

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
HISTORY, MINISTRY, PHILOSOPHY& GOALS	2
GOVERNANCE	2
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3
<b>PARENT VISITS</b>	<b>3</b>
.....	
<b>PARENT CONFERENCES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>PARENT CONCERNS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
PASTORAL CARE .....	4
<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>4</b>
POM TMNING .....	5
<b>CHANGE OF CLOTHING</b>	<b>5</b>
TOYS & SECURITY OBJECTS	5
<b>BITING, ETC</b> .....	<b>5</b>
.....	
EMERGENCY KIT	<b>6</b>
<b>SNACKS &amp; LUNCH</b>	<b>6</b>
REST TIME	7
DAILY HEALTH CHECKS .....	7
<b>MEDICATION</b>	<b>7</b>
.....	
<b>SIGNING IN &amp; OUT BY AUTHORIZED PERSONS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
.....	
<b>STUDENT RECORDS &amp; FORMS.</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>LATE ARRIVAL FOR SCHOOL</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>LATE PICK-UP</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED PERSONS</b> .	<b>9</b>
BIRTHDAY PARTIES .....	9
EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAM	10
PARENT INFORMATION	... 10
PARENT PARTICIPATION .....	10
.....	
<b>ILLNESS POLICY</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>PARKING POLICY</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>SEPARATION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
.....	
<b>FINANCIAL POLICY</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>CHANGING YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULE</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INTENT TO WITHDRAW</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SCHOOL READINESS</b>	14
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN</b> .....	~.
.....	
<b>PLAYGROUND USAGE</b> .....	14
.....	
<b>SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS</b> .....	15
.....	

## *INTRODUCUON*

The administration and staff of Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Nursery School welcomes you and your family. In the following pages you will find a variety of information, requirements, policies and agreements that will help to make your enrollment and tenure at SOPNS an enjoyable experience. These policies, requirements, and agreements constitute our *Admission Policy*.

Please take time to review each page carefully and ask us any questions you may have about our program. After reviewing this information, please sign and return to the office the *Handbook Receipt Foan*. By signing this form you are agreeing to abide by the policies and procedures that are established in this *Parent Handbook/Admissions Policy*, as well as to abide by any additions or changes that should be made in the school policies during the time your child is enrolled in the

We look forward to the opportunity to get to know you and provide your child with a positive, Chdst-centered early childhood experience.

## *HISTORY, MINISTRY, PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS*

The Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Nursery School (SOPNS) was established as a ministry to the glory of God and a service to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. SOPNS is a Christian outreach into the community, established by the First Presbyterian Church of Sherman Oaks as a non-profit church-related nursery school.

At SOPNS, we believe that children are whole people and must develop in all areas of their beings: body, mind and spirit. We believe that as a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Sherman Oaks, we are best equipped to meet all areas of your child's development by lovingly applying the principles of God's word, along with our expertise in the field of early childhood development.

We believe that young children are ready to be introduced to the wonderful world of education. Opportunities for learning are presented in both formal and informal ways, allowing the child to understand concepts and progress at his own pace based on his maturation level.

We offer a half-day Nursery School program open to children two to five years of age. We provide a quality developmental preschool curriculum, which teaches basic kindergarten readiness skills, socialization, and respect and love for God, others and self. Children are encouraged to express themselves artistically and improve their physical coordination through indoor and outdoor activities.

A Transitional Kindergarten program is offered for children who are chronologically able to enter a traditional kindergarten program, but would benefit in many ways by having an additional year of social, emotional or academic development. This program features a full academic program in a non-hurried environment of care and nurturing.

Extended hours are offered on a limited basis for the convenience of our parents. Hours are available before and after regular school hours and must be arranged in advance. A limited number of "special extended" hours are available for children who must stay occasionally.

We encourage you to participate in our education programs, parent committees, and in a variety of family-related activities that are sponsored by the school and/or church. This will help to ensure strong home, community, church and school relationships.

## *GOVERNANCE*

SOPNS is governed by the Elders of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Sherman Oaks. Elders are elected from and by the members of the church congregation. The Director administers the school in its daily operations under the

direction of the Nursery School Commission of Session, which is composed of Elder co-opted church members elected by the Session, and a Pastor.

The Church reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to administer the school in a manner consistent with the best educational and Christian standards.

### *RELIGIOUS EDUCATION*

While SOPNS welcomes all families and is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, according equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, all classes include daily, age-appropriate Christian education. All students are required to participate in this daily education and in weekly chapel services.

