



Growing, Playing and Learning Together

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN WEEKDAY SCHOOL
PARENT HANDBOOK
2019/2020 SCHOOL YEAR

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Welcome to Trinity Presbyterian Weekday School! Thank you for choosing to be a part of our program! We are honored that you have entrusted us to help meet the needs of your child during these important early years. In order to best serve your child, we are looking forward to an open, positive and supportive partnership with you.

The Parent Handbook is intended to provide you with as much information as possible regarding our policies and procedures. Again, thank you for choosing Trinity Presbyterian WDS!

INFORMATION AT A GLANCE

Address: Trinity Presbyterian Weekday School
3115 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC 28211

Phone: 704-366-3556

Fax: 704-366-9460

Email: spalmer@trinitypreschurch.org
jbillings@trinitypreschurch.org

Internet: www.trinitypreschurch.org

Tax ID: #56-0611581

Harris Teeter VIC: #4936

Hours: Classroom - 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (M-F)

Office Hours - 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (M-F)

Summer Office Hours (June-Aug) –

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (M-Th)

OUR MISSION IS TO...

- Ensure a safe and nurturing environment.
- Provide knowledgeable and dedicated staff.
- Promote active learning and discovery.
- Foster spiritual growth.
- Encourage family involvement.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that each child is a beautiful and unique creation of God, worthy of respect for and celebration of his/her own unique being. It is our aim that children come to know that each person's heritage, family, home, abilities, thoughts, and feelings are important and worthy. We believe that being loved and nurtured by the adults in their lives is a part of this important process and essential to the growth of a healthy personal sense of self-esteem.

Knowing that children learn best through play, we provide learning experiences that encourage discovery and hands-on exploration. Each classroom and everything in it is purposely planned according to the developmental level of the children in that group. We plan activities designed to accommodate the full range of learning styles and multiple intelligences as well as personal interests and abilities.

The most important life skills to be learned in these early years revolve around social and emotional development. Therefore, we strive to provide a warm, happy, and safe environment in which each child can practice getting along with others while having their own needs met. It is our goal that each child will feel loved, secure, capable and successful.

PARENT INFORMATION

We encourage active participation and involvement from all parents. Research has shown that active parental involvement encourages children to have a more positive outlook on their overall learning experience throughout their school years.

Open Door Policy

We encourage you or other family members to come into the classroom and spend time by reading, storytelling, sharing photos of an educational trip, or having lunch with your child. We are happy for you to drop in at any time;

however, please be mindful of separation issues that might arise for a younger preschooler. We would ask that you watch your child's behavior closely in order to make this a positive experience.

All exterior doors are locked at 9:15 a.m. each morning. The doors are unlocked at 12:55 p.m. each afternoon.

There is a doorbell located at each weekday school entrance. If you arrive after the doors are closed, please ring the bell for entry.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Scheduled conferences with your child's teacher are held once a year in January. These are wonderful opportunities to discuss your child's progress and how best to meet his/her needs. These conferences are limited to 20 minutes each. As needed, additional conferences may be scheduled at any time with your child's teacher or the director. If you ever have any questions or concerns about your child or the program, please feel free to contact us.

Parent/Support Team (PST)

The Parent Support Team (PST) is a vital part of the weekday school that is open to all parents/families. Each team of teachers will ask for volunteers to become room parents – one or two per class. All room parent volunteers are encouraged to be a member of the PST. The PST gives parents an opportunity to support and be actively involved in accomplishing the goals of Trinity Presbyterian Weekday School. The PST organizes fund-raisers, family/parent events, and teacher appreciation functions. Every September there is a "kick-off" meeting to assign committees and discuss new areas of involvement for the year. Your assistance in this area is crucial to the success of our program and greatly appreciated.

Another way to help our school is by participating in school fundraising events and the Harris Teeter "Together in Education" Program. The school earns a small percentage of income when you shop at Harris Teeter. Trinity Weekday School's code is #4936. Please remember to relink every fall. Thank you for your support!

Monthly Newsletters/Calendars/Notices

Written communication regarding important events/information will be placed in family folders located outside your classroom or in communication folders within your child's backpack. Some will be from the teachers, and some from the administrative staff. Parents will also receive a weekly email from the director. We want parents to stay informed about what goes on in their child's classroom and the school as a whole.

