**
- **Do not unhook your child's car seat until the car door is opened.** A staff member will help your child out of the car.
- **When pulling up to the curb,** please pull all the way up to the mailbox.
- **Do not block the alley while waiting at pickup.** Parents of the 3's classes are trying to cross S. Darlington Street.
- **Do not stop and wait on the block of S. Darlington south of the church.** You will block traffic. Instead, circle the block. You can be ticketed if stopped on that block.
- Follow the directions of the teacher with the STOP sign.

All Other Classes and Lunch Bunch & Enrichment:

These groups of children enter through the alley door on Darlington Street (door closest to Hemlock Alley). Please come down Hemlock Alley via Church Street. A staff member will greet you at the corner of Hemlock and S. Darlington. Walkers will meet outside of that same door.

Drop Off/ Pick Up on Hemlock Alley.

- **Do not arrive too early.** If someone needs to get through the alley, you must move. This alley is used by residents of West Chester. There is private parking along it. The neighbors have been informed of our drop off and pick up times and work with us to let us use the alley during our designated times.
- **Do not unhook your child's car seat until the car door is opened.** A staff member will help your child out of the car.
- **You may turn right on to S. Darlington or continue across on Hemlock Alley, after you have dropped your child off with a staff member.** It is recommended to go straight across S. Darlington.

CARLINE BEGINS AT THE START TIME OF YOUR CHILD'S PROGRAM

Late Drop-Off & Emergencies/Late Pick-Up

Drop off:

Doors will be open for 10 minutes past the starting time for your child's class as children arrive. The teachers will gather the children in our Social Hall and wait for all the students before going to the classroom. After 10 minutes, the doors will close. We understand that on occasion you may run behind schedule or hit morning traffic; however, due to multiple classes/carlins, we MUST remain on a schedule. On the rare occasion that you should arrive 10 minutes after your child's start time, you may drop off in the alley with the 2s at 9:15am or the 3s line at 9:30am. If you are later than the 9:30am drop off, you must find parking and walk your child to the main entrance of The Bucket School (on W. Miner St. where the ramp is located; you will see a sign for The Bucket School; note this is a different entrance than where drop off normally takes place) and the receptionist will call down to the director. NO EXCEPTIONS. If your child is consistently late to school, we reserve the right to not accept your child after the designated drop off time as it can be disruptive to the classroom learning environment.

If your child has a planned doctor's appointment and you need to arrive late to school, please email your child's teacher and copy the director with the date of your appointment and the expected arrival time at school for the day.

Emergencies:

We understand that emergencies occasionally arise. If this happens and you are unable to pick up your child at his/her designated time, email the Director and your child's teachers **as soon as possible**.

Pick Up:

Your child should be picked up promptly. There is a \$10 late fee assessed after 10 minutes with an additional \$1 per minute fee thereafter.

Multiple Drop Offs/Pick Ups

Families with multiple children can drop off all children with the child who is scheduled to arrive first. They will be given time to play while they wait for the rest of their class to arrive. We will also hold the 2-year-old siblings until 12pm to be picked up with their older siblings.

Photos, Videos, and Social Media

At the time of enrollment, parents are asked to authorize their child's photos and video with the school. Students who have permission for photography may receive photo updates about their child's day from their teacher. Please note that The Bucket School has given our staff permission to use *personal cell phones for classroom photography*. The Bucket School also makes use of photographs in promotional materials such as flyers and brochures and uses photographs and videos in social media.

Recess Rules

Fighting and/or violent games or play is not permitted during recess. Students should use equipment safely and appropriately. A request not to participate in outdoor recess will only be permitted due to health reasons and requires a note from a physician.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Experiences during the early childhood years are important building blocks to help children develop skills that enable them to form healthy friendships and learn to reduce aggressive behaviors such as bullying. Our curriculum and teacher modeling of pro-social skills such as sharing, helping, and including others, is intended to help prevent bullying from occurring, reoccurring, or intensifying at school.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

It can be:

- PHYSICAL - child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.
- VERBAL - Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling.
- EMOTIONAL - A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities or play with those they believe to be their friends.