While we acknowledge different beliefs, our school is Christian by nature and design, and all students are expected to participate in opportunities for spiritual growth. We do not celebrate holidays associated with other beliefs.

Parents are welcome to join us for our chapel services any time. Chapel is held once a week during the morning preschool session and lasts for approximately 15 minutes.

### *PARENT VISITS*

Parents of children enrolled in the school are welcome to visit the school at any time during the school day. Please keep in mind that classes are in session and should not be disturbed. Please remember to respect your child's initial adjustment and separation time before planning visits to help in the class.

### *PARENT CONFERENCES*

Conferences with teachers are scheduled once a year for our four-year-old children. Additional conferences shall be scheduled as needed by the parent, teacher and/or director.

Please respect the teacher's time immediately before and after class. If you must speak with the teacher at length it is best to arrange a mutual time. If there are situations that occur within your family that may affect you child, please be sure to notify the teacher immediately.

## *PARENT CONCERNS*

Any concern regarding your child in class should be shared first with the teacher. Operational, policy, scheduling, financial or staff concerns should be shared with the Director only. If the concern cannot be resolved with the teacher, a conference should be arranged with the Director by parents or teacher. The Director will listen, investigate, and devise a plan of action to come to a resolution.

In the event that a mutually satisfying resolution is not achieved, the Pastor will be available to all students and parents. Final responsibility for policy decisions rests with the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Sherman Oaks.

SOPNS wishes to be open to suggestions and constructive criticism by parents. Continued negative input is disruptive, discouraging to staff, undermines authority and stifles creativity in both students and staff. This cannot be permitted. Parents who continue to be dissatisfied after exhausting this process for concerns, will be encouraged to seek other school placement that will be more suitable to their needs and will preserve the harmony and effectiveness of SOPNS.

## *PASTORAL CARE*

School families in need of the specific care of a pastor are welcome to contact the pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Sherman Oaks. Every effort will be made to provide for your specific needs. Those in need of a professional counselor are encouraged to contact the Sherman Oaks Counseling Center, a joint ministry of Sherman Oaks Presbyterian, Lutheran and Methodist churches.

## *DISCIPLINE*

Children are disciplined in a positive manner that does not degrade, ridicule or physically harm the child. Staff members may not spank children.

We practice behavior management that begins by setting clearly defined limits for children and preparing our classrooms and lesson plans to set the stage for a positive day. We verbalize inappropriate behavior and help children to react and interact in acceptable ways.

When appropriate, "time out" is used to separate a child from a given situation. After separating for an appropriate time the child is helped to understand what is inappropriate behavior and what is appropriate.

## *POTTY TRAINING*

While we prefer that all children are potty trained, we will assist you by changing diapers and/or helping with potty training for children in our Blossoms class. Parents are required to provide disposable diapers, a box of 100 disposable rubber gloves and baby wipes. When potty training begins we do not recommend the use of "pull up" type diapers. You should discuss this process with your child's teacher. Children must be fully potty trained before entering a three-year-old level class.

## *CHANGE OF CLOTHING*

All children should bring a complete change of clothing in the likely event of a spill or an accident. Please place the clothing in a one-gallon plastic bag and mark all clothing and the bag clearly with your child's name. Clothing should be changed occasionally.

## *TOYS AND SECURITY OBJECTS*

Bottles, pacifiers and oral toys are not allowed.

A small "security" blanket, pillow or stuffed toy is permitted for extended day students. Security items will be kept in the child's cubby during class times.

Children may bring toys books or other small items to share on class share days only. The school is not responsible for loss or damage of any item brought to school. Shooting and weapon-type toys are not allowed. SOPNS reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of any toy, book or recording.

## *BITING AND OTHER INJURIOUS BEHAVIORS*

It is the policy of Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Nursery School that children be accepted into our program and continue in our program as long as their physical behavior allows them to function in a group of children without causing injury to other children, themselves or to school personnel.

In the course of play it is understood that a child will occasionally and unintentionally injure another child. However, biting and other intentional injuring is not acceptable behavior.

Should biting and other unacceptable, dangerous or injurious behaviors occur, the children will be physically separated. The injury will be cared for with standard first aid. The parents of both children will be notified in writing of the incident and appropriate, immediate correction and discipline will be administered by school personnel.