School Pictures

Individual photographs will be taken of each child in the fall and in the spring. Typically, the fall photographs are outside in color, and the spring photographs are taken on the playgrounds in black and white. Parents will be given the opportunity to purchase. An optional sibling shoot can be scheduled with the photography company. Group photographs of each class are taken in the spring.

Teaching Staff Qualifications

Our teaching staff are qualified, loving, and nurturing people who are committed to the education of young children. Each staff member is a resource, a facilitator, a nurturer, an initiator, and one who meets the children where they are developmentally to help your child be successful. Only those individuals with early childhood experience and/or education will be considered for placement as a Weekday School teacher. All of our staff undergo a background check upon hiring and must remain current with CPR/First Aid training. Our staff are excellent role models from whom children learn acceptable behavior as they develop and mature. Each member is required to earn 10 hours of continuing education each year in the field of early childhood education.

Structure

Trinity Weekday School is a ministry of Trinity Presbyterian Church. Our daily operation is under the supervision of a director, an assistant director and a staff of highly qualified teachers and assistants. We are guided by the Trinity Presbyterian Church Weekday School Ministry Team. This Ministry Team is comprised of church members, a parent rep and teacher rep who are actively involved in the preschool. Questions or concerns about the policies or procedures of the program may be brought to the attention of any Ministry Team member. Congregational and parental interest in the school are encouraged and appreciated.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Weekday School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the administration of its policies. Children with special needs will be accepted on an individual assessment basis as we want to make sure that we are equipped to help meet their needs.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Arrivals and Departures

The Weekday School operates from September through May from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We observe an early dismissal at 12:00 noon for all Toddler and Two's classes during the first two weeks of school in order to ease the transition for these younger children. Otherwise, all classes end at 1:00 p.m.

Doors will open promptly at 8:55 am for student drop-off and 12:55 pm for pick-up. **Please have your child at school no later than 9:15 am.** We ask that all parents please call or email the school by 9:30 a.m. if your child is going to be absent that day. We will relay this information to your child's teacher.

At 1:10, children who still remain in the classroom will be taken to the director for pick up and late pickup fees will be charged to your account. It is essential to the quality of the program that teachers have the time before the children arrive and after the children leave to do the necessary preparation required for the classroom. Your cooperation with arriving by 9:15 am and picking your child up by 1:00 p.m. is greatly appreciated.

Drop-off and pick-up are not appropriate times for parent/teacher conferences. Our staff is more than willing to schedule a time to meet with parents in confidence and when students are not present.

Children in the Toddlers and Twos classes must be walked to their classroom each morning, signed in, and picked up at the classroom each afternoon.

Please park in the rear parking lot located behind the sanctuary.

A car-pool system is in place for children enrolled in the Threes, Fours and TK classes beginning the second week of school. Threes, Fours and TK should be dropped off at the end of the main building sidewalk each morning. After being greeted by staff members, the children will be guided to their classrooms. Do not allow your child to exit your car and walk in unless a teacher is present. Car doors will not be opened for arrival or dismissal if you are on your cell phone. **For the safety of the children, carpool is a NO CELL PHONE ZONE!!** Please pull up to the Buckle Up Zone to buckle your child into his/her car seat.

All parents/guardians must complete an "Authorization to Pick Up Child" form. This form lists all persons authorized to pick up your child from school. Anyone not listed on that form will not be allowed to leave with your child. **Parents must provide written notice for any changes. Those picking up children may be asked to show photo identification.**

For safety reasons, we ask that you follow these simple rules for the parking and drop-off / pick-up procedures:

- **THE ADJACENT LOT BESIDE OUR CARPOOL LINE is for staff only.**
- **PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE CAR-POOL LOADING AREA.**
- **NO U-TURNS ARE ALLOWED ANYWHERE ON CAMPUS DURING DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP TIMES**
- **ONE-WAY ONLY** where indicated
- **PLEASE KEEP GOODBYES AND STAFF DISCUSSIONS SHORT AND SWEET.**
- **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED IN CAR.**
- **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE VALUABLES VISIBLE IN YOUR CAR.**

Items from home

In order to make the transition from home easier, children are allowed to bring something small that is special to them to help them feel more comfortable in their new environment. The teachers welcome items that are related to the theme of the week. Please be advised that the school is not responsible for any broken/lost items that are brought from home. Please leave toys at home.

