

Banner Elk Presbyterian Church Preschool



Policies and Procedures Parent Handbook 2024-2025

Welcome to Banner Elk Presbyterian Church Preschool!

It is a privilege to have your child as part of our program this year. We look forward to a great year getting to know you and your family. Included in this handbook is the information that we trust will be of help to you as we begin the new year.

PROGRAM

Banner Elk Presbyterian Church Preschool Program is for children ages 2 to 5. It is open to all children in the community and surrounding area, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, family structure, need, or ability.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Banner Elk Presbyterian Preschool is a Christian preschool whose staff desires to make your child's time here one they will cherish. Our goal is to provide intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual development through hands-on creative play. The varieties of learning areas are enhanced through a STEAM based curriculum where children will explore art, music, language, math, technology, science, and social skills. Fine motor skills are enhanced using puzzles, beads, weaving, and art activities. Gross motor skills are enhanced by daily outside play, weather permitting, using tricycles, balls, yoga, dance, obstacle courses, sand play, slides, and climbing wall on our new private "Sunshine" playground. Once a week the students will have chapel time in the sanctuary led by our ministers. Bible stories and character education are woven into the curriculum. Music knowledge is enhanced through extracurricular lessons twice per month.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The responsibilities of the Board of Directors are to develop policies and guidelines consistent with the statement of the purpose, to give oversight and support to the Preschool Program that is based on sound Christian convictions and highest principles of early childhood education. The Board also manages the finances so that the annual operation is self-supporting with the exception of utilities and routine maintenance which will be provided by the church. Any parent concern should first be discussed with your child's teacher, second with the program director, and third with the board chair who may choose to discuss with the entire board.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

The Banner Elk Presbyterian Church Preschool has an open enrollment policy. We understand that family situations change, or families move in and out of a community. Because we want to be supportive of all these situations, we will accept children into the program throughout the year. If this occurs, we may need to move a child from one classroom (age group) to another. There will be several factors that we will look at if we need to move a child. Age/birth date will not be the only criteria and if needed, we will do an evaluation of a child to determine if they are able to make this transition if needed. We will not move a child into the older age classroom just because they have a birthday in the middle of the year.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

The school calendar will be set each year by the Board and a copy will be sent to the parents prior the beginning of school in August. Monthly calendars and outlining of important dates can be found on the parent informational board or on Facebook for each month.

We look forward to an exciting year together!

LICENSING

Banner Elk Presbyterian Church Preschool does not fall under North Carolina Department of Child Development and Early Education's state licensing requirements. While the program meets or exceeds many state standards, it only operates 4 hours per day, exempting it from having to be licensed. Banner Elk Presbyterian Church Preschool meets the following standards for high quality early care and education programs as assessed by a specialist from Blue Ridge Partnership for Children:

- Low teacher/child ratios
- Physical square footage per child in classrooms
- Environment Rating Scales high range standards for developmentally appropriate classroom environments, materials, planning and practices, teacher-child interactions, outdoor learning, environment, physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language, and literacy development, safety, sanitation, program, parent engagement, staff professional development, and administration.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Webster's defines discipline as "the training of the mind and character". We believe in guiding children's behavior consistently by focusing their attention on the problem or task, using explanation and instruction. Problem-solving is encouraged and reasoning is used so that children will begin to see logical consequences for their actions.

Occasionally children will experience the temporary loss of a privilege or activity as a consequence of their actions. We believe in redirecting the child's attention to remove them from the situation and give them time to think about their behavior. We do not use any type of corporal punishment!

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We hope that parents want to bring their time, talents, and interests to BEPC Preschool. Your participation is necessary for specific activities and for the success of the program. We ask each family to:

1. Share, on a rotating basis, in providing a daily snack for the children.
(Suggestions and ideas for snacks will be posted on parent information board).
2. Work with other families and the school, to host and plan outside school events.
3. Help and support with any church or community events that involve the preschool.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday will be recognized on the day closest to his/her birthday or when the parent chooses. It is a special day for every child. Parents are invited to provide a special snack that day to share with the group, all items need to be store bought in their original packaging. Please ask program director for any possible allergies amongst the children. Please note that we cannot hand out birthday invitations in the classroom unless all students are invited.

SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

A limited number of partial scholarships are available from Banner Elk Presbyterian Church. A scholarship application form can be obtained from the Church office or on the website. The Preschool board will discuss and make recommendations to the session for all awarded scholarships.

CLOTHING

Preschool children are required to bring a complete set of extra clothing each day of school. They may be left in the child's cubby, clearly marked with the child's name, only to be taken home when used. We recommend that you bring extra clothing in a zip-lock bag for easy storage and for soiled clothes to be kept in.

Clothing: Be aware that the children will be participating in active play every day, including art and science projects that can stain clothing. Please dress your child in play clothes that are easily washed. Also take in to consideration that if diapers need to be changed that clothing is easy to remove and replace. We appreciate your understanding.

Shoes: Make sure your child arrives at school with comfortable play shoes that have closed toes. No flip-flops or dress shoes to avoid the danger of slipping or tripping from their shoes.

Diapers: Parents will provide all diapers and cleaning wipes needed for their child. Please check your supply weekly. Teachers will remind you when supplies are getting low.

SNACKS

A morning snack will be served each day, provided by the parents on a rotating basis. The snack provided needs to be enough for all the children at the preschool. Appropriate snacks include goldfish, crackers, fruit (cut and ready to serve), pretzels, yogurt, cheese cubes etc. More ideas and suggestions can be found on the parent board. If there are any allergies within the school, this needs to be taken in to serious consideration before providing a snack. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to ask any of the teachers. If you wish to opt out of our provided snack, please send an extra snack in your child's lunchbox labeled FOR SNACK!