AS A PARENT:

- a) Look for unusual behavior in your child. For example, he/she may suddenly not wish to attend school, or he/she may regularly say that they feel ill.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Inquire how his/her day has gone and who he/she has spent their time with.
- c) If your child encounters any problems related to bullying, please notify your child's teacher and the director. Your complaint will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will follow as soon as possible.
- d) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. Tell him/her to ask for help and to tell any adult as soon as possible so the incident can be dealt with effectively.

Consequences for Violation of the Anti-Bullying Policy:

Bully behavior will not be tolerated. Depending on the severity and nature of the incident, the school will take one or more of the following steps when bullying occurs:

- **Intervention, Warning, and Redirection:** A teacher will ensure that the immediate behavior stops and reinforce to the student who is doing the bullying, that bullying will not be tolerated. During this meeting with the student, the staff member will redirect the student and come up with a plan for success should they find themselves in a similar situation in the future.
- **Notification of Parents:** The director will notify the parents of the students involved. The parents might be asked to meet with the director or other members of the staff, including the student's teacher.
- **Resolution with the Target of the Bullying:** Depending upon the nature of the incident, the students and/or parents involved may meet to help resolve the problem and ensure it does not happen again.
- **Consequences:** The student who is bullying may lose school privileges or in cases of severe or repeated bullying, the student may be terminated from The Bucket School.

Students with Special Needs

We make reasonable accommodations for all children who can safely participate in a school setting. We review each child's needs on a case-by-case basis. Please discuss your child's needs with the director and your child's teacher. If applicable, we request a copy of your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or similar document for inclusion in the student's file. If your child qualifies for support through early intervention or the intermediate unit, those services may be conducted at our school. Please note, our school is located in Chester County. Any services that are being received at the school through the county must be communicated first to the director.

Reporting of Child Abuse

All staff are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Human Services.

**CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE, Dept. of Human
Services 1-800-932-0313**

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

Confidentiality and Student Records

All information in a student's file, including personal information, is privileged and confidential. Access to records is only available to those directly involved in your child's care. All others requesting access to a student's file must obtain written approval from you. Parents and guardians may have access to their child's records at reasonable times upon request. If you require a copy of your child's records, an administrative fee may be charged.

III. Education and Classroom Life

What to Bring to Preschool

Below is a checklist of items that your child should bring to school and when:

- A large bucket with your child's name on it, not a sand pail (daily)
- Labeled water bottle and/or small cup without a lid (daily – teacher will specify which)
- Class folder (daily)
- Lunch, if staying (daily)
- Completed forms, tuition checks, notes about pick up (as needed)
- Extra sets of clothing, labeled in a zip lock bag (beginning of the school year and as requested by teachers; please make sure to send a fall/spring and winter outfit)
- Diapers and wipes (2s only - beginning of the school year and as requested by teachers)

What NOT to Bring to School

We ask that you do not send your child to school with any of the following:

- ✓ Weapons of any kind
- ✓ Personal belongings, jewelry or toys
- ✓ Pacifiers

At the beginning of the school year, we understand that some children may need personal belongings for comfort and to help with the transition to school. If a child does bring a personal toy or "lovie" to class, we are NOT responsible for any damage or loss of personal belongings.

A Typical Morning

Our daily routine involves such things as:

Circle Time – calendar activities, pledge, songs/fingerplays, weather

Play Centers - purposeful play and active, self-directed exploration in the classroom's play areas such as the math center, library center, and dramatic play area.

Free Play and Recess – unstructured play time indoors or outdoors that helps to build motor skills.

Snack – a time to share in conversation and gather to eat together.

Academic Readiness – structured large and small group lessons in handwriting, alphabet, science and math activities.

Arts/Crafts and Sensory Exploration – a time to foster creativity and explore materials with our senses.

Specials – mini worship, Physical Education, music, and library/book exchange.

Dress

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and sneakers. No boots (snow or rain). It is too hard for small children to navigate the classrooms and play areas with boots on. We do not go outside during inclement weather. Daily activities include active and messy play, and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. The child's name should be placed on all outdoor clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all the proper possessions and clothes.

