

Parent(s):

Thank you for choosing Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy for your child's preschool education and care. We are excited to be a part of your child's development and look forward to working with you to establish a positive support network for your child. The church and its ministries also work hand-in-hand with the academy to provide additional support for our staff and programs, as well as you the parent.

Today we continue to strive to give every child at our academy the loving care and guidance that children need in their early formative years. All of us understand that a child's first few years are very important, so our goal is to support them with their mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual growth. We offer developmentally appropriate curriculum and create a classroom community in which children are encouraged to work and play together to have a positive early childhood experience.

Parents are encouraged to visit, ask questions, and make suggestions. We are partners in care for your children. Trust, respect, and understanding are vital for all of us to cultivate your child through many successful years at the academy. The best assurance for the success of your child's experience with us is the close cooperation between parents and staff.

The following PARENT HANDBOOK provides thorough information about our policies and procedures. It is an excellent resource.

As a mother, educator, and Director of the academy since 2003, I understand the desire for a caring, loving, nurturing environment for your children. I am proud that everyone at the academy continually works to learn something new to cultivate ourselves and provide better education services. My door is always open and I invite each parent to come talk to me for any reason. May God bless you and your family.



Renee Henry





Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy

PARENT HANDBOOK **January 2019**



*“Train up a child in the way they should go,
and when they are old, they will not
depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Parent Handbook is intended for the use of parents and families of the Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy. Its contents may not be photocopied or used in any other publication without our consent.

A. State Licensing

The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services of the State of Texas license Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy. We undergo regular inspections by this agency and by the Harris County Health Department and the local Fire Marshall. We follow state and federal guidelines in all the prescribed areas of health and safety standards.

Current and past inspection reports are available online at www.dfps.state.tx.us or on our information board located in the hall between the school offices.

Important State Numbers

Child Abuse Hotline: 800-252-5400

Child Protective Services: 713-526-5701

Gang Free Zone

Texas Penal Code: Any area within 1000 feet of this childcare center is a Gang Free Zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties and will be prosecuted.

B. Academy Background

After careful deliberation, preparation, and prayer, Spring Branch Presbyterian Church established the Academy to meet the community's need for quality childcare and preschool education. Having opened in 1971, the Academy enjoys a fine reputation for being a wonderful place for children to grow and learn.

The Academy is under the full sponsorship and authority of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church and operates under the policies and guidelines of the church and its preschool ministry. A church-appointed Academy Board of dedicated volunteers provides guidance in the administration of the Academy. These volunteers are active members of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church who have interest and expertise in early child development, business, and/or human resource management. The Board meets monthly to assist in creating and implementing specific procedures and policies for the Academy. The Academy Director supervises the daily operation of the Academy

and is a strong Christian leader with education, training, and experience in early child development, business and human resource management.

The parents, their employer, or other applicable agencies pay monthly tuition. The Academy is a non-profit childcare and preschool educational organization. Spring Branch Presbyterian Church sponsors the program as part of its weekday ministries.

C. Our Purpose and Mission

- Care for children and encourage development of the whole child, physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually
- Provide an excellent Christian educational experience for young children
- Provide ministry to the families who have children in the Academy through the entire staff and ministries of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church

The Academy is designed to provide a safe, loving, and nurturing environment where children learn through play. Our program is based upon principles of growth and development, which provide guidelines for age-appropriate activities suited to the needs and abilities of the individual child. We view each child as a special gift from God, uniquely created, deserving of our respect, care, and guidance. We hope to foster a positive self-image as well as develop independence and self-reliance in each child. To accomplish these goals, we use the Wee Learn Curriculum, Mother Goose Time and High Reach Learning, whose writers and editors are leaders and experts in the field of early childhood education.

Working hand in hand with the parents of the children enrolled with us, we strive to provide a warm, loving and responsive child-centered environment. Through careful lesson planning, our teaching staff offers a number of learning experiences each day to enhance the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual growth of the child. We endeavor to introduce the child to the world God made through observation of the natural world and through hands-on adventures. Our curriculum includes foundational teachings about God and Jesus, incorporating Bible stories and Bible thoughts and verses. Church members and staff lead chapel.

In addition to our wonderful teachers and curriculum, the academy includes many extracurricular activities - for example Spanish, music, and a movement program. The Academy also offers several additional parent paid activities. The academy strives to offer high quality

programs. Please consult the front desk for a current list of programs and activities.

Our Mission

Caring for children in a nurturing environment where children can learn and grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Touching lives with the love of Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Building many families through our child care ministry.

D. Opportunities Offered

- The opportunity to be happy and accepted. This is achieved through a warm and caring atmosphere, which fosters growth and a positive self-concept.
- The opportunity to be challenged. Activities and curriculum are provided that lead to problem solving and skill building in all areas of development.
- The opportunity to be creative. Materials and guidance are provided so that your child might develop his/her individual talents to their fullest potential.
- The opportunity to experience success. Activities are provided that are suited to your child's interests and abilities.
- The opportunity to be prepared. The Academy provides a solid foundation for future schooling and personal growth.

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Services Provided

Our program offers preschool learning experiences and childcare for children ages 6-weeks through pre-k, including after school and summer camp for children in public pre-k through 5th grade. The Academy begins operation at 6:30 A.M. and closes each day at 6:30 P.M. Our services are Monday through Friday for 12 months a year promoting a child in August. We offer full-time and part-time programs.

B. Director's Door is Always Open

At any time, a parent may request to speak with the Director about any concerns they may have. The Director will then arrange a convenient time for the parent to meet. All concerns are addressed immediately with a follow up phone call if needed.

C. Open Door Policy

We have an "open door" policy. We invite you to drop in at any time. Stop in and visit whenever you wish. All we ask is that you do not disturb our classes and keep your visit to a maximum of 10 minutes. Early childhood education is very important to us. If you choose to stay longer or visit regularly a back ground check may be requested.

D. Planned School Activities

All parents are welcome to join classes for parties and programs (birthday parties, Thanksgiving luncheon, Christmas program, etc.). We ask all parents visiting the school other than drop off and pick up to notify the teacher and office they will be attending the event. On the day of the event stop by the front office to Sign-in, please bring a picture ID.