Our goal is to provide opportunities for children to become independent, responsible, and self-controlled in a variety of aspects in life. Our intent is to establish an atmosphere of respect between children and teachers, children and their friends, as well as respect for the environment including equipment, materials, and the property of others.

Our Board of Directors is always available to help the Director with any parent issues or concerns.

TUITION AND FEES

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 per child each year. This is used to purchase basic supplies for the school year. Your child's spot will be secured once the registration fee is paid.

**FEES: All classes; 2 year olds, 3 year olds and 4 year olds,
5 days per week for \$310.00 per month.**

School schedule is Monday-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm.

Payments may be mailed directly to the Banner Elk Presbyterian Church, PO Box 158, Banner Elk, NC 28604; or dropped in the tuition box below the parent information board outside the 2-year-old classroom.

There will be a fee of \$25.00 for all returned checks. After the first returned check, payments need to be in cash or by money order.

All tuition is due no later than the 5th day of each month. If the tuition is not paid in full by this date, your child will not be allowed back to school until it is paid in full.

The application forms are available in the church office or found online on the preschool website. To complete the application process, return the form with the \$50.00 nonrefundable registration fee.

REGISTRATION POLICY

Registration will begin April 1 of each year with the following priority: Currently enrolled children. Siblings of children currently enrolled. Children and grandchildren of BEPC members. Open enrollment will begin May 1. A waiting list will be maintained throughout the year with a complete application form. When your child moves off the waiting list for enrollment, the registration fee of \$50.00 is due.

Children who are ages 2, 3 or 4 by August 30 of the current year are eligible to apply.

*It is very important that you adhere specific times to allow for flow and respecting the teachers time of day. **Please do not drop your child off any early than the designated time unless discussed with the Director.** Please pick your child up at the designated time, if you are going to be late please contact the Director and/or your teacher. Thank you!

DROP-OFFS

Drop-off Procedures: Drop of is at 9:00am*

2-year-old class: At the Main Preschool Entrance (facing the Bell Tower).

3-year-old class: At the First Fellowship Entrance.

4-year-old class: At the First Fellowship Hall Entrance.

PICK-UP/END OF DAY

Pick-up Procedures: Pick up is at 1:00pm*

2-year-old class: At the Main Preschool Entrance (facing the Bell Tower) or Playground.

3-year-old class: At the First Fellowship entrance.

4-year-old class: At the First Fellowship Hall Entrance.

ILLNESSES

The problem of communicable disease is prevalent in every group and preschool is no exception. Parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children when they show symptoms of any deviation from their normal health. If a child becomes ill at preschool the teacher will immediately notify the parents. The child will be kept separated from the group until taken home.

In case of extreme illness of children and/or staff, the board may close the program for a period to allow for sanitation of facilities and healing of people.

We encourage all parents to have their children immunized to help prevent the spread of disease. Children will not be permitted at school with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever within the past 24 hours.
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- Draining rash or undiagnosed rash lasting over a 24-hour period.
- Eye discharge or pink eye. Children can be re-admitted after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection, or after 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Open, oozing sores or scabs, unless properly covered and 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Head lice- until treatment is effective and a follow-up check has been made by

the program director.

- COVID-19 related illness, please adhere to separate document– BEPC COVID-19 policy & guideline

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES

Weather is very challenging to work with. For most closures, we will abide by the announcements of Lees-McRae College regarding closing school due to ice or snow. If the college is on any delay, the BEPC Preschool will keep regular hours unless the Director finds the conditions precarious. The Director will be in constant communication with the Chief of Police at Lees-McRae College. If we are open, **please understand that it is always the parent's discretion to decide whether it is safe to drive their child to school or not.** Announcements will be made through Facebook and Email regarding change in our daily schedule.

Each winter has different challenges regarding weather related school closings. The BEPC Board continues to discuss the proper safety procedures for our staff and children. In the event we have preschool, parents and caregivers are to use their own judgment on traveling to school. An alternate "snow day" curriculum will be in place should we decide to have school and depending on numbers of teachers and students.

SCHOOL DAY AND LUNCH

Our school day begins at 9:00am and ends at 1:00pm Monday through Friday every week. Each child needs to bring a packed lunch and bottle of water clearly labeled with the child's name and current date, month/day/year, each day. All lunches will be placed in the refrigerator if needed. Please take into consideration that we do not heat any food at the preschool.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than the parents, or persons on pick up list, the director and the teacher must be notified in writing and the person picking up should be ready to show proper identification.

ABSENCES

No credit will be given due to vacations, illnesses, or holidays.

WITHDRAWALS

Please give at least 14 days' notice if you must withdraw your child from BEPC Preschool. If you withdraw your child and later wish to re-enroll, this may only be done if space allows.

CUSTODY

If there is a custody issue involving your child, please inform the Director. If legal custody is given to only one parent, the preschool will need to have copies of the court agreement. Legal documentation is also required if one parent isn't allowed to pick up your child/children. Unless we have proper documentation saying you are the custodial parent, we cannot keep the non-custodial parent from coming to school. If a problem arises during school hours, the police will be contacted.

PHYSICAL/SEXUAL ABUSE

Following NC law, it is our policy that all children being served in our program will be free of the following threats: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, bullying and neglect. Please be aware that it is State Law that all staff must report any suspected case of child abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation. If a suspected case of abuse does occur; a report will be made to the Department of Social Services. All staff will conduct themselves in such a way as to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care. An accusation of inappropriate behaviors or abuse by any staff member will result in immediate investigation by the board.



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