We value time spent outdoors. We make every attempt for children to go outside daily, except in extreme cold, heat, or rain. It is expected that you will send your child to school dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the weather and outdoor play.

We also encourage you to send children in clothing that makes diapering easy and encourages independence in the bathroom. We recommend pants that have elastic, not buttons, leggings instead of tights and no one piece outfits, like overalls.

Extra sets of clothing, including underwear, should be provided to the school in a zip lock labeled bag.

All families are required to sign our bathroom policy form.

Bathroom/Diapering/Bathroom Accidents

Children may use the bathroom whenever they need to and we stress the importance of good hygiene, hand washing, etc.

We do ask that you encourage your child to use the bathroom before leaving home, a good habit no matter where you are going!

For participation in our two-year old programs, children are not required to be toilet trained but are encouraged to be in the process of being toilet trained. When your child shows interest in toileting, you and our teachers will discuss how to work together to encourage toilet learning.

For admittance into our 3s and PreK programs, students are required to be independent in the bathroom. Independence in the bathroom includes being able to pull up and down pants, wiping themselves, flushing and hand washing. Please encourage good practices at home.

Teachers in the 3s and PreK are permitted to assist toilet trained children with clothing if needed, but we encourage independence, especially in the PreK classroom. The teachers are not permitted to wipe children nor change accidents that include bowel movements. If a child in the 3s or PreK has a bowel movement accident, you will be called to either come and change your child and return them to class or take them home for the remainder of the day. If a child in the 3s or PreK class has a wet accident, we will assist with changing.

Snacks

A daily snack is provided by the school. We are nut free at snack time, but we do allow any kind of food at Lunch Bunch. If your child has food allergies, please send a snack to school in their bucket each school day.

Lunch

If your child is staying for Lunch Bunch (3s and PreK programs), lunch must be provided by parents from home. **Please be sure that your child's lunchbox is clearly labeled so there is no confusion!** We do not heat or reheat food. Food is also kept in the buckets for the morning. We suggest an ice pack in the lunch box. Staff will assist children with unwrapping items, if needed. Please be cautious to slice hot dogs and grapes lengthwise to prevent choking.

Birthday Celebrations

We would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school and your child's teachers will make this day feel special. If you would like to send in food, please make arrangements with your child's teachers. They will let you know what is appropriate to bring in. We reserve the right to change this policy based on food allergies and special needs at school or in a particular classroom.

In honor of your child's birthday, you may elect to donate a book to the school library. A birthday book label will be placed inside the book to honor your child.

Scholastic Books

Brochures are sent home throughout the year. Participation is strictly optional. The school receives bonus points from Scholastic that we use to buy new books, so it's a great way to build our library and yours!

Religion and Mini-Worship

Mini-worship classes are held on a monthly basis and led by the Director of Faith Formation or one of the Pastors at the church. Our worship services include prayer, singing, and a bible story or value. Mini worship services are held in the sanctuary. Our preschool is open to children and families of any religion – you need not be of the Presbyterian faith to enroll in our school.

Service-Learning Projects and Christian Values

Our school participates in service-learning projects that help students learn Christian values and about the world beyond their preschool classroom. Please see the school calendar and monthly newsletter and the classroom monthly calendar and newsletter to learn more about the project for the month. Participation is completely voluntary.

Classroom Behavior Management

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective teachers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development.

Our staff will use **only** positive guidance techniques to help prevent and respond to misbehavior. Individual, “public” behavior management charts will not be used.

Below are some useful ways that our staff has been trained to respond to misbehavior:

- ✓ **Redirection**
For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."
- ✓ **Logical consequences**
For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.
- ✓ **Participate in the solution**
For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please come apologize and help me make him feel better."
- ✓ **“Take a break” or “Calm down chair”**
In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to “take a break” or sit in the “calm down chair.” This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the calm down chair. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go to the calm down chair. I will talk to you when you are ready."

Corporal punishment is not considered an accepted method of dealing with young children’s behavior. Children will not be hit, slapped, or spanked in any manner while attending The Bucket School.

