



First Presbyterian Church
1031 North Garden St.
Bellingham, WA 98225
preschool@fpcbellingham.org

Family Handbook

Welcome to First Pres Preschool!

Thank you for choosing First Pres Preschool! We are happy to welcome you into our school. We are extremely blessed and very excited to be one of the first steps on your child's educational journey. We are dedicated to working with you so that this is a positive, happy, and educational experience for your child.

First Pres Preschool is a Christian preschool and Pre-K with an emphasis on quality education, faith and diversity. It is our commitment to show your child the love, grace and mercy of Jesus. We believe that all children are blessings from God and we cherish each child's individuality. It is our hope that through this education your child will learn the beauty of diversity and the valuable lesson of accepting and loving others for who they are.

Every year we look forward to working with our students and our families to enrich each other's lives. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns or "life changes" that happen during the year. We strive for open communication with our families.

Mission and Goal

The mission of the First Pres Preschool is to be a warm, loving, healthy, and safe Christian environment for the Bellingham community. As children of God we teach and model positive self-image, individuality, independence, and values of the community and mutual care. Our curriculum is academically rich and spiritually sound. Students will be offered the opportunity to grow and develop spiritually, cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically through developmentally appropriate play based learning.

Our goal is that every child will feel successful and know that they are a beloved child of God. Jesus is the thread that weaves our day together as we explore reading, math, science, and social studies while learning to love God and each other.

Schedule

Daily Schedule

Blended Preschool classes are offered Monday through Thursday from 9am to Noon. An extra hour of Pre-K programming extends from Noon to 1 pm. Children must be 3 years of age by September 1 of the enrollment year and self-sufficient in the bathroom. Children who are 3 by December 1 will be evaluated based on readiness and space available.

Our flexible schedule helps families meet the unique needs of their preschooler by picking a 2, 3, or 4 day-per-week schedule on the days that work best for them. When deciding on a schedule for your child, please consider whether they might benefit more from the consistency of consecutive classroom days or a more restful every-other-day routine.

**All students are welcome to join us for field trip special guests, and class parties/events at no additional cost even if the event is scheduled on a day your child is not enrolled.*

9:00 Soft Start, Discovery Time

9:30 Morning Meeting

9:45 Play-based Learning, Art

10:30 Middle Circle

10:45 Snack

11:15 Gross Motor Play and Group Games

11:45 Closing Circle

12:00 Preschool Parent Pick-Up

12:00 Start Pre-K Extension

1:00 Pre-K Parent Pick-Up

Drop Off & Pick Up

Send your child off to preschool after a good night's sleep and a good breakfast. Please take him/her to the bathroom before bringing to class. The doors to the classroom will be open at 8:55. Please sign your child "in" and help them hang up coats and put personal items in cubbies. At the end of our regular school day, teachers will help students pack up their belongings and bring them upstairs to the main lobby. Please sign your child out including time. Teachers will remain with the children until their guardian arrives. Pick up time is at 12pm.

Due to the nature of parking areas at and around First Presbyterian Church, specific instructions for parking during Drop Off & Pick Up will be provided during orientation.

Early/Late Arrival and Early/Late Pick-Up Courtesies

If you are running late for drop off or pick up, an "I'm late!" call or text would be greatly appreciated. If you are tardy more than three times for pick up, an "I'm late!" fee of \$15 will be added to your tuition for the following month. Your promptness is extremely appreciated, especially by your child! If you are picking your child up early, please give a staff member a "heads up" to ease the early exit and minimize classroom disruption. Additionally, if you know in advance of an upcoming absence, a note, text, or email is very helpful. This saves time and worry for your teacher.

School Closure and Snow Day Policy

We follow the Bellingham Public Schools' calendar in regards to holiday and vacation breaks. If the Bellingham Public Schools are closed for inclement weather, we will also cancel class for that day. School closures for inclement

weather can be heard on all local radio stations (106.5 FM, 104.1 FM, 92.9 FM and 790 AM). If the Bellingham Schools have a "Late Arrival", we will be delaying school for 1 hour. This means the school day will run from 10am to 1pm. You will be notified by email or text of any weather closures before 8:30am. If First Pres Preschool has more than 4 weather related closures, we will begin the discussion regarding "make-up" days.

Program Information

Tuition and Fees

Annual tuition is broken down into 9 equal payments.

Monthly tuition is as follows:

2 days/week - \$200

3 days/week - \$300

4 days/week - \$400

Optional Pre-Kindergarten Extension:

2 days/week - \$66

3 days/week - \$100

4 days/week - \$133

Annual registration fee = \$75

Payment

The payment is due the 5th week of the month (Sept - May) unless prior arrangements have been made.

- Payments can be made online through the FPC Bellingham website. The fee for credit or debit cards is 2.15% +\$0.30 per transaction. The fee for ACH (bank transfer) is \$0.30 per transaction.
- You may also utilize automatic bill pay through your own bank, by adding FPC as a payee: First Presbyterian Church, 1031 North Garden Bellingham, WA 98225.
- We also accept checks, made payable to First Presbyterian Church.

Orientation

A parent orientation meeting will be scheduled before the beginning of the school year. This is a mandatory meeting and will serve to answer your questions about school, give you an opportunity to talk with the teachers, and to meet other families that will be with you and your child throughout the next school year. If you are unable to attend please set up an appointment.