E. Nondiscrimination Policy

Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, sex or national origin.

F. Food

We will furnish full-time day children with a morning snack and an afternoon snack every day. Our Lunch program is a parent paid option. The menu is available in the Academy office. If you choose to bring food from home, please be aware the Academy is a Nut Free environment. Any food you send containing any nuts will be sent home and you will be notified.

G. Class Placement

New classes are formed and presently enrolled children are promoted the same week that Spring Branch Independent School District begins their new year. Children are accepted all through the year when space is available and when the child's age is in the same range as the other children already enrolled in the class. The child's date of birth as of September 1, decides enrollment placement. Children are not usually moved to other classes except at our regular promotion time.

H. School Pictures

School pictures will be taken twice a year. There is no charge at the time of session, and purchase of these pictures is optional. We will be taking pictures of the children enrolled in our program throughout the year. These pictures will be used for “in house” slide shows and photo albums. Upon signing this parent handbook you are granting Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy permission to take pictures of your child/children, unless you specifically request that your child’s picture not be taken.

I. Absence/Sick Child

If your child will be late or absent, please notify the office. If your child is out because of sickness, please let us know so that we may be aware of any illnesses and notify parents if necessary. Parents of after school children need to call before 1:00 P.M. so that we are able to notify the van drivers and the after school teachers of the absence. In case of absence, payment is still due.

J. Birthday Parties

Simple refreshments for the afternoon snack time are encouraged when arrangements are made with the classroom teachers. Invitations to parties held outside the Academy will be distributed only if there is one for each child in the class. The Academy does not release personal contact information.

K. Toys at School

Toys, games, books, etc., may be brought ONLY on days planned by the teacher. Please do not allow children to bring these kinds of items on days other than designated days. Classroom teachers will notify parents when toys, books, etc. are requested. Children may have small, soft toys such as stuffed bears, etc., for rest time only. On school holidays, school age children are allowed to bring games, books, toys, etc., from home with the teacher’s permission. Toys and other items of this nature will be brought to the office and held for the parent to pick up at the end of the day if they are brought on days other than those permitted by the teacher. Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy is not responsible for any items that are lost or damaged at school. We will do our best to help all of the children keep up with their property.

L. Naptime

After lunch, a nap is provided for all preschool children. To protect the health of each child parents must provide a mat for their child. Mats are sold in the Academy office. Parents can bring a crib sheet,

blanket, and pillow and should take them home every Friday to be cleaned.

M. Transportation

We offer transportation to and from public school and on scheduled field trips. The director and van driver will take all precautions in transporting the children. Children will be required to wear a seat belt. Children who disobey this rule will be suspended from riding the vehicles.

N. Release of Children

Our Academy will release children only to those persons named on the enrollment form and only on the days the parent designates. Parents are expected to inform the classroom teacher or the Academy office, in advance, of pick up arrangements that vary from the daily norm.

When individuals other than the parents pick up the child, this individual should be on the child's enrollment form as an approved "pick-up person". They will need to be identified using a driver's license or other photo identification. A copy will be made of the identification provided. The parent(s) should notify the classroom teacher and/or Academy office by using the printed Authorization Forms or by calling the Academy office by noon of the day that the pick-up authorization is being requested.

Children will only be released to siblings who are at least 18 years of age and are on the parent's approved "pick-up" list.

In matters of child custody, the Academy will abide by the court rulings (see page 13). It is requested that the Academy's office has a copy of divorce degrees so that custody arrangements are on file with us. In all matters regarding the child, our Academy and Spring Branch Presbyterian Church stand by ready to assist all family members. PLEASE NOTE: Because of State Standards and safety concerns, children will not be released to any parent or individual who appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. All parents picking up will be asked for a photo ID and a copy will be made.

O. Fieldtrips, Water & Animal Activities

In addition to our regular program, field trips, water activities and animal activities will be planned. The Director will inform you ahead of time of these activities. They will be posted in front of your child's classroom at least two days before they take place. Parents will have to sign a permission form prior to the trips, water and animal

activities. Parents who want to attend a field trip must be cleared through a criminal history process. This is necessary to protect all of the children in our school.

P. Clothing

Children should dress each day in clothing appropriate for an active day of play. For safety, only rubber-soled shoes are acceptable. Each Preschool child should have a set of clothes (to include tops, bottoms, underwear and socks) at the Academy at all times. The children will use glue, paint, markers, and crayons. We purchase all washable items but there is no guarantee that it will wash out of your child's clothing. Please take this into consideration when dressing your child. Each item of clothing should be labeled with the child's name. All diaper bags and backpacks should be labeled as well.

All students are expected to bring their own supply of disposable pull-ups, training pants, or regular underwear along with plastic pants. We ask that parents send only one week's worth of supplies and clothing. Teachers will remind parents when more supplies are needed.

Q. Lost and Found

Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy is not responsible for lost clothing, toys, or other items. There is a lost and found located by the Academy's office or in your child's classroom. Please remember to label everything.

R. Breast Feeding Policy

Parents at SBPA are welcome to breast feed at the Academy. Please ask the office and we will show you a private place to breast feed your child. In addition, parents who want to store breast milk at school may do so. Please make sure milk is stored in appropriate single use bags, labeled with name and date. Bags need to be put into a larger zip lock or Tupperware container stored in our freezer.

S. School Closings & Holidays

Holiday closings are determined by church policy and approved by the Academy Board.

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving (2 days)	Good Friday
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Memorial Day
July 4th	2 Teacher Workdays (TBA)	Labor Day

There will be two in-service training days each year for teachers and staff, therefore, the Academy will be closed. All holiday and in-service

closings will be announced at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters each year.

Due to fixed costs, averaged over a calendar year, there is NO reduction in tuition for these holidays. When one of these Holidays falls on a weekend, the Holiday will be taken on Friday or Monday.

