



First Presbyterian  
DAY SCHOOL  
—★ est. 1962 ★—

# FPDS PARENT HANDBOOK

## Table of Contents

ABOUT THE SCHOOL .....	5
History .....	5
Mission Statement.....	5
Philosophy .....	5
DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS.....	6
Social, Emotional and Spiritual Goals .....	6
Cognitive Goals.....	6
Physical Goals .....	6
FAITH DEVELOPMENT and MISSION.....	7
Spiritual Development.....	7
Weekly Chapel.....	7
Mission Projects .....	7
Donating Toys and Other Items .....	7
SCHOOL BUSINESS .....	8
Policy Changes.....	8
Class Days/School Hours.....	8
Term of Enrollment.....	8
Class Placement.....	8
Application Fee.....	8
Registration Fee .....	8
Tuition Deposit.....	8

Annual Tuition .....	8
Meet-the-Teacher .....	9
Parent Orientation and Classroom Open House .....	9
Stay n Play.....	9
Late Tuition Payment.....	9
Late Pickup Fee .....	9
Returned Checks .....	9
Nonpayment of Tuition and Fees.....	9
Financial Assistance/Scholarships .....	10
Short-Term Tuition Assistance .....	10
Year-Long Tuition Assistance.....	10
Unexpected School Closing(s).....	10
Substituting for Teacher Absences .....	10
Student Withdrawal .....	11
Your Child's Records.....	11
Supplies.....	11
School Photos.....	12
ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL .....	13
Attendance .....	13
Security.....	13
Preparing your Child for School.....	13
Arrival.....	13
Dismissal .....	14
Late Pickup Fee .....	14
Car Pools .....	14
Booster Seats Available .....	14
Parking Lot Rules .....	15
HEALTH and HYGIENE .....	16
Health Requirements .....	16
Sick Policy.....	16
School Health Checks.....	16
Illness during the School Day.....	17
The Flu .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Communicable Diseases .....	17
Head Lice.....	17

Allergies and Asthma .....	17
Medications .....	18
Insect Repellent and Sunscreen .....	18
Emergency Medical Procedures.....	18
Vision and Hearing Screening.....	18
Speech Screening .....	19
Handwashing .....	19
Security/Comfort Items.....	19
Clothing at School .....	19
Shoes at School .....	20
Diapers and Toilet Training.....	20
NUTRITION .....	21
Snack Time .....	21
Lunch at School .....	21
Healthy Food Philosophy .....	21
Water .....	22
Birthday and Super Star Snacks .....	22
Stay n Play Snacks .....	22
Children with Food Allergies .....	22
Nut and Food Allergy Notice .....	22
BEHAVIOR and DISCIPLINE.....	23
Discipline Policy .....	23
Conscious Discipline .....	23
Changes At Home .....	23
Biting .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Aggressive Behavior .....	23
SAFETY and SECURITY.....	25
State Licensing and Inspections.....	25
Reporting Child Abuse .....	25
Custody Situations.....	25
Security.....	25
Open Door Policy .....	26
Emergency Contact Information .....	26
Emergency Preparedness and Evacuations .....	26
Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs.....	26

Weapons.....	26
Gangs .....	27
Field Trips.....	27
Water Activities .....	27
Animals.....	27
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.....	28
Stay n Play.....	28
After School Enrichment.....	28
After School Policy .....	28
Playground Use Outside of School Hours .....	28
The Labyrinth.....	28
Birthday Parties and Gift Exchange.....	29
COMMUNICATION .....	30
From Us to You .....	30
From You to Us .....	30
Assessment Process and Teacher Conferences .....	30
Distribution of Information .....	30
Conflicts .....	31
Who Should I Ask? Who Should I Tell? .....	31
Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) .....	32
Make-A-Plate Fundraiser .....	32
Playground Cleanup.....	32
Gingerbread House Party .....	32
Teacher Appreciation Week.....	33
Multi-Cultural Events .....	33
Classroom Celebration .....	33
Mud & Water Week .....	33
Graduation Chapel .....	33

# **ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

## **History**

One hundred and ten years after the building of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Austin, a survey was taken to establish the future mission areas to be considered by its congregation.

As a result of the survey, the congregation felt compelled to move to a new location, provide church services for independent senior citizens, assist with legal aid in East Austin, and, begin a school for preschool-aged children.

In September, 1962, the First Presbyterian Day School (FPDS) opened on Jackson Avenue and met with an enthusiastic reception from the community.

After the move to Mesa Drive in April 1978, and as a result of a needs survey among parents in the area, the present congregation decided to carry on the tradition of providing a daily program in a Christian setting for the preschool children of Austin. The school opened at this location in September 1979 with 50 students and a staff of three. Over the years, we have grown and are now located at 8001 Mesa Drive in the Northwest Hills neighborhood of Austin.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the First Presbyterian Day School is to give children, parents and staff the opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ by a developmentally appropriate early childhood program.

We believe that by being immersed in a nurturing environment with dedicated, caring and interested adults, children will develop needed skills and attitudes. Our aim is to provide a program which will help young children grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially, and intellectually.

## **Philosophy**

Our focus is on what the child can do. We are more interested in the process and the thinking involved than in the end product or the recitation of facts or labels. We believe learning is best accomplished by doing and that children of nursery school age require this method of learning.

The FPDS program helps children develop habits of observation, questioning, listening, and expressing feelings in constructive ways. A child learns there is freedom to make choices and, that within the limits of consideration for people and things, conformity is not always necessary. We believe that an open-ended program like ours prepares a child to use intellectual and creative abilities in future learning tasks.

# **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS**

## **Social, Emotional and Spiritual Goals**

- Increased autonomy
- Positive self-concept
- Secure relationships with adults
- Enjoyment in playing with others
- Beginning of assimilating different points of view
- Caring ways toward others
- Constructive coping with fears, anxieties and frustrations
- Positive attitudes toward school and learning
- Curiosity and initiative
- Increased problem solving ability
- Persistence in task completion
- Demonstrating Christian values

## **Cognitive Goals**

- Understanding and responding to ideas expressed through oral language
- Expression of ideas through language and symbolic representations in effective and varied ways
- Arrangement of ideas or objects into relationships noting similarities and differences
- Initiation of ideas and questions

## **Physical Goals**

- To build awareness of one's body in space
- To coordinate fine and gross motor skills

# FAITH DEVELOPMENT and MISSION

## Spiritual Development

First Presbyterian Day School is a Christian community that strives to nurture the spiritual growth and formation of each child and family. We believe that children have an innate sense of the presence of God, and nurturing children as they grow to know God's love is a cornerstone of the First Presbyterian Day School experience. This happens through the curriculum, the care and modeling of teachers, pastors, and staff, as well as through weekly chapel worship.

