



Est. 2001

**Growing Children for Jesus**

**Parent & Student Handbook**  
**2024-2025**

First Christian Preschool is a ministry of First Baptist Church of Defuniak Springs

225 South 11<sup>th</sup> Street, DeFuniak Springs, Florida

**Dear Parents,**

**Welcome to First Christian Preschool!! Thank you for choosing us to provide a safe, comfortable and effective learning environment for your child. We expect all of our students to make great progress here, and all efforts will be made to prepare your child for great success!**

**Because we are a ministry of First Baptist Church of DeFuniak Springs, God and His son Jesus are made a central part of each day. Regardless of any cultural shifts that may have occurred in recent years, we will simply not teach or encourage ideas, behaviors and lifestyles that are inconsistent with the Bible.**

**Biblical truth will be taught, but so will grace, mercy and understanding. As a result, we welcome all students and families who wish to attend here...even those which may not fully agree with, or adhere to, the teachings of the Bible. As long as mutual respect and love for one another is shown, we can all watch as our children grow and mature in accordance with God's plan for them.**

**Sincerely,  
April Murphy  
FCP Director**

#### Our Mission Statement

Our mission at FCP, is to use our love of Christ and the Gospel to guide us in educating and nurturing all the children entrusted to our care. We do this by providing a Christ-centered and age-appropriate environment that is fun, loving and safe for young children. It is in this context that we see valuable educational opportunities flourish. We are a place who knows and understands that all children deserve to be loved and respected equally.

#### Philosophy of Curriculum

At FCP, we believe in the development of the whole child socially, emotionally, academically and spiritually. Within the first couple weeks of school the children are assessed, and the Creative Curriculum is tailored

to meet their needs. We accomplish this through what children do best: **PLAY!**

Play is a healthy, essential part of early childhood, it allows children to develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, help with problem-solving, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments. Children also need to manipulate materials, engage with their peers, engage all of their senses, and work through their thoughts and feelings. The benefits of play-based learning are many.

We also understand that pre-academic skills are important for children, therefore, we encourage and incorporate skills such as colors, shapes, counting, numeral and letter recognition. These skills and others are tied into our daily learning environment.

Everything we do at FCP is Bible based. We teach children how to pray, to understand that the Bible is God's word and to know that God is always with us, and He wants us to show love and kindness to all, but most importantly, he sent his son Jesus so that we may all have eternal life.

We are very proud of the reputation we have gained over the years; we have well-trained highly motivated teachers and staff who strive to meet the needs of each child so that they may be a successful student with a love of learning for many years to come!

#### Open Door Policy

Here at FCP we want to be in partnership with the parent and family. We accomplish this by making sure we communicate with our families. Communication is extremely important to the life of a school and to the relationship that is created between parent, student, teacher, and administrative staff. As a result, we have an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to visit their child at any time of the day. We encourage you to participate in special events and activities. You will also be invited to

periodic parent conferences to keep communication lines open between teachers, students and parents. We also ask that you inform your child's teacher of any changes in your child's home environment (e.g., divorce, job change, illness, etc.) so that we may have a better understanding of how to meet your child's needs.

#### Open Admissions

FCP offers equal access to enrollment and does not discriminate based on race, creed, sex, ethnic background or physical disability. As it is a faith-based organization, FCP does reserve the right to make decisions based on, and consistent with, its religious beliefs and teachings.

#### Waiting List

The resources and facilities of FCP are not unlimited. As a result, there are only so many students we can accommodate in a given enrolment year. Recognizing that the number we can accommodate is often less than the number of interested families, FCP maintains a waiting list. Families and students who cannot be accommodated at the beginning of the year can be placed on the waiting list for the next available slots to come open. Typically, the waiting list operates on a first-come-first-served basis. Exceptions to this procedure are made from time to time when the circumstances warrant. For example, when a single family has one child currently enrolled at FCP but other children that wish to enroll (and are on the waiting list). In this scenario, this family's non-enrolled children will be given priority when slots become available.

#### Signing In & Out

You will be asked to sign your child IN/OUT each day your child attends Preschool. You will also be asked to sign in and out each time you volunteer at FCP. Only those listed on the child's enrollment application are authorized to pick up your child.

The only exception will be when the authorized parent or guardian notifies the FCP Director or staff **in writing** if someone other than those listed will pick up the child. Written notification **must** be provided by an authorized parent or guardian. If teachers or staff does not recognize a person or persons attempting to pick up your child, we will require an ID to verify that the person or persons are on the pickup list.