If behavior problems persist, the parent is asked to a conference to discuss what may be helpful in motivating the child to behave in an acceptable way. It may be suggested that the child be involved in a behavior modification program, with the parent having the option of being involved in the process as well.

IV. Partnering with Parents

School and Family Communication

The Bucket School values open lines of communication with parents and keeping them informed about what children are learning in the classroom. We promote close communication between our staff and families through in the following ways:

- By responding to questions promptly, within 48 hours.
- Volunteering opportunities and opportunities to participate in special events.
- Parent/teacher conferences and two written progress reports per year.
- Monthly newsletters published by the school will go home in the bucket.

- Monthly calendars and newsletters describing the planned activities and specials for the classroom (sent home by the teacher). Please read these to know your child's schedule and any classroom happenings.
- Written communication sent home in student folders or via email.

If you have questions about your child's development or progress in class, please schedule a time with your child's teachers to discuss them. **Our teachers cannot engage in these conversations during drop off or pick up times.** We also ask you not to engage teachers in conversations regarding other children, as staff are expected to keep such matters confidential.

If a parent emails a teacher a non-emergency related question, please make note that teachers are given a 48-hour window to respond. For any sensitive communications, please copy the director on your email. If you have any concerns about your child's teachers, please feel free to contact the director.

Assessment and Parent/Teacher Conferences

For the 2025-2026 school year, conferences will take place in February on Thursday, February 12th and Friday, February 13th. If it is your child's conference day, there will be no programming for students on that day. A conference sign up will be coordinated by your child's teachers.

Progress Reports

Teachers conduct ongoing, formative assessments to help plan for their instruction and meet children where they are in their learning and development. Twice per year teachers complete written progress reports that summarize your child's milestones and progress in meeting the educational goals of our programs. These reports are sent home and kept in your child's record. If a teacher has a concern about a child's development and progress, we may request a special conference to discuss your child's needs and a plan to support your child at school.

School Visitors and Volunteers

We welcome school volunteers and visitors. If you will be volunteering at our school on a regular basis, you must provide child abuse and criminal background clearances. In addition, if you have not lived in Pennsylvania for 10 years, you must provide FBI fingerprinting results to the school.

All visitors and volunteers at the school must report to the main church office to sign in and out.

Preparing Your Child For Success

It is important to foster good habits at home. Young children especially benefit greatly from having structure and routine in their lives.

Some suggestions to help prepare your child for success in school:

- Establish a regular bedtime to assure maximum rest
- Provide a healthy breakfast each morning
- Read and play games together
- Talk to your child and listen and respond.

V. Health and Safety

Health Policy

Our priority at The Bucket School is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. Please keep your child at home when they are sick. Children may not attend classes if they are not well enough to participate in normal school activities, including playground activities, if they present symptoms of a contagious illness, or if they have been diagnosed by a physician as having a contagious illness.

Here are some guidelines for when to keep your child at home.

1. If your child has had a fever or vomited, he/she must stay home from school until they have had no symptoms for a 48-hour period.
2. No child who arrives noticeably ill, with a rash, or with a fever shall be admitted to class for that day. This is a common courtesy due to each family. Please ask yourself whether you would want your child to be in a room with another child having the same symptoms. If the answer is “no,” you should keep your child at home that day as a courtesy to the other families.
3. If your child tests positive for Covid, please follow the advice of your doctor as to when it is safe to return to school.
4. Please notify us immediately of any communicable diseases (i.e. chicken pox, measles, pertussis, etc.). If a child contracts a communicable disease, and exposes other children, upon receiving such information, we will notify the parents as soon as possible. The sick child will not

be allowed to return to school until the contagion period has passed and cleared by the child's physician. No names will be revealed.

5. Please let us know if your child will not be in school by emailing the teachers and director. This will be helpful to the teachers, so they do not wait for your child and take away precious learning time.

6. The children are encouraged and helped to keep themselves clean. Classrooms have a child sized toilet and sink so children can receive age-appropriate guidance in personal hygiene.