We hope that each child learns these four foundational truths through their time at FPDS:

- God loves me and the world.
- God created me and the world.
- I can worship God.
- I can serve God and others.

Christian formation is integrated into the Day School curriculum by:

- Relating children's learning to their growing awareness of God's creation
- Praying at mealtimes and at other times of the day
- Reading bible stories
- Weekly chapel with the pastor in the Sanctuary

## Weekly Chapel

Weekly Chapel is led by the Pastor for Children, Youth and Families in the sanctuary or in the courtyard. Children pray, sing, and hear bible stories using Godly Play curriculum. Godly Play exposes children to foundational stories of scripture and to religious language, and also **encourages** them to wonder about God's world and to discover how they are a part of God's ongoing story of love and redemption.

## Mission Projects

There will be time during the year when your class or the school, as a whole, will participate in activities that will benefit the community outside our school. Please watch for announcements about collecting non-perishable food items or toys, the Thanksgiving collection, baking cookies for the fire station, and various benefits which our school community and your child's class participate in throughout the year.

## Donating Toys and Other Items

We are grateful when parents (and others) generously donate new or gently used toys, equipment and other items to our school. Before any item may be donated to a classroom, it needs to be approved by the Office in order to determine its appropriateness for our program or our church nurseries. Please bring any donations to the Office, not your child's classroom, so that we may add them to our inventory.

# SCHOOL BUSINESS

## Policy Changes

In the event of a change in the policies of the First Presbyterian Day School, you will be notified by email.

## Class Days/School Hours

Daily schedule: Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Our classes are 2-day, 3-day, 4-day and 5-day schedules depending upon age.

## Term of Enrollment

The term of enrollment is for one full school year beginning in August and ending in May (or the balance of the school year if enrolled after school is in session. A school calendar will be provided in August with exact dates of school breaks and holidays.

## Class Placement

Enrollment priorities are as follows:

1. Children of FPDS/FPCA staff members
2. Currently enrolled students
3. Siblings of current students
4. Siblings of previously enrolled students
5. Current church members
6. Wait list applicants – referencing date of application and class balance needs (specifically, age of group and class ratios)

Class placement is the responsibility of the Director only. Class placement is determined according to age as of September 1 of the school year, and upon readiness recommendations from FPDS teachers. Requests for placement may be considered, but are never guaranteed.

## Application Fee

\$50.00 is due with a first-time application for waiting list placement.

## Registration Fee

\$125.00 per student registration fee is assessed per year. This fee is NON-REFUNDABLE.

## Tuition Deposit

A deposit equal to one month's tuition is due prior to admission. It will be applied to the following May. Deposits are NON-REFUNDABLE.

## Annual Tuition

Tuition is set by projecting expenses for the entire school year and dividing that amount into 9 monthly installments. At times, it may seem that there are less days per month, but you are actually paying an annual tuition amount. No adjustments shall be made for illness, vacations, transfers, or school closures. School policy prohibits reducing the number of days in a class to reduce a student's tuition. Thus, if your student is enrolled in a 4-day class, you must pay a full 4-day tuition rate.

You may pay the full annual tuition by September 1st. If you choose to pay once a month from



September – April, the total tuition will be slightly higher due to administrative and processing fees.

### **Meet-the-Teacher**

You and your child will be invited to meet with your child's teacher in the classroom during the weeks prior to the start of school. You will have the opportunity to familiarize your child with their new classroom and the teacher will familiarize you with plans for the upcoming year, as well as discuss developmental learning goals. You may receive a classroom supply list. One electronic access card for school entry is distributed to each family at this time. Additional cards will be available for purchase at the Parent Orientation.

### **Parent Orientation and Classroom Open House**

Parent Orientation occurs just prior to the start of school each year. Participation in this is strongly encouraged each year. While the children are getting to know their new friends in their classroom Open House, parents will meet in the Fellowship Hall to learn more about practices and procedures.

During this Orientation, the Director will review school policies, upcoming events, after-school enrichment opportunities, and introduce you to this year's Parent Teacher Organization and potential volunteer opportunities. Your children will be visiting with their new class mates in their classrooms at this time. This meeting is for adults only (babies in strollers and arms are permitted). One additional electronic access card per family may be purchased at this time for \$10, cash or check only.

### **Stay and Play**

Children must be three years of age to participate. Information about how to sign up for Stay and Play will be distributed at Parent Orientation. Stay and Play is offered Monday thru Friday, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.. Late fees will be assessed after 2:30 p.m.. Stay and Play is not available on monthly Staff Meeting days. Please reference the school calendar for these days.

### **Late Tuition Payment**

Monthly payments are due on the first of the month, if payment is not made within 10 days, you will be assessed a \$30 late fee per tuition payment due.

### **Late Pickup Fee**

If you pick up your child after 1:00 p.m., (or after 2:30 p.m. from Stay and Play), you will be charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute per child.

### **Returned Checks**

A fee of \$35.00 will be assessed if a check is returned for insufficient funds. A check for insufficient funds must be repaid with a Cashier's Check or Money Order. After three returned checks, all future payments must be made by Cashier's Check or Money Order. Failure to cooperate can result in dismissal from the school.

### **Nonpayment of Tuition and Fees**

If payment of tuition and/or additional fees is not made, or an arrangement therefore, by the end of the applicable month, then the matter of nonpayment will be brought to the Day School Board's attention for review and consultation, and potentially dismissal of your student.

## **Financial Assistance/Scholarships**

Financial assistance is available to families who apply if funds are available from a designated Day School Scholarship Fund (funds maintained separate from our yearly operating budget). Funds are received in this fund from school parent and church member donations as well as 20% of all fund-raising proceeds. If you would like to donate to this tax deductible fund to help families in need, please contact the Church Office.

School policy prohibits reducing the number of days in a class to reduce a student's tuition. Thus, if your student is enrolled in a 4-day class, you must pay a full 4-day tuition rate.

### **Short-Term Tuition Assistance**

Short-term financial assistance is available to help a family through a difficult time. During a time of hardship, the Day School may grant a request for up to 50% of tuition costs for up to 2 months per school year. This assistance does not include after-school, enrichment, or summer programs. Requests must be submitted confidentially to the Director using a Short-Term Tuition Assistance Form which can be obtained from the Day School Office.

### **Year-Long Tuition Assistance**

Financial assistance requests for the school year must be submitted by March 1 of the upcoming year using a Tuition Assistance Request Form. Requests are reviewed by an independent agency. Typically, 15-30% assistance may be granted. The assistance will be granted to cover "total family tuition" in the event there are multiple students from one family. The assistance request must be made each year. Requests may require backup documentation to validate financial need. Confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.