#### Pictures, Videos & Digital Media

I understand that, from time to time, one or more pictures and/or recordings of my child may be taken and/or made for me and/or for FCP's own use. I expressly grant FCP exclusive license to utilize such image or recording in its promotional and educational materials. Further, I waive and release any and all rights and/or claims for damages I may have against FCP (or against its agents, employees, volunteers and contractors) from any and all claims, damages or actions of any nature whatsoever as a result of such use or display (including, but not limited to, claims pursuant to Chapter 540, *Florida Statutes*).

Field Trips Advance notification will be provided when these events are scheduled.

During the year, classes will not participate in activities outside the preschool or church facility. Activities such as walking trips to the First Baptist Church Sanctuary for chapel, church library and the DeFuniak Springs Library are considered to be field trips and a Field Trip Release Form will be required for your child to participate in these events. It is required that school shirts be worn on field trips.

#### Biting

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. The safety of the children at the center is

our primary concern. The center's biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs.

Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive without a lot of self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. The center will encourage the children to "use their words" if they become angry or frustrated. The staff members will maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at FCP:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "No...we don't bite people!"
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water.
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Incident Report).
- A child may be removed from the school after biting and breaking the skin after three written notices.
- **Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.**

#### First Aid

If a child needs First Aid, an accident/incident form will be filled out by staff and signed by the parent. Our top priority is to keep your child safe, however, we cannot always see everything. If a teacher does not witness

an incident, we will check the child over for injuries and research and assess the incident. If your child causes an accident requiring another child to receive First Aid (or biting incident), an accident/incident form will be filled out and must be signed by the parent.

If any accident occurs and requires treatment, the parent will be notified to pick up the child. In the event that your child is seriously injured, we will call 911 then notify you immediately. In the event that we are unable to reach you or the individuals you have authorized to make medical decisions, immediate decisions will be made by the EMS personnel.

#### Head Lice

If head lice are discovered on your child while they are at school you will be called to pick them up. The child must be treated with an over-the-counter head lice remedy. When your child returns to school, please bring in proof of purchase such as an empty box and receipt. The child must be checked and cleared by a school employee before being readmitted to class. This means they must be free of all nits and live lice.

#### Medication

All medications must be authorized in writing by a doctor. No medication will be given by verbal consent alone. All medications must be in the original container, labeled with clear directions. A medication permission form is required. The FCP Director or staff member can assist you with the proper paperwork for administering medication.

*Two important notes:*

- 1) With the exception of diaper rash ointment over the counter medicine will not be administered at First Christian Preschool.**
- 2) Only oral or topical medications will be administered by FCP personnel. If you child requires an injection or other type of**

**medication that is not administered orally or topically, other arrangements will need to be made.**

No Smoking

First Baptist Church and First Christian Preschool are smoke free zones. Please refrain from smoking on church property.

Firearms

Firearms are not permitted on First Christian Preschool property.

Safe Transport

FCP staff **WILL NOT** release children to any adult who appears to be impaired (under the influence of drugs or alcohol) or for some reason deemed unable to adequately care for the child. Staff will instead, contact the parent, guardian, or other authorized adult immediately and contact law enforcement as deemed necessary.

Abuse and Neglect

All children have a right to live free from abuse. Children depend on their parents, family members, teachers and child care providers to love, nurture and protect them. As your child's Child Care Provider, we are required by law, Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes, to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. **Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE**

Enrollment Requirements

- Children must be 2, 3 or 4 years of age by September 1.
- Children ages 3 and 4 years of age must be fully potty trained.



- Parents must provide FCP with an official Florida Dept. of Children and Families Health Certificate updated within the last two years. (school form)
- In most cases, parents must provide an immunization record updated in the last year. (school form)
- Enrollment fee of \$100 due at time of enrollment.

#### Teacher/Parent Communication

Communication between teachers and parents is crucial. Sometimes this communication will come in the form of in-person conferences. If such a conference is needed, parents will be contacted to schedule the meeting. Parents or Guardians who wish to schedule a conference are encouraged to do so. That said, please do not simply show up during or after the school day and expect to have such a meeting. This is typically not productive as it prevents the teacher and the leadership from being ready to fully address the issues at hand. Instead, please contact the FCP office to schedule the conference. Every effort to schedule a meeting promptly will be made. At conference time, the student's work will be available for review and discussion.

#### FCP Monthly Tuition

Tuition is due on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Payments may be made by cash, check or money order (make payable to First Baptist Church). If payments are not paid by the 10th, you will incur an additional late charge of \$30.00.

If payments are not received by the 15th, your child will not be permitted back until your account is made current (including late fee).

