

SoulSong at First Presbyterian Church

Family Handbook 2022-2023 Academic Year

We are thrilled that you have chosen to share your child with us. We understand what an important decision this is. At SoulSong, we prioritize a safe learning environment for all of our children. We adhere to the following policies in order to give each child the best care possible. Please read each section carefully. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions via the Remind app, Facebook, or soulsong@firstprescookeville.org.

MILESTONES FOR SOULSONG READINESS:

Most children will be ready for our program by age 1.5. Some are ready earlier, and we are always happy to evaluate prospective students on a case-by-base basis. For success in our program, your child should be able to:

- Sit in child-size chair (not a high chair) for the duration of a meal.
- Only need one (or fewer) nap per day, taken around 11:30am on own nap mat in Hatchlings.
- Follow one-step directions (ex: Put the train in the red bin.), beginning in Hatchlings 2 room but encouraged in Hatchlings 1.
- Navigate stairs safely and independently (scooting/crawling ok), beginning in Hatchlings 2 room.
- Feed self age-appropriate finger-foods.
- Drink from a water bottle(360-style cup is fine).
- Fledglings Pre-k: Above milestones, plus independent toileting (undressing/dressing, using the toilet, wiping, flushing, and washing hands)

TUITION

-Nonrefundable Fees: There is a one-time registration fee of \$30 per family. Additionally, there are two annual fees. Cleaning supply fee is \$30 per family. School supply fee is \$25 per child. These fees cover disinfectants, first aid, art, and other supplies during the school year.

-Rates: \$60/week; \$50/week for each additional sibling after the first child enrolled

-Schedule: Tuition is paid during the first FULL week of instruction each month. There will be no tuition adjustments or refunds due to failure to attend. Your tuition holds your child's space in our program. If tuition payment is not received by the end of the month, your child will move to the waiting list for future openings. Invoices are provided and will be sent via Remind. Place payments in the black drop box in the drop-off area. We accept cash or checks (written to **First Presbyterian Church**, child's name on the memo line). Cash must be clearly labeled to be applied to your account. In the event your child is unable to attend for an extended period due to an emergency situation, you may defer your unused days to a future month upon their return. Late payments will be charged \$5 per business day beginning the Monday after tuition is due.

TEACHER:CHILD RATIOS

We maintain ratios at or below 1:8 (1:6 among ages 1-2.5), unless special circumstances require a change. We always remain under the State of Tennessee childcare ratio limits for all ages served at SoulSong.

In the event that we cannot be within the legal childcare ratios as determined by Tennessee, we are forced to close for that day. This would occur if staff is unable to report and substitutes cannot be found. If you would like to apply to be a substitute, let our director know.

COMMUNICATION

Sign up for the Remind app, and join the following classes: @soulsong and your child's class (Hatchlings: @soulsong1; Fledglings: @soulsong2). All school communication will be sent via Remind. You must join Remind prior to your child's first day. Remind will be used to announce schedule changes, share updates, announce special events, etc.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

We use a combination of redirection and positive reinforcement. Time outs, if necessary, are used to calm down and regroup before speaking with the teacher and are not used to shame. Time outs are not used for children under age 3. Our teachers address the children peacefully and respectfully. Immediate safety concerns may result in a raised voice (ex: a child about to push another off playground structures). A pattern of violent behavior may be grounds for a child's temporary suspension or permanent disenrollment without refund of tuition. If a child consistently engages in behavior that creates an unsafe environment for themselves or others, it may be deemed that we are unable to safely meet their needs.

ATTENDANCE

-Daily Operations: We are open Monday and Wednesday AND Tuesday and Thursday 8:15-2:15; M/W and T/Th sessions operate independently.

-Transition Times: Drop off between 8:15-8:30 and pick up between 2:00-2:15. **Masks are recommended but not required for adults entering the building during these times.**

-Late Drop-offs: The door will be locked promptly at 8:45. Late arrivals will be required to wait until the church office opens at 9:00. Come to the office door and ring the doorbell for admittance. Our school day begins at 8:45, and children who arrive late will miss morning activities.

-Late Pick Ups: The door will be locked promptly at 2:15pm. Anyone arriving after this time will have to be let in and will be charged a late fee of \$1.50/minute per child, which must be paid in cash upon arrival on your child's next school day. After 3 late pickups, the child will be required to be picked up from our program by 2:00. It is against state policy to have children in our care after 2:15pm. Chronic late pickups may result in disenrollment.

-Absences: Up to two absences per month may be made up during the other program (M/W vs T/Th). These days must be made up within two weeks of returning to school or will be forfeited. There is no reimbursement or discount for absences, unless quarantined for COVID-19(see COVID policy). Please notify the school via Remind at least 24 hours prior to coming for a makeup day, to allow staff to prepare materials and to check for availability. To be eligible for makeup days, you must inform us of your child's absence prior to 9:00am.