T. Inclement Weather

In severe weather (flooding, ice on roads and bridges, etc.), the Academy will be closed only if ONLY IF the Spring Branch Independent School District is closed. Parents are urged to watch local television channels numbers 2, 11 and 13 for announcements of school closings. And you may call the Academy for the most up to date information on the Academy's status at 713-464-6660. Also, weather information is radio broadcast at AM 740, AM 880, FM 92.9, FM 95.7. SBISD main switchboard numbers are (713) 464-1511 or (713) 365-5250. Refunds and/or Credits will not be issued for days missed due to weather.

U. Emergency Preparedness Plan

Staff emergency contact numbers:

Renee	832-971-5705
Nikki	281-777-9588
Kathryn	281-222-6995

Lockdown ("ZEBRA" code): Teachers will have children sit against the wall away from the door. All doors will be locked until further notification.

In case of fire: Teachers will follow evacuation procedures posted on the wall in the classroom. If an actual fire occurs children will be escorted to the Spring Valley Police Department. Parents will be called to pick-up the children immediately.

In case of flood: Children will be taken to the balcony in the Sanctuary and parents will be notified.

In case of tornado: Teachers immediately take children to the lunchroom, library, or bathroom. In case of damage to the building, we relocate children to The Spring Valley Police Station. Parents will be notified if location is changed.

In case of hurricane: The Academy will be closed.

In case of toxic fumes or chemical release: Upon notification from local authorities (police, fire department, etc.) the children will be loaded in the van or bus and taken to the nearest public facility (Public School, Red Cross, or hospital) out of the danger zone. The parent will immediately be notified to pick-up their children.

- For “Shelter in Place” the AC will be turned off, all children are brought inside, and all doors closed until authorized release.
- Upon notification from local authorities (police, fire, etc.) the children are taken to the nearest public facility (public school, Red Cross, or hospital) out of the danger zone. The parent will immediately be notified to pick-up their children.

In all cases, the teachers bring the classroom backpacks with the following information:

- Attendance binder
- Children’s information binder
- First aid kit
- Flashlight

Other emergency contact numbers:

Spring Valley Police	713-465-8323
Spring Valley City Hall	713-465-8308
Poison Control	800-222-1222
Child Protective Service	713-526-5701
TX Dept. of Family Protective Services	713-394-4000
Child Abuse Hotline	800-252-5400
Center for Disease Control (pediatric)	713-694-3177

V. Daily Operations

All children are to be taken to their class by their parent(s) upon arrival each day. Please do not allow children to walk in alone, including school age children. Before 8:00 A.M. same age level classes may be combined in a designated classroom or area. Sign-In/Sign-Out sheets are provided in each room for parents to sign the child in upon arrival and out upon departure.

To provide greater security, only the parent(s) or other adults approved by the parent(s) will be allowed to drop off or pick up children. Any drop-off or pick-up persons other than the custodial parent(s) must be approved by the parent(s) in advance and listed on the child’s enrollment form. (See Release of children p.10)

Parents are reminded that classes end promptly at 6:30 P.M. Please make every effort to be punctual. It is a frightening experience for

your child to feel forgotten. If there is a problem, please telephone the Academy office. Your call helps us to prepare staff and to calm your child.

When you come to pick up your child, you will be charged a late fee. Please see current tuition rate sheet for up to date policy and charges.

W. Parent Notifications

Office Notifications are sent home in a statement-form passed to the classroom teacher and given to the parent at pick up time.

Activity Notifications are sent home in calendar form for the year and will also be posted on the classroom doors and Academy halls.

Remind.com: Register at Remind.com or text @dgge to 81010 to receive reminders related to the activities at the school.

HomeRoom: Some of the classrooms provide a private online portal to post photos of class events. Ask the child's teacher for information and access information for parents only.

Facebook: Children's photos or names are not posted on Facebook. Please note that Facebook is utilized only for information and is not a way to get in touch with the Academy.

III. ENROLLMENT PROCESS

We welcome children from the community regardless of race, creed, or religion. Parents are urged to tour the Academy and meet with the director and/or teaching staff before enrolling. At enrollment, parents receive a complete packet of information and forms, and a non-refundable fee is paid. At this time, arrangements can be made for an interview with the Director (if a parent requests) and for the introductory visits to the classroom.

A. Introductory Visits

To ensure the child's positive entry into the Academy classroom, children may visit the classroom at least twice before coming for the first full day of class. Please be aware your paperwork must be complete before visiting. The first visit should include 30 min-1 hour with the parent remaining with the child (a background check will be requested). On the second visit, the child will visit the classroom for several hours, but not remain for the entire day. The parent does not need to remain in the classroom for the second introductory visit. These visits allow acclimation to the classroom setting with less stress to the child. Please note this is a parent option and not required.

B. Enrollment Visits

The following steps must be completed for enrollment:

1. Complete registration forms
2. Up-to-date immunizations are required. Immunization, physical examination history and statement of health signed by the child's physician
3. Sign agreement to verify parent(s) has read, understands, and agrees to follow the policies of the Academy as outlined in this PARENT HANDBOOK and any amendments made to it
4. Payment of the non-refundable registration fee
5. Complete two introductory visits for the child (on parent's request)
6. Optional interview with the Academy Director

C. Child Custody

The parent who has engaged us as his/her childcare provider has continuing responsibility to inform us of (1) the legal status of parties involved in the custody of the enrolled child and (2) any subsequent change in custody status.

The enrolling parent or legal guardian must certify that his or her instructions on releasing the child from the center are in accordance with the law and not in violation of any other parent's or legal guardian's rights. The Academy requests that a copy of the portion of the divorce decree, which outlines custody arrangements, be part of the child's file with the center. If either parent is prohibited from picking up the child, a court order is required to be part of the child's file.

We will not subvert the law. The Academy will abide by all legally served court orders. We will communicate to the parent or legal guardian who enrolled the child when a court order has been served to us. This enrolling parent will be the decision maker regarding all matters at the school. Unless stated otherwise by the court.

Our staff will do their utmost to make certain that the custody guidelines set forth in divorce decrees and other legal documents are followed. We depend on parents to keep us informed on the issues of custody. Communication between the custodial parent(s) and the Academy's staff is vital.