Receipts will be given for cash payments; all other forms of payment receipts may be given upon request. Payment arrangements (other than those set forth in this Handbook) will typically not be permitted. Exceptions may be made for situations such as a parent's loss of his or her job, a death in the family or severe sickness.

**Remember, all payments not made by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will result in a \$30 late-fee being assessed each time.**

Please note that parents are charged even when the child is absent, on vacation, or for school closings, because the FCP operating expenses do not change. Our school is year-round, to maintain your childcare slot please make payments on time. (Summertime included)

Tuition is nonrefundable and nontransferable. Late fee assessments and returned check fees will be applied to a delinquent account. Any student whose account is delinquent in payment may be dismissed from the school.

#### Full Time Program

Childcare is available Monday – Friday between the hours of 6:45am-5:30pm

**\*\*Instructional time begins at 8:30 a.m.\*\***

#### Part Time Program

Childcare is available Tuesday/Thursday and Monday/Wednesday/Friday between the hours of 6:45am- 5:30pm

Part time VPK – 830 am -1130 pm

**\*\*Instructional time begins at 8:30 a.m.\*\***

#### Monthly Payments

**Two Year Olds-** \$675.00 per month (Must be two by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>)

**Three Year Olds** - \$640.00 per month M-F (Must be three by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>)

**VPK/Wrap-Around** - \$400.00 per month (Must be four by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>)

\*\*\*\*\*Part time care is available in each age group as space allows

Part time VPK- No charge- with ELC voucher

*\*The 3-hour VPK program is a separate program and available as space allows.*

Part time Twos & Threes \$280.00 per month T & TH (Must be three by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>)

\$390.00 per month M, W & F (Must be three by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>)

FCP Fees

\$100.00 Annual Registration/Curriculum fees are due at the time of enrollment.

**All fees are non-refundable.**

- School T-shirts are \$15.00 short sleeve and \$20.00 for long sleeve and are required to be worn each Thursday.
- A returned check will incur a \$35.00 returned check fee in addition to the monthly tuition in the form of cash or money order for the total payment. After two returned checks, you will then be required to pay by cash or money order only.
- Children not picked up by their scheduled pick-up time will be charged an additional fee of **\$1.00 per minute** past the scheduled time. Repeated late pick ups will be subject to dismissal.
- Payments made after the 10<sup>th</sup> will incur a \$30.00 late fee (see above).

### Daily Attendance

First Christian Preschool will contact parents if students haven't arrived by 9am each school day. If you know your child will be absent, please inform your child's teacher prior to their absence. If an unplanned absence occurs, please do one of the following:

**Call:** First Christian Preschool and leave a message or speak to an FCP staff member.

**Email:** April Murphy @ [aprilmurphyfcp@gmail.com](mailto:aprilmurphyfcp@gmail.com)

**Message:** Send a message via Remind (info included)

***Please note:*** Instructional time begins at 8:30 a.m. Students should arrive to school each day prior to 9:00 am. (this excludes VPK students as described in the VPK contract.)

### Preschool Accident Medical Insurance

This insurance is included in the tuition and provides benefits for covered injuries sustained during the hours and days when school is in session and while students are attending or participating in school sponsored and supervised activities on or off school premises.

### Tax Receipts

According to the Internal Revenue Service, all childcare expenses paid to a provider outside your family are tax deductible for working parents. Tuition totals and our FEIN number will be provided each year to parents no later than January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Safe and Secure Campus

For safety reasons, FCP is a closed campus. Doors are kept locked and access is typically restricted during school hours to FCP leadership, staff

and students only. Parents and visitors are encouraged to visit. All visitors must check-in at the office upon arrival and, for the sake of fairness and class-room continuity, visitor observations must be scheduled in advance with the Director.

#### Dress Code Policy

Have your child dress in comfortable play clothes that is seasonally appropriate and that he/she will be able to manage with little help in the restroom.

**Please NO scary faces, inappropriate pictures or quotes on attire.** Keep in mind your child will be involved in a number of messy activities, painting, play dough, sand and water play.

**We require children to wear closed toe shoes. PLEASE NO FLIP FLOPS.** Please dress your child in jackets or coats when necessary. Be sure to clearly label the inside of the jacket with your child's name. Students are required to wear FCP shirts to chapel each Thursday and on field trips.

#### Rest Time

Young children require rest and we will attempt to get your child to nap everyday. Your child will need a one-inch thick mat free of rips or tears, labeled with their name, either a mat cover that fully incases the mat (a body pillow case works well), or a roll up mat that is compact for your child's cubbie. Small blanket, small cuddly and small pillow are optional.