DROP OFF:

Drop-offs may occur anytime between 8:15-8:30 in our transition area. A hand sanitizing station will be set up in the SoulSong hallway and in each classroom. All students must clean their hands with hand sanitizer or by washing with soap and warm water in the restroom upon arrival. Late arrivals must proceed to the church office door, which opens at 9:00am.

PICK UP:

Pickups begin at 2:00. Children must be in the care of a parent or guardian by 2:15. Family members must remain in the transition area or outside when picking up. Classroom teachers will dismiss children from the classrooms when their families arrive, unless we are already outside on nice days. Late pickups will result in a fee of \$1.50 per minute per child. Families are welcome to stay on the playground after closing time to enjoy our playground.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/ILLNESS CLOSURES

PUTNAM COUNTY SCHOOLS	SOULSONG
Closed	Closed*
1 Hour Delay	Drop-Off 9:15-9:30
2 Hour Delay	Drop-Off 10:15-10:30
Early Release	30 min prior to PCS

*If we are **closed** due to weather (or illness), tuition paid for that day will roll over to the following month. This will be reflected on your next month's invoice. Rollover will also occur if we dismiss prior to noon.

Children **must** be picked up on time for early dismissals to allow staff to pick up children from elementary and middle schools. Late fee of \$2.50 per minute per child will apply.

ILLNESS

We strive to keep the children in our care healthy by maintaining a clean environment, which is disinfected regularly. We have adopted even deeper daily cleaning in response to COVID-19. Children exhibiting communicable illnesses are asked to refrain from attending until they are symptom-free and/or cleared for school by a doctor.

A child may not attend if the following symptoms have been exhibited within the past 48 hours:

- Fever of at least 99.6 (without fever-reducing medication)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Pink eye
- Yellow/green mucus runny nose
- Contagious/unexplained rash
- Head lice (may return after treated)
- Positive strep test
- Positive flu test
- Persistent productive cough
- Hand-foot-and-mouth symptoms

If children are exhibiting the above symptoms, SoulSong reserves the right to contact the parents and have the children picked up. In the event that you are contacted, please arrive as soon as possible to pick up your child. Your child will be isolated from their class until you are able to arrive. **Please be considerate to the other families and help keep our center as germ-free as possible.**

Students (and staff) will be randomly temperature screened throughout the day. In the event a temperature reads 99.5+, a second thermometer will be used to check the ear. Additional clothing layers will be removed. There will then be a 5 minute wait before checking again if no other symptoms are present. If the temperature is still elevated, a message will be sent via Remind, and the child will need to be picked up as soon as possible. Staff with a fever will be sent home promptly.

COVID-19

IF TESTING POSITIVE:

The child must stay home for 7 days after the onset of symptoms. If they receive a negative test result after 5 days, they may return to school for the remainder of the 7 day period with a KN-95 or N-95 mask provided from home. Regular illness policy (above) still applies.

CONFIRMED EXPOSURE IN THE HOME:

The child must quarantine for 5 days after exposure (onset of symptoms or positive test if asymptomatic) but may then return to school with a negative test result. Without proof of a negative test, the quarantine period will last 7 days. If additional members of the family develop symptoms, the exposure time is reset.

STAFF IS NOT PERMITTED TO RETURN TO WORK UNTIL THE ABOVE STANDARDS OF RECOVERY/TESTING HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED.

ABSENCES:

Unlike our regular illness policy, COVID-19 absences will be credited to the following month's tuition.

NOTIFICATIONS:

You will be notified via Remind of any confirmed exposures in our school, including which classroom(s) are affected. School will not be closed unless we are unable to appropriately staff classrooms or are experiencing attendance below 50%, but you will have the option to quarantine your child and utilize the Covid absence policy.

FOOD AND DRINK

-Water: Each child needs to bring fresh water in a clean, reusable cup labeled with their name daily. (Munchkin 360 cups and Thermos Funtainer water bottles are best for not leaking in bags.)

-Breakfast: None provided. Please finish eating breakfast before entering school.

-Snacks: A light morning snack is provided daily. Children may bring a snack from home if there are specific dietary needs (ex: vegan, allergies). Let your child's teacher know if they have packed a snack for themselves in their lunchbox.

-Zero-Waste Lunch: Lunches must be brought from home and may not require any additional preparation at school (heating, slicing, etc.). Please make sure your child's lunch is in a lunch box clearly labeled with their name. Practice with your child at home to open and close their lunch container. We highly recommend containers such as the Bentgo Kids bento box in order to reduce waste and increase independence at lunchtime. We are committed to a zero-waste lunch policy and strongly encourage sending your child a cloth napkin in their lunchbox. (Pouches, such as applesauce, are ok. We understand that these are a happy-making food for many children.)