## **Unexpected School Closing(s)**

1. FPDS will close when Austin Independent School District closes or delays due to bad weather. Notification of cancellations will be emailed and texted to you.
2. FPDS will close in cases of flooding, fire, lack of utilities or other eventuality making all or part of the building inaccessible, unusable or unsafe.
3. After 3 bad weather day closings, the FPDS Board will consider adding a make-up day to the school calendar.

Tuition refunds are not provided due to weather cancellations or emergency school closures.

## **Substituting for Teacher Absences**

Parents are encouraged to substitute in the classrooms. This is an excellent way for you to get to know FPDS. You will be there to assist, not lead the class. Substitutes will be paid \$15 per hour. As a substitute, please be aware that your child may behave differently or be a distraction if you substitute in his/her classroom. Please allow the lead teacher to deal with any issues related to your child. Also be aware that most children respond to the teacher better than the parent in discipline settings in a school setting.

There will be a Substitute Training Class during the first month of school. Please plan to attend in order to be eligible to substitute. We also require that all of our substitute teachers be background checked in order to substitute. We also encourage that parent substitutes obtain current CPR/first aid training certification.

## Student Withdrawal

Children may be withdrawn from the school prior to the end of the school year for the following reasons:

### By Parent

- Serious illness of the child
- Moving outside of the metropolitan Austin area

### By Director or FPDS Board

- Lack of parental cooperation/adherence to policies and practices
- Mutual agreement between the parent and the Board if the child's adjustment to school is unsatisfactory
- Required forms have not been submitted
- Delinquency in tuition and fees payments
- When a child or parent is repeatedly endangering the safety or well-being of the other children or staff (physically or emotionally)
- When the FPDS Board determines that the school is not qualified to serve a particular child

Two weeks' written notice is required, except in cases of serious illness or injury. Removal by vote of the FPDS Board may be immediate depending on the circumstance. Any unused portion of tuition and the tuition deposit is not refundable.

## Your Child's Records

In order to better understand the manner in which your child learns and discovers the world around him/her, it would help us to know if your child is receiving any type of therapy (i.e., physical, occupational, speech, emotional, vision, or hearing). Also, if your child was in another school prior to FPDS, it might be beneficial to speak with the director or teacher of your child's previous school to determine what activities were or were not well received by your child. Please know that the information you provide about your child and family will be used only by the staff members directly involved with your child's preschool education.

Any third party assessment or evaluation results will be used in order to improve curriculum planning. Information about your child will be provided only to you. If you need anything from your child's file shared with another school or with a therapist, we will be happy to copy it for you and you may pass it on.

## Supplies

Each child needs to bring the following to school:

- A change of clothing, labeled with the child's name to leave in the classroom in the event a change of clothes is needed. As the weather changes, check to be sure the clothes are appropriate, and still fit and change them out as necessary.
- A backpack or tote bag to be carried to and from school each day.
- A water bottle labeled with your child's name
- A daily snack and a daily lunch (see Nutrition section for guidelines)

An additional classroom supply list will be provided by your child's teacher. Items such as

tissues, baby wipes, and special activity supplies may be requested. Please label ALL clothing and items that your child brings to school including backpacks, tote bags, lunch boxes water bottles and cups, hats, coats ... and everything else you can think of.

### **School Photos**

Typically, school photos of individual students are taken during the fall. Class photos are coordinated during the spring semester. Photos will be taken during the school day and will be available for purchase.

# ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

## Attendance

Regular attendance helps children to establish relationships in the classroom. We hope you will make every effort to be here each scheduled day. Please contact the Day School Office when your child will be absent so we can inform your teachers.

It is a childcare licensing requirement that your child must be signed in and signed out each day by recording date, time, and adults that are dropping off and picking up. Please be diligent about taking care of this important step in your child's day.

In the first weeks of school, some children have a difficult time separating from parents and care-givers. If this is your situation, you may be asked to bring your child for a shorter period of time. The time will increase until your child is able to stay the entire school day.

Arrival and dismissal are very difficult points in time to communicate with your teacher. If you have something to discuss with your teacher, please leave a note, email or quickly schedule a time that you can speak privately. Playground time is not an acceptable time for a discussion since our staff is responsible for the supervision of many children in a large space.

## Security

For the protection of our children, FPDS and the church buildings are locked at all times except for all-school and all-church events. Each family is provided with an electronic security access card that allows entry into the school building and main church building during school hours. Please use your card carefully, and do not allow "tailgating" and do not loan your card to another parent. All parents have cards and are asked to use them. Strangers should be directed to the Church Office, or asked to wait outside the door if they would like to speak to the Director.

## Preparing your Child for School

When you talk about preschool with your child, talk about it as a happy place. When you arrive at school, make sure your child is secure in the knowledge that you have kissed him/her goodbye, that s/he is loved, and that someone will be there at the end of the school day to pick them up. Our teachers are well-versed in handling separation issues, please look to them for guidance as you say goodbye. You are always welcome to call the school office to check-in if you are concerned about the morning transition.

## Arrival

Arrival procedures:

- Arrival is at **9:00 a.m.** If you arrive before 9:00 a.m., be prepared to entertain your child outside the classroom until 9:00 a.m.
- Children must be signed in. It is important to inform the teachers and document the arrival of your child.
- Each child must be accompanied to their classroom by the parent/caregiver who brings the child to school.
- Please make visual and/or verbal contact with your teacher upon arrival.
- Please avoid using a phone or electronic device as you drop your child off at school each morning.
- Upon entering the classroom, we ask that all children immediately wash their hands to

help eliminate some of the bacteria and allergens which are carried in.

Please make every attempt to arrive on time. Late arrivals are a disruption and can make it hard on the child who is late. Late children may miss out on activities that happen in the morning and feel very disappointed.

## **Dismissal**

Dismissal procedures:

- Dismissal is at **1:00 p.m.**
- Children must be signed out.
- Please be sure that your child's teacher acknowledges your child's departure.
- If you like to visit with other parents, please leave the classroom and visit outside. Teachers need to set up for the next day. Even if you are present in the building, your child must be signed out to your care or you will be considered late.
- If your child attends Stay and Play, dismissal is no later than 2:30 p.m.

Cell phones or electronic devices must not be used as you enter the school, being present and on the phone does not communicate to your child that you are here to hear about their day at preschool.

## **Late Pickup Fee**

Please call the school if you are unavoidably detained. It will not negate the late pickup fee, but it will help us reassure your child that you are safe and on your way.