D. Enrollment Forms

The school must have necessary forms completed and on file before the child will be admitted. This will help us comply with state regulations. These forms include all enrollment application, parent

agreement form, medical forms, permission slip, and child release form. And in custody cases a notarized custody declaration may be required. Please keep this information updated.

E. Staff Hired as Babysitters

We are very proud of our staff and would love for you to have the opportunity to have them as personal baby-sitters in your home. The Academy is not responsible for the actions of employees outside of allotted times the employee works at Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy. We do not sanction employees working for parents of children attending our facility. In the event that you choose to hire an employee of Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy for such services we will not be held liable. Upon signing this parent handbook you understand and agree Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy will not be held liable for teachers who babysit your child/children.

IV. FINANCIAL POLICIES

A. Payment Procedures

Tuition is due each month the child is enrolled in our program whether they are present or absent.

The Academy is operated as a non-profit ministry to the children of our community. The monthly tuition charges are for the space in our program and not for the periods of attendance.

Our Board regulates all tuition, registration, and supply fees. Rates are reviewed annually. Changes or increases in tuition are carefully considered. It is our desire to announce changes in tuition as early as possible, usually 1-2 months in advance.

B. Fee Schedule

A non-refundable registration fee is due when a child is enrolled.

Tuition is due by the first of the month, unless a payment plan of the 1st and 15th is established with the Academy. For the 1st and 15th payments, there is a five-day grace period. A late fee is assessed for payments made after the 5th and 20th of the month. An additional fee per day may be charged until tuition is paid in full. Please see the current tuition rate sheet for up-to-date policies and fees.

C. Late Pick-up Fees

A late pick up fee will be charged for children in the full day and part-time programs when the child is not picked up on time. Please see the current tuition rate sheet for up-to-date policies and fees.

D. Delinquent Account

Account statements are issued twice a month for accounts showing any balance. Accounts, which are delinquent by the end of the month, can result in the termination of the child's placement with the Academy unless previous arrangements have been made with the director. The Academy is not allowed to let balances accrue on any account. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the Academy director to make payment arrangements for delinquent accounts.

If a child's placement is terminated, the Academy reserves the privilege, at its sole discretion, not to reinstate the contract. If reinstatement of the child's placement is requested and granted, a \$50 reinstatement fee will be charged.

Checks returned to the Academy due to insufficient funds or other reasons will be charged a bank handling fee as well as a \$35 late payment fee.

E. Tax Deduction

According to the Internal Revenue Service, a childcare expense for working parents is tax deductible. A statement will be available in the Academy office by January 31st of the following year. Tuition must be paid in full to receive this information.

F. Discounts

Sibling Discount: A 10% sibling discount applies to a 2nd and 3rd child of the same family after a one full-time tuition has been paid. This discount applies to the lesser tuition fee(s).

Spring Branch Presbyterian Church or Staff Discount: A 10% discount is given for each child of families who are Church members.

V. SUSPENSION/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A. Plan of Action

1. Academy staff will keep the Academy's Director informed concerning potential or actual problems with individual children within the classroom. A plan of action will be created to help bring the child "back on track". This plan of action will include:
 - Implementing all steps of the Academy's Positive Discipline Plan
 - Monitoring, analyzing, and documenting the classroom situation looking for areas to improve or correct

- Using an outside observer to view the situation and make objective recommendations
 - Conferencing with parents by phone or in person to assess the situation and to set goals
2. The Academy Board will be advised, as necessary, of potential or actual problems with individual children through the regular monthly meetings, through phone calls or through special called meetings when necessary.
 3. Whenever possible, before actual suspension or dismissal of a child occurs, Academy Director will advise the Academy Board Moderator and/or the entire Academy Board.
 4. Careful records and documentation will be maintained as the above steps are followed.
 5. If a parent disagrees with the suspension or dismissal decision, they may ask for a conference with the Church's Clerk of Session, the Pastor or designee. This person also may involve the Academy Board, The Director or the Pastor as needed. The Pastor or a designee will be solely responsible of all communications on behalf of the church. Please see 'Parent Grievances' below.

B. Withdrawal Information

A two weeks' notice is required when the child is to be withdrawn. Failure to give two weeks' notice will result in charges being assessed during this two-week period.

C. Parent Grievance

All grievances should be made in person to the Director. A conference may be requested at which time the Parent and the Director will attempt to work out a solution. If a solution to the grievance or problem still cannot be found, the Parent will be requested to put the grievance in writing for presentation to the Academy Board for further consideration. At the very next scheduled Academy Board meeting, time will be allotted for discussion of the grievance. Resolution of the grievance should take place within two weeks. If there is not an Academy Board meeting within two weeks of the complaint, a meeting may be called by the Chairperson of the Academy Board to convene a meeting in order to discuss the grievance. The Parent will receive an answer to the complaint or grievance within one week of the convened or regular Academy Board meeting. At this point if the parent does not feel that they have been heard and understood, they may ask for a

conference with the Church's Clerk of Session, the Pastor or designee. Please see Plan of Action step #5 above.

VI. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Our goal is to provide a happy, safe, and healthy environment for the children enrolled in our Academy. The Academy rigidly adheres to all health and safety policies outlined in the State of Texas' Minimum Standards for Day-Care Centers. A copy of this document is available for parental review in the Academy office.

A. Safety First

The Academy strives to maintain high safety standards. There are written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies as well as an emergency evacuation plan for the center. Academy staff conducts monthly fire drills with the children as well as periodic emergency drills such as severe weather drills.

Electrical outlets are kept secured, and medications and cleaning supplies are kept out of the reach of children. Our church's Property Group and the Academy's staff make regular safety inspections of our building, grounds, and play-yards.

Cleanliness as a preventive measure has a high priority with our Academy. Frequent and vigorous hand washing by staff and children is encouraged. Staff wear disposable gloves when changing diapers, cleaning a cut or a bloody nose, removing clothes soiled by blood or body fluids, and when feeding an infant-drinking breast milk. Toys, play equipment, infant beds, children's nap mats, and table surfaces are sanitized daily with a broad-spectrum disinfectant. In the Toddler rooms, toys are sanitized all through the day. The diaper changing area or pad is sanitized after every use.