Due to limited storage and space, please be sure to send small-sized items. Blankets and pillows that are too large are not acceptable and will be sent home. Each Friday all bedding will be sent home to be laundered and will need to be returned to school with your child each Monday. **FCP DOES NOT HAVE LAUNDRY FACILITIES OR EXTRA BEDDING**

#### Toys

Please keep toys from home at HOME. We have many wonderful toys at FCP for your child to play with. We will have Show and Tell days throughout the year for your child to share items from home.

### Birthdays

Birthdays are very important to you and your child and FCP is happy to help you celebrate. We will celebrate during snack time or lunchtime. You may send a special treat such as store-bought cookies, brownies, or cupcakes. Only store bought, unopened packages of treats can be served. You are welcome to join us on your child's special day. Please send party invitations to school only if every child in the class is invited.

By order of the Dept. of Children & Families: No homemade foods of any kind can be served to the students of the preschool. All celebration food must be store bought.

Please contact your child's teacher if you would like to celebrate his/her birthday at school!

### Snacks/ Lunches

Bottles and pacifiers are prohibited at FCP.

Sippy cups/thermos containers are permitted in the TWOS classroom only for drinking outside of lunchtime. Other classes are able to bring a sippy cup/thermos but it must be kept in their lunchbox at all times other than during lunchtime. All cups and containers must be labeled with your child's first AND last name, and must be able to fit in their lunchboxes when not in use. Any unlabeled items will be sent home with parents at drop off; no exceptions. All cups and containers are to be returned to parents at pick up, and NO cups/thermos are allowed to stay at the school overnight.

For snack time, if your child is in the Two-year-old classroom, please send TWO snacks in your child's lunchbox daily for morning and afternoon snack. All other classrooms have one snack per day.

Please send a nutritious lunch with your child each day. As a reminder, FCP does not provide lunch items for students. We are also unable to heat up or

refrigerate any items for students. If your child is bringing a perishable food item, an ice pack is required to be kept in the lunchbox. Milk and food must not sit out for longer than 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the meal to avoid contamination and spoilage.

Your child's lunchbox must also be labeled with their first AND last name.

Culligan water and cups are provided in each classroom throughout the day. Students are able to get water from these at any time. Water is provided during snack and lunch time.

### Food Safety

At FCP, our goal is to keep everyone safe. If any of the food items underlined below are sent to school, they will be sent home.

Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents must not be served to children under 4 years of age; such as, but not limited to, whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/ windpipe. Food for toddlers must be cut into pieces  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or smaller to prevent choking.

Foods that are the most commonly associated with children choking and are **not permitted** at school include:

- |                                                                  |                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| • Hard Candy                                                     | • Lollipops                            |
| • Caramels                                                       | • Large Marshmallows                   |
| • Cubed Cheese                                                   | • Nuts                                 |
| • Chips of any kind<br>(including, veggie straws<br>and Cheetos) | • Globbs or clumps of<br>Peanut butter |
| • Whole Fruits with skins                                        | • Popcorn                              |
| • Whole Grapes                                                   | • Pretzels                             |
| • Gum                                                            | • Raisins                              |
| • Ice cubes                                                      | • Vegetables (raw)                     |

The following exceptions ***may*** be brought to school for lunch/snack:

- Peeled Fruits (including grapes) and vegetables that are cut into ½ inch pieces or smaller
- Peanut butter on crackers, cookies and sandwiches
- Mini Marshmallows
- Sliced and string cheese

#### Change of clothes

Your child should have a change of clothes in his/her cubbie **AT ALL TIMES**. (e.g., Shirt, pants, underwear and socks) Please label the clothing with your child's name. The items should be placed in a gallon size plastic bag with your child's name on it. Remember, FCP does not have a change of clothes for your child. Please also remember to replace the spare clothing when your child uses the change of clothes and when seasons change throughout the year.

#### Bags and Backpacks

Due to limited cubbie space, please leave bags and backpacks at home. Your child will be provided with an FCP communication folder to bring his/her class work, parent notes ETC. to and from school daily.

#### Potty Training

Pull ups may be used in the Two-year-old classroom upon discussing your child's readiness with the teacher. Three and Four-year old's must be completely potty trained as these classrooms will not have diaper/pull up changing facilities. A potty-trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Be able to TELL the adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go. They must be able to say the words "I have to go potty" BEFORE they have to go.
- Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
- Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet
- Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
- Be able to wash and dry hands.
- Be able to go directly back to the room without directions.
- Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the house.