If you pick up your child after 1:00 p.m. (or after 2:30 p.m. for Stay n Play), you will be charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute per child.

## **Car Pools**

If you belong to a carpool, your car pool members must also be listed on your Emergency Contact Form. A written note must be sent to your child's teacher if your child is going home with someone who is not on your emergency contact form. A staff member may ask an adult who is picking up your child to see his/her license. We are not trying to embarrass the adult, but protect your child. Children may be released only to a person designated in writing by the parents.

## **Booster Seats Available**

An extra booster seat is kept in the Day School Office for parents who are carpooling that have forgotten to provide their child's car seat to the driver. When borrowing the booster seat, you must sign in/out the seat on the form located in the Office. FPDS neither assumes nor accepts responsibility for these booster seats.

Booster seat rules:

- Each booster seat must be properly secured in the vehicle according to the specifications of the manufacturer of each booster seat.
- A child must be properly secured in the booster seat according to the specifications of the manufacturer of each booster seat in which the child is sitting.
- Do not allow children to eat while sitting in these booster seats in order to preserve

their longevity and return them in clean condition.

- Seats must be returned within a 24 hour period.
- If you are in a car accident while using these booster seats, FPDS must be informed immediately so we may determine if their safety has been compromised for future use.

## **Parking Lot Rules**

To all drivers, please watch your speed (5mph only) and cell phone usage is prohibited as you pull into the FPCA parking lot. There are small children, exercise classes and elderly church members in our midst, that require your full attention while driving.

To all walkers, hold your child's hand while you are in the parking lot. Do not be on the phone. The joyful, expressive locomotion of children is often hard to predict. Keep your children safe by keeping them close.

Park in available marked spaces. Do not park in handicapped spaces, spaces that have been blocked by an orange cone, the Rissman Hall driveway, or in the church curved driveway. Do not double-park. There are many accessibility needs in the school and church community and spaces must be reserved for those who truly need them.

# HEALTH and HYGIENE

## Health Requirements

The State of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the City of Austin Health Department have set forth health policies that regulate child care programs. As a licensed preschool, FPDS is required by law to follow these mandates, no exceptions. Each child is required to meet standard immunization requirements or provide a state-approved waiver for a delayed schedule prior to beginning classes at the preschool. No students will be allowed to attend school without the proper health forms on file.

Before your child may attend school each year, we must have an up-to-date copy of your child's immunization record **and** a statement of good health signed by your child's physician. If you visit a physician during the year, please obtain an updated copy of your child's immunization record for our files. We will be inspected by the Texas Department of Health during the school year, and it is the parents' responsibility to keep documentation up to date.

## Sick Policy

Please send a courtesy email to the school office, [dayschool@fpdsaustin.org](mailto:dayschool@fpdsaustin.org) and your child's teacher, when your child is sick or will be absent for the day. You must keep your child home when the child:

- shows evidence of a fresh cold
- has a fever of 100 degrees
- has had a temperature of 100 degrees or above within the past 24 hours
- has discharging or sore eyes
- has unclear nasal discharge
- has had vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours
- has a rash, spots or bumps of unknown origin

Please do not send your child to school with symptoms that are masked by acetaminophen, an antihistamine, ibuprofen, naproxen, antibiotics, etc. For more information, please refer to the TFPS website and look for Appendix V of Minimum Standards.

Sick children should not enter the school. If your student or a sibling is sick, please call the office and if a staff person is available, they may offer to pick up/bring your healthy student to the car so that you may stay with the sick child. You may also ask a friend to bring your child into the school and sign them in to their classroom.

## School Health Checks

FPDS Staff conducts informal health checks when your child arrives at class in the morning. The purpose of these checks is to assess the wellness of your child and their ability to fully participate in the day's activities. We insure that your child is healthy and has no injuries that would impact the day. If your child has been sick or injured since he was last at class, please be sure to communicate this to your teacher(s).

Weather permitting, we play outside every day. If you feel your child does not feel good



enough to play outside, please do not bring him/her to school. If your child suffers from seasonal allergies, please keep in mind that s/he must go outside with the entire class, no exceptions.

### **Illness during the School Day**

The parents of a child who develops symptoms of illness during the school day will be notified; and depending on the severity of the symptoms, the child may be separated from class to reduce the spread of illness to the other students and await parent pick-up from the Day School Office.

Parents must make every effort to pick up their child within 30 minutes of the initial phone call and/or text message. Please remember to leave your cell phones ON during school hours to ensure we are able to reach you.

### **Viruses (Flu and Covid-19)**

FPDS will follow CDC guidelines related to flu and other communicable diseases. The CDC reports that the period when an infected person is contagious depends on the age and health of the person. Young children may be contagious for longer than a week.

The policy at FPDS is that a child needs to be 5 days past the onset of symptoms before returning to school. For example, if your child starts having flu-like symptoms on a Sunday night, s/he would be considered contagious until, at the earliest, Friday night and thus may not return to school until the following Monday.

### **Communicable Diseases**

In accordance with state regulations, FPDS must be notified when your child has any communicable disease such as mumps, measles, impetigo, head lice, chicken pox or pink eye. Parents will be notified when there is such an illness in their class/school. The child's name and classroom will not be identified to maintain confidentiality.

### **Head Lice**

FPDS supports a No Nit (Lice Eggs) Policy in an effort to minimize head lice infestations and keep the children at FPDS lice and nit free. It is important to screen your child regularly and notify us immediately if head lice or their nits are detected on your child. Your child may return to school once all evidence of head lice or nits are gone. If head lice or nits are detected on your child during school hours, the parent or guardian of the child will be contacted immediately to pick up their child.

Please visit [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org) for more information about this common but preventable, communicable disease.

### **Allergies and Asthma**

If your child has been diagnosed with asthma or specific allergies, it is your responsibility to submit the appropriate forms (and Allergy Questionnaire or an Asthma Action Plan) with your medical forms. The administrative staff will be sure this information is communicated to teachers and resides where it is accessible in the event of a related medical emergency.

## **Medications**

FPDS shall not administer medication(s) except in emergency situations stated below:

- In response to an unexpected severe allergic reaction - liquid Benadryl will be administered (with your written permission on your Emergency Contact Form)
- In response to a severe allergic reaction or asthma attack – an EPI Pen or asthma inhaler will be used IF these have been prescribed for your child by your physician. An Allergy Questionnaire or Asthma Action Plan must be on file for your child. Please provide two prescribed devices for the school (one for your child's classroom and one for the Office) with the physician's written instructions.

In the event that a child needs any medication not mentioned above during the school day, a parent must be present to administer the prescribed medications.