B. Accidents, Injuries & Medical Emergencies

All staff members in all classrooms are trained in First Aid and infant-child CPR. First aid supplies are kept in the Academy's office as well as in the classroom. Teachers carry basic first aid supplies with them to the playground, to the lunchroom, and on walks and outings. If an accident occurs, staff will attend to the child's needs immediately. If the injury or accident warrant, parents will be notified immediately by phone. The attending staff member and/or a witnessing staff member will fill out an accident report as soon as possible. Parents will receive a copy of the report and copies of the report will be kept on file at the Academy. If a minor accident and/or injury occur towards the end of the day, staff will verbally notify the parent of the accident and/or injury with a written report due to the parent the next morning.

If treatment by a doctor is needed, the Academy will always make every effort to contact the parent and/or the doctor the parent has indicated on the enrollment form. If the parent cannot be reached, every effort will be made to contact the “in case of emergency” person listed on the Enrollment Form. In all events of emergencies dealing with accidents, injuries, or illnesses, the Academy will make sure that the injured or ill child receives the necessary emergency treatment until the parent or “in case of emergency” person can be reached. The authorization for emergency treatment is part of the enrollment packet and must be signed upon enrollment.

C. Required Immunizations & Examinations

Texas laws and the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services require the following immunizations and examinations for all children enrolled in a state licensed child-care facility:

- DPT or DtaP
- HIB
- Poliomyelitis
- Mumps/Measles/Rubella
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Hep B
- Hearing and Vision Screening (for 3 & 4 year olds)
- Statement of Health signed by a physician

Immunization records must be provided upon enrollment. All immunization records for toddlers and preschoolers must be kept current. Parents should submit validated proof of immunizations as the child receives new immunizations or booster shots.

D. Illnesses

Children who are ill with a temperature or a contagious disease or condition may not attend the Academy. If the child becomes ill while attending the Academy, parents will be notified. The Academy director or other administrative staff will make the final determination if a child is too ill to remain at the center.

The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services’ guidelines and the Academy state that a child cannot come to school if they:

- Have a contagious disease
- Show signs of unusual fatigue, irritability, fussiness, or lethargy
- Have had a temperature of 100 or more degrees
- Have severe coughing
- Have a sore throat
- Have symptoms of a cold

- Have persistent diarrhea (2 times successively, very watery)
- Have experienced vomiting
- Have sore, discharging eyes
- Have yellow or green discharge from the nose, ears, or eyes
- Have skin eruptions or infectious skin disorders
- Have a communicable disease including but not limited to chicken pox, measles, or mumps

The Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy reserves the privilege of sending children home if the child develops any of the above symptoms during the school day. The parents will be notified and asked to pick up the child within 30-45 minutes. The Academy requests that parents appreciate their obligation to their own child's health, as well as to the health of all the children in the class and the school.

If a parent cannot be contacted the Academy will try to contact the child's emergency contacts. If at this point a contact cannot be established with parents or emergency contacts the proper emergency agency will be contacted.

Parents are urged to plan ahead for alternative childcare when their child is ill. Please note that Texas State Law requires that parents notify the school if their child develops a communicable disease, including head lice, so that the school may notify the parents of the other children in the class. Always ask your pediatrician if your child's condition is a communicable one.

E. Return to School after Illness

Normally a child must be free of the above listed conditions for 24 hours before returning to school. A child may be readmitted earlier than the 24-hour waiting period only with a written statement from the child's doctor stating that the child has been examined, is not contagious, and is able to participate in all the school activities including outdoor play. With the exception of a child who has been sent home with a fever they will have to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. For example: if your child has been sent home on Monday with a fever they cannot return to school until Wednesday.

When a child returns to the Academy, they must be able to participate in all Academy activities including going outside to play (weather permitting).

Our program design and its limitations dictate that no child will be kept inside separated from the other children when weather permits

outdoor play. Our program philosophy is based on the premise that child-care can be stressful for young children and, if ill, they need a quiet, restful environment in which to recuperate. If a child is not well enough for play outdoors, they need more recuperation time at home.

F. Medications

There are no state requirements that centers have to administer medications or breathing treatments. Our school has chosen to help parents in this important area; therefore, we have some set guidelines that reflect the Health Department's requirements for those centers that choose to give medications and treatments.

A completed and signed Medication Permission Form, obtained at the Academy office must accompany prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medicines. If medications are ongoing, a form must be filled out every Monday morning for that week. All medications must be in their original containers with the child's name clearly written on the label. Check with the Academy regarding current specific medical and allergy related procedures.

Children are never allowed to carry any kind of medicines (over-the-counter or prescription) in their classroom or in their backpacks, diaper bags, or other belongings.

Prescription medicines may be given only if (1) the prescription label carries a current date and (2) the name of the specified child to whom it is being given.

Over the counter, non-prescription drugs, that are to be administered by our staff must (1) be in the original bottle, (2) labeled with the child's name, (3) be recommended for the child's age, and (4) have directions and dosage on the label.

If the non-prescription drug is recommended for an age that is not the child's, a doctor's note approving the administration of the drug and dosage information must accompany the medication.

All medicines and the completed and signed Medication Form are to be given to an Academy staff member in the office. When possible, we limit giving medications to two times per day only: the child's lunchtime and at 3:00 P.M. No medication will be given "as needed". We must be given exact times to give all medication.

G. Vision & Hearing Screening

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or a professional

examination for possible vision and hearing problems for children of certain ages and grades. Refer to 25 TAC Chapter 37, Subchapter C, (relating to vision and hearing screening), for specifics on vision and hearing screening. This information is available at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vhs/.

You must provide a copy of the screening from your doctor.

H. Detection & Reporting Child Abuse

In accordance with state law, we immediately report suspected abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Protective Regulatory Services. The Academy provides our caregivers with annual training on child abuse and neglect. We also have posters that readily list local phone numbers for reporting incidents.