Food Requirements

Every day, your child needs to bring a snack, lunch and water bottle. **Please provide only healthy items – no candy or other sweets.** Since we are always encouraging self-help skills, we ask that you send easy-open containers and food that is ready for your child to eat. Certain foods should be cut lengthwise into small portions prior to being sent to school, such as grapes and hot dogs, because they are choking hazards.

Some healthy lunch suggestions are fresh fruits/vegetables, cheese cubes, yogurts, raisins, crackers, bagels with cream cheese, and turkey roll-ups.

Clothing

Please dress your child in clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for a day of active learning. Also, children must wear closed toe shoes to protect their feet from mulch and concrete. Sneakers are a good option.

Accidents can happen at any time. Therefore, your child will need to have a change of clothes for school (more than one during potty training). Please keep extra clothing (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) in a large Ziploc bag in your child's bag at all times. Since we do go outside on an almost daily basis, an extra jacket or sweatshirt is highly recommended. We also recommend clothing that is easy to pull off and on, which will help to encourage independence. Please no overalls, belts, and outfits with lots of snaps/buttons. Your child's clothing should not prohibit him/her from participating in the daily activities of preschool.

Diapers/Toilet Training

If your child is not potty trained, please provide the diapers or pull-ups that your child will need for each day. **Students must be completely potty-trained before entering the four-year-old program.** All children are required to wash their hands with the assistance of the teacher after having their diaper changed or using the toilet.

If you are toilet training your child, please let your teachers know – we have helpful information to share with you. Your child should show signs of being physically and emotionally ready to begin the process. Our teachers are willing to assist in the training process and to work cooperatively with the parent's pattern of training at home.

Curriculum

Trinity Weekday School believes that preschool children learn best through active learning. We offer developmentally appropriate hands-on activities that promote exploration and discovery. We follow many of the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) guidelines in planning our Christian-based, child-centered and active learning curriculum.

Our lessons are organized by themes. The weekly/monthly themes incorporate art, music, language/pre-reading skills, science, math, dramatic play and blocks. Outdoors is not only used for playtime, but it is also used as an extension of our classrooms.

The Reggio Emilia Approach to learning will be implemented into the existing creative curriculum. This approach or philosophy keeps the children's interest in mind when planning the direction of learning.

While incorporating Reggio Emilia, WDS staff are encouraged and supported to follow key components:

- Learning based on interests.
- Teachers and parents are co-learners.
- The classroom environment is a "third teacher".
- Learning progress is documented.
- Teacher focus on the many ways children learn.

Each child will have the opportunity to participate in various enrichment activities (at no additional cost) such as My Gym, Heart Strings Music and Creative Movement. Monthly Chapel is provided for all of our Threes, Fours and TK classes, with Twos joining in January. Also, for an additional fee, students may participate in enrichment programs offered after school such as Hello Spanish, Shining Stars and Soccer Shots. We strive to provide an environment where each child is cherished and encouraged to develop in his/her own way.

Birthday Celebrations

We will be happy to celebrate a child's birthday while at school. Simple cupcakes/muffins/cookies and birthday cups/napkins/plates are appropriate for parents to provide. **Please ask your child's teacher if there are any food allergies** in the class. We welcome parents; however, balloons/treat bags/presents and extended family members are more appropriate for parties outside of school. Children will not be allowed to exchange presents at school. Party invitations cannot be given out at school unless the entire class is invited.

OUR POLICIES

Discipline

Our goal is to help each child learn self-discipline. It begins with our efforts to provide an age-appropriate environment, to set limits that are easily understood and consistently maintained, and to give students an opportunity to make decisions concerning their behavior. We strive to help each child learn to verbalize needs, listen respectfully to others, negotiate, solve problems, resolve conflicts peacefully and make amends as appropriate. When needed, we use redirection, which is when we seek to lead a child to modify his/her behavior by helping him/her to identify more appropriate behavior. The consequences imposed (such as cool down period and removal from activity) are reasonable, related, respectful and developmentally appropriate.