## **Insect Repellent and Sunscreen**

We recommend that sunscreen and/or bug spray (if desired) be applied to a child before the start of the school day. A sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher is recommended. There are samples of sunscreen and bug spray options in the Office, but we recommend you apply products that you purchase due to the potential for skin reactions. If you would like us to apply sunscreen or insect repellent during the school day, a permission form must be signed.

## **Emergency Medical Procedures**

In the event of a medical emergency or accident, FPDS uses the following emergency protocol:

- A staff person will call for adult help and stay with your child to administer first aid
- The summoned individual will contact the appropriate FPDS staff personnel to secure emergency treatment
- The summoned individual will remove other children from the area and remain with them
- The Office or appropriate staff personnel will obtain the status of the child and contact EMS, if necessary
- If EMS has been called, someone will be assigned to the parking lot to await and direct EMS
- The parents will be notified
- A staff person will get a written history of the incident, and accompany the child for emergency treatment, if necessary

All incidents, accidents and unexpected illnesses at the school, both minor and major, are documented with an Incident Report which is filed in your child's files. The original is always sent home. FPDS will alert Child Care Licensing of any accident that happens on school grounds and requires medical treatment. Please let us know if you seek medical treatment for an injury obtained at school.

Our accident protocol also requires that we make an immediate parent phone call if a child bumps his/her head for any reason, to prevent issues related to concussions.

## **Vision and Hearing Screening**

You will be given the opportunity to have Vision and Hearing Screening at First Presbyterian Day School. It is recommended for all children who can reliably respond to the screening tests.

Children who are 4 by September 1st must be screened within 120 days of the start of school.

This screening must also be repeated at the age of 5, so if your child remains at preschool for an additional transition year, you will need to resubmit vision and hearing screenings.

Parents are responsible for the screening costs. If you choose not to have your child screened here, you must provide proof that it has been done by a licensed or certified screener or health care professional within the current school year (i.e., between September and May of the PreK year).

## **Speech Screening**

FPDS may offer speech screening for children over 3 years of age. This screening is optional and is conducted by an outside professional. It is offered as a service to the children of FPDS.

Parents are responsible for the screening costs. You will receive more information about this optional screening during the school year.

## **Handwashing**

Handwashing is an important part of our daily practices and helps prevent communicable and infectious diseases. Proper handwashing procedures followed by FPDS adults and children include: using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails, rinsing well, drying hands with a paper towel, and avoiding touching the faucet or door handles with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Please review our handwashing rules:

- Children must wash their hands as they enter the classroom each morning.
- Children are required to wash their hands before snack/lunch, cooking and sensory activities, and after playground time.
- Children must wash their hands after playing with pets, sand, or dirt
- Children must wash their hands immediately after: coughing, sneezing, nose blowing and toileting.

Please reinforce safe hygiene practices by encouraging thorough handwashing with soap and water at home too. Adult visitors and volunteers in the classroom are expected to follow the same handwashing procedures as the children.

## **Security/Comfort Items**

At preschool, we encourage the development of healthy socialization and expressive language. We encourage parents to implement a transition routine of saying goodbye to security or comfort items in the car, before entering the school building, or placing them in your child's backpack or tote bag outside the classroom. Please speak to your child's teacher if you have concerns about helping your child transition into the classroom without security or comfort items so you can work together.

## **Clothing at School**

Play can be messy. Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable clothes, with closures your child can deal with independently.

A school change of clothing will be kept for your child at school in the event of an accident. A

complete change of clothing should include a top, bottom, underwear, socks and if possible, extra sneakers. Be sure to remember to replace the extra clothing whenever they are used and check throughout the year to be sure they still fit and are appropriate for the current weather.

Make sure your child knows it is OK to get a little dirty. We make an effort to see that the children wear paint smocks, but accidents happen. Your child will be more comfortable if s/he wear clothes that can become dirty or paint-spattered without upsetting you. When children refuse to take part in activities because they are afraid they will get their clothes messy, they miss valuable learning experiences.

Remember, we will be outside every day the weather permits. Please dress your child accordingly. We encourage layers such as sweatshirts, hats, coats, mittens. During cold weather months, keep an extra sweater or mittens in their bag/backpack in case the weather changes.

### **Shoes at School**

Closed-toed and closed-heeled sneakers are the only footwear allowed at FPDS. We are looking out for the children's safety. If your child wears sandals, crocs, cowboy boots, spike/high heels of any type, you must change them into sneakers before arrival at their classroom.

### **Diapers and Toilet Training**

Many preschoolers will be transitioning from diapers to toilet training during their preschool days. Please share with your teacher what you are doing at home so you can agree on a consistent practice.

# NUTRITION

## Snack Time

Parents shall provide daily snack for their child/children. We encourage choosing two food groups for your snack, such as fruit and crackers, or cheese and sliced cucumbers. We will serve water along with their snack.

## Lunch at School

Parents shall provide a healthy lunch. FPDS is not responsible for the nutritional value of the food provided by parents or for meeting the children's daily nutritional needs.

Again, we ask that you provide foods low in sugar, salt, fats, and food preservatives and additives. Beverages that are not 100% juice, milk or water are not permitted. When inappropriate food items are included in a lunch, the teacher will put them back in your child's lunch box and tell them they can enjoy them after they are picked up from school, but they are not a school food.

We are unable to provide lunch refrigeration so please use your own method of keeping lunch items cool. Your child's name must be on the lunch box. Please use containers your child can help open and manage independently. Bring your child's lunch box home and clean it daily. Please prepare all food beforehand (such as peeling oranges or removing tops from strawberries), the staff is not able to do special preparations.

## Healthy Food Philosophy

You shall provide a daily snack and a healthy lunch for your child. The variety of foods your child eats is more important than the amount they eat.

Please choose healthy foods:

- Grains – whole grain breads, pasta, rice...
- Vegetables – sliced cucumbers, peas, green beans, avocado, sweet pepper slices, match-stick carrots...
- Fruit – strawberries, bananas, oranges...
- Dairy – yogurt, cottage cheese, chunks of cheddar cheese
- Protein – beef, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, peanut butter...

Please avoid foods which contain excessive amounts of sugar, salt, fats, food preservatives and additives. The following is a sample list of foods that are not considered healthy foods at FPDS.