Most often the abuse of children is not pronounced. Whether it is a parent, stepparent, or even a boyfriend/girlfriend of the custodial parent, people rarely confess that they have abused or neglected a child. Abusive adults cross all racial and socio-economic boundaries and they are not usually mentally ill or handicapped but are simply too ashamed to admit the abuse. And children are either too frightened or unable to say the mistreatment occurred.

Only when someone acknowledges that there is a problem can a solution be found. If nothing is done to address warning signs, the child's life will continue to deteriorate. The abuse erodes trust and can cause the child to suffer from speech delay, a lack of curiosity, and a negative self-image. Left unopposed the situation can even result in serious injury or death of the child.

- Detection of Child Abuse/Neglect

Observing the parent-child interaction at the time of the child's arrival or departure is critical to proper identification of abuse. During these times parents are stressed and hurried. Belittling or ridiculing by the parent of a slow-moving child may occur. Shaking, striking, or pulling the child's hair may be other behavioral techniques used by the parents to control the screaming, tired child. Poor hygiene of the child may also be observed. All these are signs of abuse or neglect. Not reporting these instances may result in serious consequences for the child and present a legal liability for those who fail to comply with the law to report it.

Recognition of child abuse or neglect is not based on one or two clues but a cluster of indicators. While the child is in our care,

keeping an eye out for the physical and behavioral indicators is the essential way to detect mistreatment.

- Indicators of Physical Abuse

For a child to be physically abused, they must have some type of physical mark on their body. Bruises on the lower legs and the outer forearm areas are not necessarily signs of physical abuse. Bruises in these areas are common among all children and are the consequence of play and growing up. Bruises in the covered areas of the body like the torso or buttocks are likely to be signs of physical abuse.

Unexplained burns, human bites, broken bones, black eyes, or patches of hair loss on the head are other physical indicators that physical abuse may be occurring.

Behaviorally, a physically abused child may appear frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home. This child may be wary of adult contacts or can be extremely aggressive or withdrawn.

- Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Research shows that 1:3 girls and 1:5 boys are sexually violated by the time they are an adult. A family member or someone who is trusted by the family accounts for approximately 90% of all sexual abuse. The effects of sexual abuse on a child are devastating because it is beyond their ability to understand. This experience produces psychological trauma will impact the child's behavior indefinitely until it is addressed. This trauma has particular impact on the child's development when the perpetrator is the caregiver in the family. The child may see their parent or caregiver in both a positive and negative way. They can hate the abuse and love the abuser. Unable to understand this contradiction, a child will display a variety of symptoms that indicate the child has been traumatized.

Physically, the child may have difficulty walking or sitting. The child's underclothing may be torn, stained, or bloodied. There may also be bruising or bleeding in the external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas. In some cases, the sexually abused child may have a venereal disease.

Behaviorally, the child may show bizarre behavior or possess unusual sexual knowledge. Anticipation of the sex abuse is usually more traumatizing than the actual sex abuse itself due to the anxiety that wells up in the child. Sexually abused children

tend to withdraw and fantasize. They may be unwilling to change clothes for a field trip or may find nap time extremely stressful because the child associates undressing or sleeping with when the sexual abuse occurs.

- Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury that results from belittling, constant teasing, unfair treatment, excessive demands, verbal attacks, or inadequate nurturing. It is a subtle, yet devastating form of child abuse. A child who experiences emotional abuse loses their self-esteem and feels unlovable.

Emotional maltreatment can have physical effects in the child. It causes an overall physical failure to thrive that can result in speech disorders or delayed physical development.

Behaviors found in emotionally abused children range from submissiveness and passivity to aggression and making demands. Habit disorders such as sucking, biting, and rocking may be the result of such abuse. Hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, and hypochondria may also indicate the child is experiencing emotional maltreatment.

- Indicators of Neglect

The most common form of abuse is neglect but it is often overlooked. In child care, neglect is failure to provide food, proper nutrition, clothing, shelter or adequate housekeeping, medical care, proper hygiene, and supervision. Often, neglect is the result of a parent's ignorance so the parent may simply be unaware of the neglect and appear to be indifferent towards the child.

Neglected children are consistently hungry, fatigued, appear dirty or have elevated body odor. Other signs include disregarded physical problems or medical needs that have not been addressed. In conversations with a neglected child you may learn that they are consistently without proper supervision at home. Abandonment is an extreme form of neglect.

- Response to Abuse/Neglect

Though one can observe the various indications of abuse or neglect, a child may wish to disclose the mistreatment to caregivers. When a child indicates that they want to report abuse or neglect, we follow these guidelines:

- A private place is found to talk with the child

- The child is comforted and the caregiver focuses on being supportive
 - The child is told that they are believed and that the caregiver is proud of them for revealing the mistreatment
 - The caregiver assures the child that they will be protected
 - The caregiver informs the child that the talk will be reported and explains what will happen when the report is made (we do not “promise not to tell”)
- Legal Requirements to Report Abuse/Neglect

A report of suspected abuse to the Director of a day care facility does not satisfy a caregiver’s obligation to report it to authorities. The law requires that anyone having cause to believe that a child's safety or welfare may be threatened due to abuse or neglect must report the instance immediately to state or local law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Protective Regulatory Services (800-252-5400). The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The law states that a verbal report should be made to local authorities within 48 hours. Proof of abuse is not necessary, and an immediate report aids authorities with their primary purpose to protect the child. Reports are always confidential and may be left anonymously, but caregivers are encouraged to leave their name.

The report shall include information that will enable TDPRS to locate the child or family. This includes the child's full name and address, date of birth, and any supplemental information on his parents and siblings. Best efforts shall be made to be as specific as possible to describe what was observed, when it was observed and any the specific injuries or markings.

- Post-report Support with Abuse/Neglect
- After incident(s) have been reported and addressed, if a parent needs additional help or guidance, they may contact the Presbyterian Children’s Home & Services at 800-888-1904. This service provides help to families dealing with child abuse.