If a child's behavior is adversely affecting the class (e.g., continued hurting of others, self, or property) and the above discipline techniques fail, it may be necessary to have a teacher-director-parent conference to work together and/or an outside consultation using professional community resources. If the behavioral problem persists, the child may be temporarily or permanently removed from the school at the discretion of the director.

Sick Policy

The health of the children and staff in our care is of the utmost importance to us. All staff members are trained and use "Universal Precautions" as defined by OSHA. By using these precautions, we hope to prevent or curtail the incidence of infectious diseases such as colds, flu, diarrhea, and other contagious illnesses. You will see our teachers using disposable gloves to change diapers, wipe runny noses, and clean scrapes.

Any child showing symptoms of illness should not be sent to school. These symptoms may include:

- Fever of 99.6 or higher
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash
- Abnormal discharge from any part of the body
- Any communicable disease

Your child may return to school when he/she has been free of all symptoms for 24 hours without the aid of over-the-counter medicine. If your child develops any of the above-mentioned symptoms during the school day, we will contact you to make arrangements for your child to go home.

The school will notify parents any time that children have been exposed to a communicable disease or lice. We ask that parents notify the school if their child is diagnosed with any communicable disease or lice. Names of children diagnosed will be kept confidential.

We will only administer medicine that has been prescribed by a doctor. Each medication should be properly labeled with the child's name on the container. All prescription medicines must be taken to the administrator's office to be properly stored during the day. A signed 'Permission to Administer Medication' Form must be completed. Whenever possible, please arrange your schedule so medicines can be given before/after school.

Lice

A child will be sent home immediately upon discovery of lice or nits. After a child is treated and there is no trace of remaining lice/nits, they should be kept home from school for 24 hours as a precaution. Upon returning to school the child should be walked into the office by the parent or caregiver where their head will be checked prior to the child returning to class. The person walking the child into the school should be prepared to communicate what treatment was administered.

Severe Weather Closings

The Weekday School will follow the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' (CMS) decisions for snow or inclement weather closings and delays. Please stay tuned to local television stations/websites for information regarding school closings. Also check the WDS Facebook page for updates.

- If CMS is on a 1-hour delay, Trinity WDS will have a 1-hour delay.
- If CMS delays for 2 hours, Trinity WDS will delay for 2 hours.
- If CMS closes, Trinity WDS will be closed as well.

It is the policy of the Weekday School to not have make-up days.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The staff of Trinity Presbyterian Church and the Weekday School recognizes the seriousness of child abuse and neglect. All of our staff have been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of neglect and abuse. Our staff is legally obligated to report suspected child abuse/neglect to the Mecklenburg Department of Social Services. Additional procedures for reporting and responding to allegations are listed in the Trinity Child Protection Policy. A copy of the policy is maintained in the Weekday School office and is available to review.

Allergic Response

The WDS staff understands that there is a wide range of allergies and allergic reactions that are common to children – examples are peanut, dairy, wheat, and insects. We cannot guarantee an allergy free school, but will strive to work with all of our school families to provide a safe environment for their child while in our care. A list of all classroom allergies will be posted within the classroom.

Written documentation, instructions, and medication as directed by a doctor should be provided to each teacher. Our teachers have been trained on the proper use for an Epi-pen in an emergency situation. These will be stored safely in the classroom. **It is the parent's responsibility to keep this medication clearly labeled and current (not past the expiration date). This medication should also be prescribed by a doctor for the specific child. We welcome information that can help inform our staff and/or share with the families regarding this special need for your child.**

Emergency Procedures

The Weekday School has formulated plans to deal with various emergencies that may arise during the school year. As part of our plans, we have fire/tornado drills, and have a designated fallout shelter (approved by the Fire Marshall) where we might be evacuated in an emergency. Our fallout shelter is a large area under the Trinity Presbyterian Church sanctuary. **In order for our emergency plan to work, it is imperative that all emergency contact information be kept current with the school office.** Please notify us in writing when you have a change of address, home phone, or cellular phone numbers. Please keep your cell phones with you and turned on at all times while your child is in school. If you cannot be reached during an emergency, the school will allow the designated authorized pick-up person to care for your child. Please feel confident that we will provide a safe and secure school environment while your child is in our care.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Registration

Registration forms are available in the weekday school office. In order for an enrollment to be complete, the application form must be completely filled out and signed and have the required registration fee attached. Enrollment is based on priority levels. They are as follows: Trinity Presbyterian church members and staff, current families in the school, former Weekday School families, and then new families.