### Do not meet healthy food guidelines:

- Fried chips
- Jell-o
- Pudding
- Candy of any kind
- Cookies and cake
- Fruit roll-ups and gummy fruits
- Granola bars with chocolate or candy
- Yogurt with candy sprinkles

**Choking hazards that are not allowed:**

- Hard pretzels
- Popcorn
- Nuts of any kind
- Any chunk of food larger than can be swallowed whole
- Hot dogs

**Foods that may become choking hazards and must be prepared properly:**

- Grapes (cut in halves or quarters)
- Grape or cherry tomatoes (cut in halves or quarters)
- Baby carrots (matchstick-sized, only)

Childcare licensing (TFPS) also states that no foods brought from home can be shared at preschool, so the staff will reinforce that snack and lunch times are not a time for sharing.

**Water**

Please bring full water bottles each morning and take them home each day for cleaning. We will always have water available to refill water bottles. Please send only water in your child's water bottle.

**Birthday and Super Star Snacks**

Birthday and/or "super star" celebrations may be a part of your class celebrations. A special snack is permitted on your child's special day. We suggest mini muffins, rice krispie treats, cookies, popsicles or frozen yogurt bars, or ice cream cups.

Balloons are not allowed as a part of birthday and super star celebrations.

**Stay n Play Snacks**

No snack is served during Stay and Play. The children may drink water from their water bottles or from the water fountain.

**Children with Food Allergies**

Parents of children with food allergies are required to complete an Allergy Questionnaire during enrollment and/or during the school year if a new allergy is diagnosed. While parents supply snacks and lunches during the school week, there are multi-cultural events and super star snacks at special times during the year and we must be aware of your child's allergies. Teachers will email families when special food will be presented to your child at school. Parents will be responsible for providing a snack/lunch alternative when their child is allergic to the provided foods.

**Nut and Food Allergy Notice**

FPDS is NOT a peanut-free, egg-free or dairy-free facility. However, in certain circumstances when a FPDS student has a severe allergy to a certain food(s), the classroom in which the child is enrolled may be designated as "free" from that particular food(s) for the entire school year during FPDS school hours only. This determination, taking into account the severity of the allergy, is conducted by the Director of FPDS, in conjunction with the parents of the student and his/her teacher(s). Please look for special notices from your teacher to find out if this issue affects your class.

# **BEHAVIOR and DISCIPLINE**

## **Discipline Policy**

Our staff is trained to use only positive guidance techniques, such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, setting clear limits and enforcing them with logical consequences, and using a brief supervised separation.

We abide by all discipline and guidance criteria listed in the "Minimum Standards and Guidelines" of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TFPS).

## **Conscious Discipline**

FPDS staff are specifically trained in a discipline philosophy called Conscious Discipline®. FPDS believes this practice aligns with our play-based and developmentally appropriate philosophy. The core tenant is that discipline is “something we seek to instill within our children, not done to children.”

In using Conscious Discipline to strengthen our children and their community, our children enjoy common routines, and a school-wide language for positive guidance. This helps them feel free to explore their world and build relationships with all students and teachers. We believe that the best way to respond to children requires us to develop kindness, and self-respect, to teach them to honor each other, and to solve problems with love and compassion.

Using the Conscious Discipline philosophy, a research-based discipline – parents, teachers, and children strive to:

- Set and achieve goals together
- Manage emotions instead of acting out
- Resolve conflict in a way that creates closer relationships

*“Conscious Discipline® is a comprehensive social-emotional and classroom management program that uses everyday life events to teach children and adults self-control, conflict resolution, character development, and social skills.” - Dr. Becky Bailey.*

## **Changes At Home**

Please keep the teacher informed when things happen at home that can affect a child's behavior at school (such as mom or dad being out of town, a move, death in the family, etc.). Even seemingly minor or positive changes affect behavior.

## **Aggressive Behavior**

If a child's behavior becomes physically aggressive toward others, s/he will be briefly separated from the group. If the behavior continues, parents will be notified. The teachers will work with the child and the parents until the behavior becomes manageable.

The teacher and Director will work with the parents to reach a mutually acceptable solution. If we cannot arrive at a workable solution, and the behavior endangers others (physically or emotionally), parents may be asked to temporarily remove the child from the school until the aggressive developmental phase has passed.





# **SAFETY and SECURITY**

## **State Licensing and Inspections**

For your child's protection, FPDS is a licensed facility of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Our Texas child-care license and most recent inspection report is available in the Office.

We also maintain annual inspections for fire safety, sanitation, gas, and minimum standards for child-care centers. These inspections and the minimum standards for child-care facilities are available for your review in the Office. For information, questions and concerns, or an online copy of "Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers", please visit the DFPS website at: [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

Licensed child-care centers and facilities are dedicated to keeping children safe. We ask parents to report any signs of child abuse or neglect by calling the Abuse/Neglect Hotline at (800) 252-5400, or bring your concerns confidentially to the Director. For situations that do not require a response within 24 hours you may report through the DFPS's secure website: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).

FPDS staff is obligated to report any evidence of child abuse or neglect. In addition, all FPDS staff receives annual training in the identification and prevention of child abuse.

Examples of abuse and neglect include, but are not limited to:

- leaving a child alone or in an unattended vehicle,
- not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat,
- unexplained marks and bruises,
- evidence of shaken baby syndrome,
- frequent child hygiene and nutrition issues.

FPDS promotes prevention by helping develop good parenting and teaching skills, promoting and modeling non-violent discipline techniques, and helping adults identify needs and resources for additional support. Please help us work as a community to protect our children.

## **Custody Situations**

If your family has a court order on file, please provide the Day School Office with the most recent copy. At FPDS, we prefer not to be involved in custody situations which may arise within families, and by state law in the absence of a court order, both parents have equal rights. If a custody dispute takes place on our campus, the local police will be called to handle the dispute so that FPDS will not be placed in the middle of a family issue.

## **Security**

For the protection of our children, FPDS and the church buildings are locked at all times except for all-school and all-church events. Each family will be provided with an electronic security access card that will allow you into the school building and main church building during school hours. These cards will be distributed by your teacher during your classroom visit prior to the

start of classes. An additional card may be purchased for \$10 during orientation only. If you lose your card, you will be charged \$50 to replace it. Please do not delay reporting lost cards to the church office. A lost card gives a stranger access to our school.

Please use your card carefully, and do not allow “tailgating”. All parents have access cards and are expected to use them daily. Any strangers should be directed to the church office, or asked to wait outside the door if they would like to speak to the Director.

## **Open Door Policy**

Despite locked doors for safety and security, we welcome parents at preschool at any time. Please be aware that frequent visits may disrupt your student’s school day routine. We ask you to be sensitive to the impact your visit may have on your child and the classroom dynamics.