It is expected that the parent of the child who injured the other child will firmly reinforce the inappropriateness of the behavior. It is also advisable for the parent to take his or her child to the injured child to apologize.

Should the behavior occur again with any child, the parent will be called and required to pick up the child from school immediately and remain out of the school for the rest of the day. Should there be a third incident, the parent is required to remove the child from the program until the parent can assure the school administration that the inappropriate behavior will no longer occur. Should the child be re-enrolled in the school and the behavior occur again, the parent will be required to permanently remove the child from the school program.

### *EMERGENCYKIT*

In the event of a major earthquake or other emergency, you may not be able to get to your child immediately. We have in place an emergency disaster plan that includes the provision of an earthquake kit for each child. Provisions and other supplies are designed to last a minimum of 72 hours. Please be advised if the drive gate is closed following a disaster you should park your car and report to the staff member posted at the gate.

In addition to items provided by the school, you should bring the following items on the first day of school:

1. A complete change of clothing including socks and sturdy shoes
2. A picture of your family and a comforting note from you
3. Any prescription medication which your child takes on a regular basis
4. All emergency forms from your enrollment packet

These items should be placed in a one-gallon "zip-lock" bag with your child's name clearly marked on the outside of the bag. (Yes, they do really fit!)

### *SNACKS & LUNCH*

All children should bring a healthy, non-perishable lunch to school, including a drink. There is also the option of purchasing a hot lunch on a monthly pre-paid basis. Menus are sent home monthly for your selections. Lunch is served between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Large uneaten food portions will be returned home so you may monitor

your child's eating habits. **DO NOT SEND CANDY OR GUM IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH OR ANY MEDICATIONS, INCLUDING VITAMINS OR COUGH DROPS.**

During morning class time and in the afternoon extended program we serve a nutritious snack which is included in your child's tuition cost. If your child has any food allergies or medical restrictions, you will be required to provide a suitable snack.

Special snacks may be provided by parents for special occasions such as birthdays or holidays. Please refer to our *Birthday Party Guidelines* in this handbook. Please coordinate these with the teacher.

Children are expected to be capable of feeding themselves. Staff will help children with difficult containers. Should your child not have a lunch, **SOPNS** will provide a lunch for your child at the cost of \$3.50 per lunch.

### *REST TIME*

By state law, all children involved in the extended day program must have a rest time. Children will rest during the times of **1:00 and 2:30** p.m.

The school provides a child-sized cot for each child. Each child should bring a small crib-sized blanket that is to be taken home and laundered each week. If necessary children may have a small pillow, sheet and stuffed toy for added comfort.

### *DAILY HEALTH CHECKS*

Your child will be given a daily visual health check. Any child suspected of being ill or having a contagious disease will be sent home. Children must be picked up within one hour of notification. Children with various medical conditions and injuries will be admitted at the Director's discretion.

### *MEDICATION*

While we prefer not to administer any medications, as a service to parents of children in the extended care program only, we will administer prescription medications only. Children must be free of fever and contagious symptoms.

A medication release form must be signed each week. Medication will not be administered without it. Medication must be in its original container, clearly labeled with your child's name and instructions. **DO NOT SEND MEDICATION IN THE LUNCH**

BOX. Medication should be handed directly to the teacher. It is the parent's responsibility to take medication home each evening. Medications left for one week **V**all be discarded.

**NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED AT ANY**

### ***SIGNING IN AND OUT BY AUTHORIZED***

State law (81078.1) requires all children to be signed in and out of the school each day. Failure to do so will result in the dismissal of your child. Only those persons listed on the emergency identification form will be permitted to pick up students. Other persons must have prior written notice from the parents or guardian. All persons will be required to show picture identification.

**PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE MAY NOT PICK UP ANY**

### ***STUDENT RECORDS &***

All registration/enrollment forms must be completed and returned to the office at least one day prior to your child's first day of school. Please update you child's emergency forms as needed. An incomplete file will result in a delay in you child starting in the program or in suspension of the child.

### ***LATE ARRIVAL FOR***

Children arriving at school after 9:30 a.m. must be signed in at the classroom. The person bringing the child to school must also notify the office before leaving that the child has arrived.

### ***LATE PICK-UP***

Parents or caretakers must pick up children promptly. Please call if you will be late. Children being picked up after the regularly scheduled closing time will be charged a \$10 penalty per 15 minutes, or any portion thereof. Payment must be made at the time of late pick-up and can be paid in cash or by check to the responsible teacher.