If there are more applicants for a class than there are spaces available, a lottery will be held. You will be notified via email of your registration placement.

Registration fees are non-refundable - except in the case of being placed on the "waiting list" if requested class is already filled when child's application is drawn in lottery. In this case, the student is placed on the appropriate waiting list and the registration fee will be returned to the parent.

Enrollment

Class offerings are subject to change due to enrollment/staffing needs.

Class ratios and maximum number allowed are as follows:

Toddlers: 8 children, 2 teachers
Twos: 12 children, 2 teachers
Threes: 12-14 children, 2 teachers
Fours: 14 children, 2 teachers
TK: 14 children, 2 teachers

Immunizations are required for your child to enroll. They must be up to date and the blue medical form (provided by the Weekday School) must be completed by your child's physician within 30 days of your child's first day of school. Screen shots of immunization records are not permitted. Acceptable options are:

- Original or copy of the original
- Scan and send via email
- Fax to the WDS

The only allowable exemption is a medical exemption due to allergy to vaccine or its components. A medical exemption form must be completed and signed by your child's physician.

Fees

Registration Fees are \$125 for non-church member, new families, \$115 per child for non-church member, returning families and \$105 per child for church/staff member families. A registration fee is charged anytime during the year, regardless of when the child is enrolled. This fee is non-refundable and is separate from the monthly tuition fee. The maximum registration paid per family is \$250.

Tuition Fees are based on the number of days per week a child is enrolled. In order to hold your space for the following school year in our Toddler – Fours classes, we require one month's tuition to be paid in advance by May 1st. This advance deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the May tuition payment at the end of the school year. If enrolling in our Transitional Kindergarten class, we require two months tuition to be paid in advance – the first payment due by April 1st and the second due by May 1st. These will be applied to September and May's tuition of that school year.

Late Pick-Up Fees will incur a charge of \$1.00 per minute after 1:10. Any child whose parents have not arrived by 1:10 will be brought to the director so that his/her teachers may complete their end of the day classroom duties. Parents may pick up their child in the office. This late fee will be added to your child's account and a statement will be issued.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first of each month. Checks or Tuition Express are the preferred methods of payment. Checks should be made payable to *Trinity WDS* and may be mailed or placed in the locked box located near the weekday school office. Tuition Express (automatic payment plan) is also a convenient method of payment offered at Trinity. Tuition Express will be drafted on the 10th of each month. We highly encourage participation in this program. Please contact the WDS office for further information or to enroll in Tuition Express.

If cash payments are made, the exact amount must be given; otherwise a credit will be issued to your child's account for any amount in excess.

Late payments/Returned Check Fees: Payments received after the 10th of the month are considered delinquent and a LATE FEE of \$25 will be charged to the account. All checks returned for "non-sufficient funds" are charged a handling fee of \$20 per check. If a family has two returned checks within the same school year, the Weekday School office will require future payments to be made in cash, by money order, or by cashier's check.

If tuition fees are not paid within 30 days of their due date, the Weekday School reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment. Trinity Weekday School will make every effort to work with a family should a financial crisis arise. Please see the director or assistant director for further assistance.

Withdrawal from School

We value our relationship with you and your child. We hope your child will be a member of our school family for a long time. We understand, however, that there may be a time when a parent may need to terminate a child's enrollment for reasons such as relocation or change in job status. If a parent elects to remove their child from school, we ask that written notice be given to the director 30 days in advance. Payment of tuition is expected for the notice period.

Unfortunately, there may be times when Trinity Weekday School must terminate a child's enrollment. These include nonpayment of tuition by parent, abuse of staff, children, or property of Trinity Presbyterian Church, chronic abuse of the Weekday School policies, and the inability of the staff to adequately care for or meet the needs of a child in a group setting. In all cases except nonpayment of tuition, a two-week notice will be given before terminating a child's enrollment.

Good For
1 FREE
Late Payment

Good For
1 FREE
Late Pick-up