Snacks

Please have your child pack a healthy snack each day. We encourage eating "grow foods" first (fruits, veggies, proteins) followed by "snack food" (crackers, fruit snacks) saving sweet treats for last (cookies, etc.). Please send only containers and utensils that your child can handle without assistance. We will address any food allergies if necessary.

Special Programs, Holidays & Birthdays

We have two special programs per year that are attended by all of our students: the Christmas program and our Mother's Day celebration in May. Exact dates will be listed on the year-at-a-glance calendar. We also try to acknowledge other holidays if we can. This could be anything from a class party, to a special snack, art project, book or visitor. Information regarding holiday celebrations will be communicated.

We will celebrate each child's birthday. If you would like to bring a special treat, please let the teachers know. We will celebrate all summer birthdays as "school birthdays" and will notify you in advance if this affects your child. In consideration for the feelings of all the children, please do not send gifts or invitations for parties or play dates to school unless all the boys and girls in the class are included.

Field Trips and Classroom Visitors

It is our intent to go on 2-3 field trips per year. Opportunities outside of school provide learning through hands-on experience and enrich our classroom learning. Have a field trip idea? Let us know! Due to Washington State law, it will be up to you to transport your own child in an approved car seat or to make individual arrangements for someone else to do so. We will also have guest visitors come to our classroom. If you would like to be a special guest, please let us know.

Preschool Attire

Dress for Mess! Please send your child to school in comfortable play clothes. 99% of the materials we use are "washable" however, there is always the risk of stains. We have fun and we make messes. It is our goal to communicate with parents and give them a "heads up" for extra messy occasions. Jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts are encouraged for our outside playtime. Please put names on these and for safety reasons do not send them in clogs or flip-flops.

Please bring a spare set of clothes for your child, including socks and undies, to be kept at the school. Please place the clothing items in a gallon size zip-lock bag with your child's name written on the outside. Bathroom accidents and snack time spills do occasionally happen with this age group and we like to be prepared.

Families' Only Directory

Each year we will create a directory of and for our families with "opt-in", google link information only. Please be courteous, thoughtful, and respectful with this information. Do not use the information for any purpose other than child social activities such as play dates or birthday invitations. If you have a change of address or telephone number please inform us as soon as possible. First Pres Preschool does not share your personal information with anyone.

Fundraising

We do a small amount of fundraising to help subsidize our budget. Fundraising opportunities will be communicated to you as needed.

Health and Safety

Guidelines

To safeguard the health of the children in our preschool we ask that you kindly respect our guidelines. We are dedicated to a clean and healthy environment for all of our students. In order to maintain this standard, and limit exposure to germs we ask each child to wash their hands prior to starting their school day.

Children with the following symptoms should stay at home:

- **Diarrhea or vomiting:** A child with diarrhea should be kept home until they have been symptom free for 24 hours. Watch child for signs of dehydration and see your doctor.

- **Fever of 100.4 or higher within the last 24 hours:** A child with a fever may not be sent to school. The child must be free of fever for 24 hours before being sent back to school. Check your child’s temperature prior to giving them medication.
- **Congested cough:** A child with a “heavy” cold and deep or hacking cough belongs at home even without a fever. Greenish discharge from the nose may be a sign of an infection. Notify your doctor if this occurs.
- **Puffy, pink or infected eyes**
- **Rash:** Do not send a child with a rash to school until your doctor says it is safe to do so.
- **Head Lice:** Head lice can become a difficult and expensive problem if allowed to spread. If your child contracts head lice, you will be contacted to pick him or her up. They may return to school after treatment with a lice-killing shampoo and lice have been determined to be eliminated. Please ask if you have questions or need assistance in any way.

Many of these symptoms are the same as for COVID-19. Testing is recommended for people who experience these symptoms as soon as possible after their onset. We understand that no parent would knowingly send a contagious child to school, but with many diseases, children can be contagious days before symptoms occur. Please let your teachers know if your child has not been well. Depending on the disease, we may send out a Health Advisory email to notify the other preschool parents and hopefully stop the spread. All health issues will be handled as discreetly as possible. If your child becomes sick at school or sustains a serious injury, you will be contacted immediately.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child do not hesitate to speak with us. If there are any changes at home: a move, death in family, sickness or lost pet—any of these can upset a child. Let us know. If your child is having difficulty with preschool or we are having difficulty with your child we will arrange a conference. Please tell us if your child is unhappy or something is bothering him/her, we want to help!

First Pres Preschool does not administer medication without written permission, under emergency circumstances.

Background Checks

We are dedicated to providing a safe classroom. To ensure this, all First Pres Preschool and FPC staff are required to complete a background check every 2 years, and will be compliant to all state regulations concerning negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child.

Emergencies

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please be assured that your teachers are trained in CPR and First Aid. In the event of an accident at school, your teachers will determine if 911 should be called. If the injury is minor, we will simply take care of it and treat your child and inform you upon pickup. We will always refer to your Medical Health form when evaluating treatment. Fire, earthquake, and other emergency drills will be practiced and performed.

First Presbyterian Church Information

Preschool families are always welcome to join us for worship and kids time Sundays at 10:00. Activity bags are available in the foyer for your children to help keep them busy during the service. A “cry room” is available, as well as a wonderful nursery with live feed television from the worship service, if that is more comfortable for you. We hope that you will join us.

**We are so thankful that the Lord has brought us together,
and we thank you for sharing your child with us.
Blessings for a great year!**