7. Teaching staff does NOT administer medication to students. Exceptions are an Epi-pen or asthma inhalers that have been supplied for emergencies.

Children will be sent home as soon as possible if they become ill while at school. In addition, if your child presents an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the director), or an illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom, the child will be sent home. Students should be picked up as soon as possible. A child who becomes ill at school will be removed from the classroom to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease.

In the event of significant illness spreading through the school, the director will make the final decision regarding when a child may return to school, in order to help minimize the spread of infection. The Bucket School reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

Immunizations

The Bucket School complies with the health and immunization regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Private Academic Preschools and must keep immunization records on file for every enrolled child. Families opposed to immunizations due to religious or moral beliefs must sign a waiver indicating their objection.

Head Lice

If you find head lice on your child, notify the director and keep your child at home until he/she has been treated. If head lice are found on a child at school, the parent will be called to pick up their child for treatment at home. A child cannot return to school if they continue to have live lice. Children need to be cleared by a note from the doctor.

Notification of an Exposure and Reporting of a Communicable Disease

If a child or staff member is found to have a communicable disease, families will receive an email notification of the illness and be reported to the health department, if necessary.

Medication Authorization

Staff may NOT administer medication to any child, with the exception of emergency medications. Students who have emergency medications (such as Epi-Pens, rescue inhalers) must have a signed emergency action plan on file at the school from their physician. Any staff member who has been trained in the administration of these emergency medications MAY administer them in an emergency situation.

Allergy Policy and Students with Food Allergies

The Bucket School strives to create a healthy and safe learning environment for all students and is accommodating to children with life-threatening illnesses or food allergies. Our food allergy policy states:

- The Bucket school is a nut-aware school, but we are not nut free. Our snack list does not contain items with nuts.
- Parents of children with allergies should send a snack in the bucket each day that is safe for their child.
- Students with food allergies will not be allowed to eat any food not specifically supplied or approved by his/her parent.
- Food sharing is not allowed.
- Children and staff must wash hands, before and after eating.
- Tables will be cleaned after snack and lunch.

Emergency medications MUST travel with a student on field trips, any walking excursions around the church grounds, as well as to any events in the church.

All staff MUST be trained in the administration of emergency medications and signs/symptoms of an allergic reaction.

In our lunchrooms, lists of children with food allergies will be located in a public yet discrete location known by the staff. Lunch bunch monitors will closely monitor children with food allergies and make accommodations for seating, if necessary.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOOD ALLERGY POLICY MAY BE UPDATED TO ACCOMMODATE CHILDREN WITH EXTREME, LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES AS IT IS A PRIORITY TO CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL.

Documentation of Accidents/Incidents/Inappropriate Behavior

Staff members shall document all accidents and incidents that occur using an accident/illness/inappropriate behavior report. If the injury is serious, a parent will be notified before pick-up. All accident/incident reports are placed in the child's permanent file.

In the case of a true emergency, 911 will be called.

Documentation of Special Health Care Needs

An Individualized Health Plan and/or Emergency Action Plan will be on file for any child or staff member with special health care needs (e.g., seizures, food allergies, diabetes, etc.). A copy of the plan will be kept in the classroom binder. All staff working in the classroom or with the child MUST familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's or staff member's specific health care needs.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted throughout the school year and will be communicated to families. Lock-down drills are conducted twice per school year.

Emergency Plan

All staff are trained in the school's emergency plan and CPR/first aid. The emergency plan is posted in every classroom and reviewed annually.

In the event of an emergency at the school, parents will be notified via a mass text and/or email (if possible).

VI. Supporting Our School

Families can support The Bucket School in several ways. We appreciate donations of snacks, children's books, Amazon registry items, and monetary donations. We also appreciate families attending school functions.

Non-discrimination policy:

The Bucket School does not discriminate in the administration of educational programs, admission, financial aid, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, marital status, socio-economic status, disability, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, or citizenship.

Changes to the family handbook:

The Bucket School reserves the right to unilaterally amend, change, modify, delete, replace or add to the policies in this document, or to any other school policies or procedures, at any time, with or without prior notice. Such changes will be communicated in a timely manner.