If you need to speak to a teacher or the Director, we encourage you to email in advance and set a convenient time to meet so that we have time to focus on your issue without disrupting class supervision and activities.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

All students must have a completed Emergency Contact Form on file before they may be left at the First Presbyterian Day School. Please notify the Day School Office by email of any changes in addresses and phone numbers during the year in order to insure that we may always find you in the event of illness, injury, or evacuation. These forms are kept in your child’s classroom, go out on the playground with us each day, and a master copy is kept in the Office for all emergency and evacuation situations and drills.

## **Emergency Preparedness and Evacuations**

FPDS has an Emergency Preparedness Plan in the event of a school-wide emergency such as hurricanes, tornadoes, intruders, fire, etc. For commonly recognized crisis situations, this plan prescribes the appropriate response for each event type – security lock-down, taking shelter in interior hallways, or building evacuation. The Day School holds monthly fire drills and evacuates to safe areas outside, as well as shelter-in-place drills for severe weather and intruders. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.

In the event that First Presbyterian Day School must be evacuated to another location, the following locations are arranged as emergency sites depending on the emergency.

St Matthew’s Episcopal Preschool	Covenant Presbyterian Church	Westover Hills Church of Christ
8134 Mesa Drive	3003 Northland Drive	8332 Mesa Drive
Austin, TX 78757	Austin, TX 78757	Austin, TX 78759

## **Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs**

Smoking, alcohol, and drugs are strictly prohibited in the First Presbyterian Church buildings and around all areas of our property during school hours.

## **Weapons**

FPDS is a gun-free zone. on the grounds of or within 1,000 feet of the property of First Presbyterian Day School which is considered a private school zone. Weapons may only be carried by professional

law enforcement officers acting in his or her official capacity. If you are a parent in law enforcement, please identify your professional position and license to carry a weapon with the Day School Office so that we are prepared to address concerns about a weapon on the school campus.

Toy weapons such as swords, guns, knives, and light sabers should not be brought to FPDS for sharing or show-and-tell.

## **Gangs**

FPDS is a gang-free zone - under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone where criminal activities are subject to harsher penalties. If you see any behavior or groups that concern you, please report your observations to the Director.

## **Field Trips**

FPDS goes on very few field trips due to liability and safety concerns due to transporting children. We invite special guests which enrich our program at various times throughout the school year.

Classes may walk over to the neighboring fire station, the mail box, or a neighborhood business but there must be enough adults for each child to have an adult hand to hold.

## **Water Activities**

FPDS children have the opportunity to play in water sprinklers, with water in the sensory tub, or play in wading pools. At no time are children unsupervised when participating in water activities. Express permission for water play must be indicated on your child's Emergency Contact Form. If you will not allow water play, please keep your child home during Mud and Water Week.

## **Animals**

FPDS keeps several aquariums in the building. State law does not allow frogs, turtles, or domestic birds as classroom pets due to the diseases that they potentially transmit.

Service animals are allowed on school property. We occasionally have special pet and exotic animal visits which you will be informed about in advance.

Children and teachers are required to wash their hands with soap and water before and after handling animals. If your child has an allergy to any animal, please inform the school.

## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

### Stay and Play

Stay and Play is an extended childcare service available to registered students from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. each day. It is not part of our regular planned day. Students must be signed up in order to attend. There is a fee for this time which will be discussed during Parent Orientation.

### After School Enrichment

Special enrichment classes are offered at First Presbyterian Day School directly after school. These programs are separate from the Day School programming. The enrichment teachers must meet safety, background checking and supervision specifications required for all teachers working with our children; however, they are contracting with parents to provide the enrichment programs. They are not a part of the Day School Staff or issues and emergencies are not covered by school policies and liability. Questions about the policies and practices of these programs should be directed to the FPDS Director.

### After School Policy

If you would like to visit with other parents, you must sign your child out, exit the building, and visit on the small playground or gravel picnic area. Our teachers need time in their classroom to clean up and prepare for a new day. Stay and Play students and staff are the only people allowed on the large playground immediately after school.

### Playground Use Outside of School Hours

Please be sure to review the playground rules. We must ensure all users of the playgrounds follow safe playground practices and ask that all parents reinforce the same behaviors the school requires outside of school hours.

The small playground is open immediately after school. The posted playground rules must be followed by you and your children. You may only enter and exit the small playground through the Day School building. **Children may not enter the building without an adult.**

The following outdoor rules must be followed:

- Items in the school shed are for Day School staff only and are not available after school
- Shoes must be worn at all times
- Climbing is not permitted on tables or playhouses
- No climbing UP slides – feet first and seated on your bottom only
- Sand toys must stay in the sandboxes
- Children must be seated on their bottom on swings, - no standing or hanging
- No moving or throwing of the large rocks and gravel
- Do not move tables and slides
- Leave the playground as you found it
- Report any hazards to the Day School Office

### The Labyrinth

The church labyrinth is a place for spiritual journey and meditation. We encourage you to talk

to your child about prayer, meditation and the importance of quiet spaces, and kindly ask you do not to use the labyrinth as a play space or social gathering area. FPCA does not maintain that area as a play space for children; the antique columns, historic stone signs, stumps and rocks are jumping and tripping hazards for young children. The Day School Staff works with the operations and custodial staff to reduce hazardous obstacles and the risk of pests such as mosquitoes, bees and fire ants on the childcare-licensed playgrounds. Please use playground spaces as directed by your Day School staff for gathering and socializing.

### **Birthday Parties and Gift Exchange**

If you are planning a party for your child, do not hand-deliver or place invitations in backpacks unless everyone in the class is invited. If the entire class is not invited, please use email or the regular U.S. mail to deliver your invitations.

No gifts are to be exchanged between students at school.

# COMMUNICATION

## From Us to You

Our primary form of communication with you will be by email. Any messages generated by the Office will be emailed to the address you have provided us. Your child's teacher will contact you for specific class announcements and progress by email and messages posted outside the classroom. Please email updates to your contact information to the Day School at [dayschool@fpdsaustin.org](mailto:dayschool@fpdsaustin.org) immediately after changes occur so that we have accurate contact information on file.

There will be times when announcements or paperwork are placed in your child's tote bag/backpack. Be sure to check your child's belongings each day.

## From You to Us

If you have an issue you would like to communicate to the staff, Board or administration, please email [fpdsdirector@fpdsaustin.org](mailto:fpdsdirector@fpdsaustin.org). Issues should be presented in writing so that concerns are clear and verbal messages are not misunderstood. Please do not call teachers on their cell phones during school time. They need to be spending their time attending to your children. Messages to the teachers should go through the administrative staff in the Day School Office. Therefore, to leave a message with your child's teacher and/or contact the Office during school hours, please call the Day School Office at (512) 345-8961. Please program our number into your cell phone!