### ILLNESS

Please do not send your child to school if any of these symptoms persist:

#### **24 hours home without any symptoms**

fever  
unexplained pain  
unexplained rash  
green/yellow nasal discharge  
red & watery eyes  
chills  
earache  
diarrhea  
vomiting

If a child becomes ill while at FCP, the child will be isolated from the other children and parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. **Any child with a fever of 100 degrees or higher will be sent home.** Please notify staff of any communicable illnesses (such as chicken pox) so other parents can be notified.

### COVID 19

Children who have a COVID -19 exposure or close contact, but have no symptoms, are not required to quarantine and can remain in the classroom. If a child is COVID-19 symptomatic or COVID-19 positive, they should stay home while symptoms persist. The child will be able to return to the classroom after 5 days have passed since the onset of symptoms and are fever free for 24 hours.

After an exposure, close contact, or positive COVID-19 diagnosis, a negative COVID-19 test is not required for a child to be able to return to school. Children are not required to wear a mask or face covering.

### Emergency Preparedness Plan

To ensure the safest possible campus, FCP will perform various safety drills from time to time. Should you ever have a question about our safety procedures and protocols, feel free to contact the FCP office and schedule a time to speak with the Director.

### Emergency Closings

Please watch and listen to local news stations concerning early dismissals and closings. If Walton County schools are released early or are closed, First Christian Preschool will release early and/or close.

### Withdrawal Policy

If you wish to withdraw your child from FCP, a two-week written notice is **required**. The final two weeks' tuition charge must be paid regardless of attendance.

### Termination Policy

FCP reserves the right to discharge a child for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Failure to pay fees in a timely manner
- Lack of cooperation on the parent's part
- Special services needed; further evaluation needed
- Repeated disciplinary actions.
- Repeatedly not picking child up in a timely manner
- Failure to provide up to date immunization and physical
- Failure to adhere to the code of conduct
- Ungovernable behavior

- Open, public and/or disruptive behavior on FCP property or during FCP events. This includes, but is not limited to, public behavior which is contrary to the beliefs, teachings or doctrine of FCP and/or the First Baptist Church of DeFuniak Springs

A Two-week written notification will normally be given to any family that is having the above issues. If it is a matter of safety, an immediate termination will be given.

**All terminations will be at the discretion of the Director and FCP board.**

#### Discipline Policy

At FCP, it is our belief that children can be influenced by their surroundings. If the environment is not developmentally appropriate, children can become frustrated. To alleviate this, we will provide a developmentally appropriate program with plenty of opportunities for the children to make their own choices. However, conflicts will arise, and teachers will respond in a positive, appropriate manner.

Teachers will use behavior management techniques such as setting reasonable and positive expectations, offering choices, and providing children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings, which encourages children to develop self-control and problem solving through understanding. There are times in which the child will be incapable of responding to these techniques and will need extra time to gain their self-control. During these times, the teacher will direct the child to a quiet place within the classroom (i.e. the library area) for some time away from their peers to give the child the opportunity to calm down.

This time away will take place within the teacher's view and will not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age. Teachers or staff will not use discipline associated with food, resting, toileting and/or active play at any time!

**Corporal Punishment is not permitted on the premises of First Christian Preschool by parents, family, teachers or staff.**

**Extreme behavior will result in the child being removed to the Director's office. Parents may be contacted and asked to pick up their child if extreme behavior persists.**

The Director and staff will work alongside the Parents and students to help maintain positive behavior and keep the FCP environment safe. The dismissal of a child from our program is at the discretion of the Director and the FCP board.

**Let's have a wonderful year! 😊**

First Christian Preschool is a religious organization governed by a Board of Directors. These Directors are approved by the voting membership of First Baptist Church of DeFuniak Springs. They are all members of First Baptist Church and are empowered to set policy and procedures for FCP. As such, the operation of FCP is, and shall always remain, consistent with the beliefs, teachings and doctrine of FBC DeFuniak Springs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REVIEW AND RECEIPT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge and certify that on this date, \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ I received, read and understood the preceding Parent & Student Handbook provided by First Christian Preschool ("FCP").

By signing this receipt, I understand and agree to the following:

- This handbook supersedes all previous handbooks or policies I may have previously received from, or have been advised of by FCP.
- The policies and conditions contained in this parent/student handbook can be changed by FCP at any time.
- It is my responsibility to follow the guidelines in this handbook and be informed as to its contents.
- My child is permitted to attend FCP only so long as my child and his/her parents abide by the policies contained in the handbook.
- Should my child or his/her parents refuse to abide by such policies, my child's enrollment may be terminated as set forth in the handbook.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