VII. DISCIPLINE

Discipline works to teach your child what type of behavior is acceptable and what type is not acceptable. Developing discipline is a guiding tool that is crucial during the preschool years. A child needs to feel totally and unconditionally accepted, still they need to learn about how to live in a world with rules and with others. This is one of the first steps in discipline at Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy.

Parents and teachers set guidelines on the behavior of a young child to help them learn about safety, develop self-control, and discourage inappropriate behavior such as destroying materials or hurting others. Reasonable limits give children an opportunity to choose their behavior and become an independent person.

A. Our Approach

Though a children's misbehavior may be frustrating for some, it is important to understand that we view it as an opportunity to teach, a chance to model self-discipline, and a means to develop character. Like intellectual development, emotional growth takes time and opportunities to learn.

In our classrooms we take an affirmative approach:

- Rules are clear and consistent, and the consequences of not following to the rules are discussed with the children.
- Rules are few when possible. Some classrooms have only one basic rule such as, "You may not hurt yourself, others, or things."
- Often we offer choices like, "Do you want to clean up your puzzle now, or do you want to clean up after we read a story?"
- Tantrums are ignored, if they are not harmful, to help a child understand that they will gain nothing through outbursts.

We work to help children feel good about themselves and school. Children are encouraged to understand limits, follow behavioral guidelines, participate in class activities, and respect the rights or feelings of other children. A respectful attitude toward the teachers and staff is also expected. An understanding of these rules and expectations will also aid the parents in consistently reinforcing acceptable behavior at home. In working together, we ask parents to provide us with information that will help teachers understand the child and their behavior.

Chronic behavior problems may require an additional plan including parental assistance to address the problem, supplemental counseling, or even temporary removal from the Academy. The Academy reserves the right to request the withdrawal of a child who cannot adapt to a group situation. Withdrawal may be necessary when it is deemed that placement in our care is not accomplishing the goals of our program or when it is a detriment to other children at the Academy.

B. Positive Discipline Plan

- 1) Classrooms are set up for success
 - Choices are provided for well-defined learning centers that have interesting and challenging hands-on activities

- All areas of classroom are used to avoid open areas for running
 - Developmentally appropriate toys, games, and puzzles are used
 - Room is arranged so all children are visible at all times
2. Curriculum and activities are planned
 - Boredom is avoided - children are challenged and stimulated
 - A variety of activities are engaged like quiet time, active time, small group tasks, large group tasks, build motor skills, apply fine motor skill building, etc.
 3. Teachers are classroom managers
 - Teachers come to know each child well and what techniques work with each of them individually
 - Potential problems are watched for in order to redirect children away from possible negative situations
 - Each child is given lots of attention every day, including some one-on-one time, before it is demanded by negative behavior
 4. Classroom rules are simple and positively worded
 - The rules are consistently applied and discussed with children every day because preschoolers are learners and need many reminders to help them remember from one day to the next
 - Easy to understand statements are used such as, “Be kind to everyone” or “Respect others and their belongings”
 - Application of rules encourage children to do what they should instead of what they should not like, “Walk with your feet” rather than “Don’t run” or “Blocks are for building” rather than “Don’t throw blocks”
 5. Positive reinforcement is applied
 - A child observed making a good choice is encouraged with statements like, “You are working hard at the easel... good job” or “You all are working hard at sharing. In the Bible it says we should love one another and you are doing just that!”
 - Encouraging words are used often and teachers look for ways to use positive praise each day with every child
 6. Needs are addressed, not symptoms
 - When a child acts out or makes negative choices, teachers work to find the cause of the behavior with questions like “Is the child tired, hungry, or not feeling well?”, “Is the child bored or overly stimulated?”, or “Why are they angry or upset?”
 7. Children are guided to positive choices
 - When a child does something negative, the child’s attention is redirected to a more positive choice or from one learning center to another learning center (Section VIII, D)

- If a child is angry, we find something for the child to do that meets the expressed need of the child such as tearing scrap paper or popping bubble wrap
 - When a child does something this not negative but also not necessarily safe like climbing on tables, instead of saying, “No, don’t climb”, we show them the climber in the room or provide a climbing experience outside
8. Times are used sparingly and meaningfully
- Time outs are used by teachers to talk with a child to help them understand their negative behavioral choice, reassure them that they can rejoin their class as soon as possible, and to find out what the child’s needs may be
 - Time outs are developmentally appropriate for the child and are generally not employed with children less than 3 years old
9. Office visits
- A last resort for a child that needs time to “cool off” and to talk with the director or other office personnel
10. Behavior modification contract
- Parents are continually updated and maybe asked how they deal with certain behaviors at home so we can try to stay consistent with the parent’s methods when appropriate
 - If necessary, a behavior modification contract will be written with the parent and child to outline measurable and attainable goals that address 1-2 negative behaviors that are of the greatest concern
 - Day is divided into increments the child can understand like ‘outdoor time’ or ‘group time’ and the child is given a check mark or smiley face by each increment of the day that they reach the goal
 - The child is praised and encouraged when any goal, minor or major, is achieved to inspire success
 - At home, parent rewards the child for smiley faces or checks with a special story time, activity with parent or a favorite show (material rewards are discouraged)
 - Ultimately, the greatest reward for the attained behavior goal is the positive time and attention the child gains from the teachers and parents rather than the negative attention gained by the unruly behavior
11. Documentation
- Documentation of classroom problems, behaviors or issues are kept at all times
 - Academy administration are advised of actual and potential problems for additional help and support

12. Withdrawal

- The safety and well-being of all children at the Academy is paramount, so if a child continues to exhibit negative behaviors that endanger themselves or other children, we reserve the right to recommend a different placement if a careful study reveals that we are not meeting the needs of the child
- We keep lists of resources for help and support for families and will provide this information if requested

C. Common Questions about Biting

The toddler months (12 - 30 months) are times for great strides in development. Communication skills grow while both their gross and fine motor skills expand. This period can be filled with amusing moments of funny antics, parents mimicry and language development. It can also be a challenge due to biting, the child saying 'no' to almost everything, and the pursuit of their independence. These behaviors are normal or common and are developmentally appropriate for this age.