## Assessment Process and Teacher Conferences

Each family completes a Personal Information Form for their child to enable us to determine any physical, family, social/emotional or cultural issues that will affect your child's progress and development at school. Every family also provides us with goals for their child on the Goal Sheet. It is imperative that you provide us with information about any outside services your child receives (physical, occupational, speech, emotional, vision, hearing) so that we can follow through with whatever the therapist(s) recommend. When we know what is happening in your child's life, we can better provide a wonderful preschool experience for your child.

You and your child will visit with the teaching staff individually in the classroom to help your child orient to the school and to help the staff learn more about you and your child. Speech Screening is available in the Fall. By the end of the Fall term, you will receive a brief written report from your child's teacher. Vision and Hearing Screening opportunities are provided in the Spring. A child or group may be the subject of a focused observation and a developmental assessment.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in February each year. Your teachers will review your child's progress and share celebrations and concerns with you at this time. You will also be given a brief written report at the end of the school year. At any time, you may request a conference for specific concerns with your child's teacher.

## Distribution of Information

Any notes, letters, invitations, advertisements, etc. must be related to school business and

cleared with the administrative staff in the Day School Office before distribution to Day School families.

## **Conflicts**

If a disagreement occurs between parents and staff members, we ask you to follow this sequence:

- Speak, first, with the person with whom you have the disagreement. It might also be helpful if you put the problem in writing. If an agreement cannot be reached, then please,
- Contact the Director and set up a dedicated time to meet. You are encouraged to put your concerns in writing to make sure all aspects of the problem get addressed.
- If a satisfactory agreement still cannot be reached, put your concerns in writing to the FPDS Ministry Board Moderator at [fpdsboard@fpdsaustin.org](mailto:fpdsboard@fpdsaustin.org) . You will be contacted by a member of the Board after your concern(s) have been reviewed.

## **Who Should I Ask? Who Should I Tell?**

If a question, situation, or suggestion arises and you don't know who to ask or tell, please stop by the Day School Office and let us help or guide you. You can always call and leave us a message at 345-8961 or email us at [fpdsdirector@fpdsaustin.org](mailto:fpdsdirector@fpdsaustin.org). Also feel free to make recommendations and express concerns via email. We love to hear from you!

## **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The FPDS Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is organized for the purpose of supporting the education of the children at FPDS by fostering relationships between the school, church, parents, and teachers. The PTO works to enhance the educational facilities and opportunities for the students of FPDS that are not otherwise provided for in the school budget, and by volunteering to augment the activities of the FPDS staff.

The primary objectives of the PTO are:

- promote volunteer opportunities and programs for the school;
- sponsor projects and events that benefit the students of FPDS; and
- raise funds as necessary to support the growing needs of FPDS.

The FPDS PTO Executive Board is comprised of a: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. A FPDS Staff Representative and a Room Representative(s) from each class also actively and provide leadership for the activities of the PTO. Executive Board positions are elected, typically at the end of the subsequent school year. Each FPDS class designates at least one Room Representative for the upcoming year to act as a liaison between parents and the PTO. Any parent/guardian is invited to become a member of the PTO or any of its event committees.

All PTO events are volunteer-led and requires support through attendance and volunteering. Each school-wide event requires one to two Committee Chairs and many helping hands.

### **Make-A-Plate Fundraiser**

This event is our first fundraiser of the school year and one of our most creative. You will take home plate templates, allow your child/ren to turn into artists and create a masterpiece. Volunteers are needed to promote and coordinate this fun fundraiser – over a 2 week period, before and after school.

This event generally occurs between the end of September to mid-October and on-campus. Plates are typically delivered the beginning of December and make wonderful holiday gifts.

### **Playground Cleanup**

Participate in a fun Saturday morning workday – in the Fall and Spring, to assist with playground upkeep. Activities usually include: adding mulch to the fall-zone areas of the playground, planting, power washing playground equipment, and other planned cleanup activities. This is a fun, family-friendly event. Enjoy coffee and breakfast snacks while you work... bring shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes, and work gloves. Children are more than welcome to come help, or just play!

### **Gingerbread House Party**

This is a fun, family-friendly, community event which is a long-standing FPDS tradition. Decorate a real gingerbread house from a smorgasbord of holiday candy, with no mess to clean up. Volunteers are needed to help make this event a success ~ planning and organizing, building gingerbread houses, making icing, sorting candy, decorating the event site. This event generally occurs on the first or second Saturday of December in the Fellowship Hall at FPCA.



## **Teacher Appreciation Week**

Help show our appreciation for the caring hands and daily work of the FPDS Staff. This week-long event combines of various gestures of appreciation to help show the FPDS staff how much they mean to the parent community. Volunteers help facilitate activities over a week period such as special breakfasts and lunches. Room Representatives coordinate classroom participation like 'bring your teacher a flower day', and other creative acts of appreciation. All activities take place occurs on the FPDS campus during school hours, but may require volunteers to perform some duties off-campus.

## **Multi-Cultural Events**

Help the school celebrate cultural diversity and coordinate, decorate, and plan fun-filled, authentic 'holidays' – such as Chinese New Year, Persian New Year and Hispanic Heritage. The celebration(s) often include: special visitors such as Chinese dancers, Ballet Folklorica, school decorations and a food sampling. Please let us know if your family celebrates a special holiday. We would love to share your cultural traditions with the rest of the school!

Cultural holidays currently include:

- Hispanic Heritage (September)
- Chinese New Year (January/February)
- Persian New Year (March)

## **Family Celebration**

We love to celebrate our families! The PTO works alongside the staff by preparing a time of fellowship with – friends, family, good eats, live music, and a silent auction.

Help plan for the music or the food at Classroom Celebration. We have had picnics, food trucks, Dollar Dogs, and pizza parties

The Silent Auction is the largest fundraiser for FPDS, and many volunteers are needed to make this event a success. You can help by gathering donations from friends, restaurants, business products and services, vacation rentals, musicians and artists you know to donate to the Silent Auction. This event typically takes place on-campus the last Thursday of April, in the evening.

## **Mud & Water Week**

During this week, each class will have a day of water-related fun on the playground. Volunteers are needed to transform the playground grass area into a spectacle of pools of water, shaving cream, bubbles, toys, beach umbrellas, and a time for a summer treat like popsicles. Volunteers will set up and breakdown the activities throughout the week. This event takes place in mid-May during the school day.

## **Graduation Chapel**

In late May, we celebrate our FPDS graduates who are moving on to kindergarten. This special chapel service is open to the entire family. The PTO coordinates a slideshow montage and a family-friendly reception, and working directly with the Director and 4's teachers.