Not permitted: high fructose corn syrup, artificial dyes, excessively processed foods, box/pouch drinks other than organic milk or yogurt smoothies, choking hazards such as unsliced grapes/baby carrots/popcorn/etc. Items that do not meet these standards will be returned to home in your child's lunchbox.

Please be mindful of the level of messiness of your child's lunch. We do not have a daily janitorial staff, and the teachers are responsible for cleaning the floor after lunch.

-Birthdays: You are welcome to send non-food treats or a healthy snack to celebrate your child's birthday.

-Allergies: We have a wide array of food allergies. Speak with your child about not sharing their lunch with anyone else and not eating from a friend's lunch. If any of our students have a severe peanut allergy, we may become a peanut-free facility.

-Dietary Restrictions: If your family has a specific diet due to allergies, religion, or personal choice (vegan, vegetarian, etc.), please let us know.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Each child is required to bring the following daily in a **full-size** backpack:

- Change of clothes, including socks and underwear
- Reusable Water Bottle, clearly labeled and filled with clean water daily
- Diapers/Wipes (if needed), clearly labeled, at least 5 diapers daily
- Zero-Waste Healthy Lunch: Clearly labeled, insulated lunch box/bag

Not in backpack:

- Jacket/Rain Boots/Hat: Please bring weather-appropriate items when needed. We will go outside as much as possible. Please ensure your child is dressed for the weather. There are hooks available for jackets/hats. If your child's hat is inside their backpack, please communicate that with their teacher.
- School shoes: All Fledglings pre-k students and staff members are required to keep a pair of shoes at SoulSong to be changed into upon arrival. Shoes worn to school that day will be worn for outside recess. Hatchlings students are not required to have inside shoes.

REST TIME

We understand that some children drop their nap earlier than others. Children are not required to sleep during rest time; however, they do have a calm and quiet period during which they are welcome to sleep if they need to. Books and other quiet activities will be made available after a reasonable period of silent rest time. Children are welcome to bring a small, lightweight swaddle-size blanket and/or lovey that will fit in their backpack daily.

****Fledgling pre-k students do not nap.****

STAFF TRAINING

Our staff is trained in first aid and CPR, as well as molestation prevention. All staff/volunteers must pass a background check prior to working with any minors at FPC. It is FPC policy that at least two adults will be with minors.

DRESS CODE

-Clothes: Play clothes! The children will be doing art and playing outside as frequently as possible, and they will get dirty. Clothing should be conducive to movement and comfortable. Children who are toilet independent should be able to go to the bathroom without requiring help undressing/dressing. Undergarments should be fully covered by clothing during times of movement.

-Shoes: Running shoes, enclosed sandals (Keen-type) and non-heeled boots are permitted for outdoor recess. No dress shoes (including high heels), open sandals, heeled boots, backless shoes, or other slick shoes are allowed for safety reasons. Rain boots are encouraged when it is muddy outside but can pose a safety risk on dry days, as children often trip when running in rain boots.

Work with your child at home practice putting their own shoes on and removing them independently. We do not expect them to be able to tie their own laces, but it will help the teachers significantly for as many children as possible to be able to at least get their shoes (and socks) on their feet independently. Non-lacing shoes are preferred for independence.

RECESS:

Children will receive at least 30 minutes of gross motor play per day. We will be outside when weather permits (“feels like” 40+ degrees, no lightning/heavy precipitation, no active safety advisories). On our playground, children can choose from climbing, playhouses, slides, cars, sidewalk chalk, running, and seasonal activities. When weather requires us to stay inside, we will play inside classrooms and also utilize the fellowship hall play area.

The policies in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of SoulSong/First Presbyterian Church, as needed. Please save the link to the handbook.

SoulSong

2022-2023 Calendar

Observed Breaks and Holidays

August 9	Open House (10:00-12:00) - OPTIONAL
August 10	First Day of Fall Semester
Sept 5	Labor Day - CLOSED
Sept 30-Oct 14	Fall Break - CLOSED
Nov 8	Election Day - CLOSED
Nov 21-25	Thanksgiving Break - CLOSED
Dec 20	Last Day of Fall Semester
Dec 21-Jan 3	Winter Break - CLOSED
Jan 4	First Day of Spring Semester
Jan 16	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - CLOSED
Feb 20	Presidents Day - CLOSED
March 10-17	Spring Break - CLOSED
April 10	Easter Monday - CLOSED
May 11	Last Day of Spring Semester

- This calendar is subject to change at the discretion of SoulSong and First Presbyterian Church. Any changes will be announced as soon as possible via Remind.
- Weather-related closures and delays, as well as illness-related closures, will follow Putnam County Schools. Additional illness-related closures beyond those observed by PCS will be at the discretion of SoulSong.