Some of the more common reasons a child might bite include hunger or thirst, a need for extra attention, the desire for a toy another friend might have, frustration with their inability to express themselves through language, and even teething.

When biting occurs we give all our attention to the child that has been bitten to treat the bite, sooth their feelings, and comfort the child. After they calm down, we have the bitten child talk to the biter and let them know that they cannot bite them. We feel it is important that children are empowered to be able to say "no" loudly and clearly when they are about to be hurt or bitten. This works to prevent children from developing a victim-attitude and helps them to learn that they can say "no" to protect themselves. After, we review the room where the biting occurred to see if more materials or resources are needed to keep the children busy and happily participating.

To address biting, we have a few techniques to employ.

- Make sure there are plenty of toys to play with so children do not have to share or wait a turn
- Keep children hydrated, fed, and rested
- Help sore and irritated gums with teething toys for the child
- Stay close to a potential biter to interrupt the biting incident, ask the child what they wanted to do or say, then offer suggestions to help the child accomplish that goal

VIII. EDUCATION PROGRAM

A. Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Research indicates that to be effective with young children, teaching practices need to be developmentally appropriate, which means that educators should create an environment with experiences that are in tune with where they are in their intellectual and physical progress, both as individuals and as part of a group.

Based on this research and our experience, we adapt our classroom environment and activities for our local community, the families involved and each child's progress. We are eager to learn as much as we can about each child, their family, cultural background, past experience, and current circumstances. With this knowledge we work to create a program that fits each child and the families we serve.

B. Active Learning

Children enjoy the opportunity to see how things work and test their own ideas, so the best learning approach is physically active learning because it engages a child's natural desire to move, manipulate items, and investigate things. They use all their senses to make discoveries using their hands, eyes, nose, ears, and mouth.

With that in mind, our classrooms and programs are set up to promote active learning and help children talk, play, and explore. They get lots of opportunities to pursue what interests them, solve problems, make discoveries, develop relationships, and make comparisons. As children interact with their classroom environment, they gather sensory information and use it to refine their senses and motor skills. For example, squeezing clay, picking up puzzle pieces, and lacing threads through beads are ways for young children to practice using hands and fingers.

C. The Power of Play

We plan our days to allow for a lot of playtime. As with developmentally appropriate practices and active learning, years of research illustrate the benefits of play for a child's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and language development.

All kinds of play are valuable, so we support it by providing space, opportunity, and materials. Classrooms are setup so that children can play without damaging furniture or injuring themselves. Children can play independently, with friends or even near others but independent with their own activity in what is called 'parallel play.' In parallel play, children use each other's toys and even talk to one another as they

play; however, they do not coordinate their activities. Beyond physical development, children also learn to see other children's points of view and become more empathetic and caring. They learn to use language in new ways to describe their play and to interact with others. As children get older, they play cooperatively, organizing roles and scenarios for group play.

D. The Learning Center Approach

A learning center is an area of the classroom that has been set up for a particular activity and is defined by physical boundaries and specific materials. Learning centers give order to the classroom, provide freedom within limits, allow children to make choices, and provide opportunities for children to move freely and independently.

Learning centers also permit teachers to meet the individual needs of children and to encourage them to do an activity for a maximum period of time with minimum interference. Learning centers invite children to see, to touch, to taste, to smell, and to feel the environment in the room.

Art Center

- Develop social skills
- Foster eye-hand coordination
- Release emotional frustration
- Stimulate creativity
- Enhance independence
- Foster cognitive concepts
- Make decisions

Sensory Center with Sand & Water

- Be creative
- Develop readiness skills for math
- Have sensory experiences
- Promote concepts such as pouring, dumping, floating, sinking, and measuring
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Develop social skills

Block Center

- Choose sizes and shapes
- Foster reasoning
- Enhance mathematical skills and science concepts
- Foster problem solving
- Learn to take turns
- Learn organizational skills

- Extend vocabulary
- Foster Creativity
- Foster self-confidence
- Share his/her own ideas
- Develop sensory discrimination and eye-hand coordination

Reading Center with Library & Books

- Stimulate new ideas
- Clarify and organize existing ideas
- Foster aesthetic appreciation
- Name, describe, and classify materials
- Develop listening skills
- Verbally express feelings
- Build a positive self-image
- Increase vocabulary

Home Living Center

- Reenact what they sees in his/her own environment
- Foster language and communication skills
- Develop organizational skills
- Problem solve
- Be creative
- Release emotional tension and frustration
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Develop social skills

Science & Nature Center

- Work independently
- Experiment with different tools and materials
- Increase observation skills
- Develop vocabulary
- Develop sensory skills
- Use problem-solving skills
- Explore and discover the beauty of God's world
- Learn through firsthand experiences
- Stimulate curiosity

Puzzles & Manipulative Center

- Experience success
- Learn to work independently
- Learn the concepts of size, shape, and color
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Enhance problem solving
- Learn the relationship of the parts to the whole

- Develop fine motor skills
- Build math readiness skills

Other Centers

These are dependent on age and include a computer center, a music center, a writing center, a wood-working center, and more.

IX. CHURCH MINISTRIES INFORMATION

We truly are grateful you chose the Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy for your family. It is our privilege and pleasure to serve you because the Church and Academy were created for families like yours. Even if you are actively involved in another church, you are still invited to participate in our ministries, Bible studies, and activities like our Wednesday night supper at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Whether you are married or a single parent, our ministries have something to offer everyone. Service times are available in the church office.

The prayer ministry is also available to you and your family. Please let the Academy office know of your special prayer needs, and we will gladly add them to the Church's prayer list.

For all services the Church provides childcare by trained teachers for babies through 3 year-olds. During worship service, we also provide a children's worship time for children under six years old.

Lastly, our Pastor and the Church staff are available to assist your family in any way we can. If you have any questions about becoming a part of our church, please visit www.springbranchpres.org.



Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy

PARENT HANDBOOK CONFIRMATION

I have read the Parent Handbook for the Spring Branch Presbyterian Academy and understand that it should be referenced throughout my child's enrollment at the Academy.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

Date Signed

Date Signed