A child left after closing at the end of the school day (6:00 p.m.) without notification by the parent is considered an abandoned child. Appropriate measures will be taken to insure the safety of the child.

Parents should be considerate of our school workers who need to attend to their personal lives after school hours. SOPNS reserves the right to ask any parent who is chronically late picking up their child to remove the child from the school permanently.

### *AUTHORIZED PERSONS*

On your Emergency and Information Form please list those persons who have your permission to pick your child up from the program without additional permission, If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child from school, EVEN IF THEY ARE ON YOUR LIST, please be sure to notify the school in writing or by phone.

Persons not on your list who do not have written or verbal permission from you will not be permitted to pick up your child. If you have made arrangements for your child to go home with another person, and that person sends an alternate, we will not allow your child to go home with the alternate without your permission.

All persons picking up children will be required to show a picture

In custody and other situations between parents, the school personnel can only stop another parent from picking up a child if the school has a copy of the court order. School personnel may then call the police. If there is no court order we cannot legally stop a parent from taking a child.

### *BIRTHDAY PARTIES*

Birthdays are a special time for all children. SOPNS has devised a special way to celebrate birthdays that will be equitable fun for all children. Birthdays will be celebrated during the morning snack period.

Parents are welcome to send a special treat like muffins, Jello Jigglers, cookies or other health snacks. The children usually don't eat most cakes or cupcakes. You may send special plates and/or napkins if you desire.

## *EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS*

A variety of after school programs may be available as determined by the Director and approved by the Nursery School Commission.

Class size, length, and content are determined by the private instructor with the approval of the Director and the Nursery School Commission. Fees are paid directly to the private instructor. Children are escorted by school staff to the program site. Children in extended day program will be escorted back to class at the end of the program, and others should be picked up promptly by their parents or caregivers.

## *PARENT INFORMATION*

SOPNS tries to communicate with parents regarding upcoming events, activities and general information in a number of different ways. Please be sure to look through and read the papers that your child brings home each day.

Each class also provides a parent information board with important announcements. Please take time to look at this board at least once a week.

Please be sure you communicate in writing to the office any information regarding your child.

## *PARENT PARTICIPATION*

As a non-profit church-related school, our program is operated solely on tuition paid by our school families. We are not subsidized by the church. Over 70% of our income actually goes toward employee compensation, so we can maintain our high standards of early childhood professionals caring for your children.

This situation necessitates each parent taking an active role of volunteerism. We need you help in providing special donations of your time, effort, and resources for our fundraisers, class coordinators, phone tree, and a host of other jobs.

Parents who work outside the home can be involved in a number of different projects with a few weekend or evening hours.

We can also use donations of materials and supplies that can be used as teaching resources and art materials. Parents can visit as special storytellers or share about their occupation.

WE NEED YOU! Your class coordinator will be contacting you to let you know how you can help. You may also check the parent information board for your teacher's wish list.

### *ILLNESS POLICY*

We are not licensed for "sick" childcare and could lose our license if the following policies are not followed:

Children should not come to school if the child has:

1. A temperature currently or in the last 24 hours (even low grade)
2. A consistent cough
3. A runny nose with thick discharge
4. An infectious dermatitis
5. Any contagious disease or symptom of contagious disease

Please notify the office when your child is out sick so we may follow current

Any child absent due to illness must:

1. Be free of a temperature for 24 hours
2. Be free of all illness symptoms such as vomiting for 24 hours
3. Bring a release note from a physician for any infectious disease or condition

If your child has a chronic illness such as asthma or allergies, we will require a written physician's statement describing the condition and the procedure for handling this condition in a school setting.

### *PARKING POLICY*

All drivers are required to abide by the following rules. Please advise your carpool drivers and caregivers.

1. All drivers shall park and conduct themselves in a courteous manner.
2. All cars parked in the tandem spaces must pull completely forward.
3. All cars must be in a marked parking space unless directed by a parking attendant. Cars may not park in the driveway, on the grass, double park on the street, or down the center of the lot.
4. If you observe people parking inappropriately, please report it to the office immediately.
5. Drivers may be asked on occasion to do on-street or pull-through parking only in order to accommodate special church activities.

## *SEPARATION*

For many children nursery school is the first time children will be away from parents for an extended period of time. We want to make the separation process as easy as possible on both the child and the parent. If your child cries when you leave, it is not unusual. Don't worry about your child interrupting the class or the teacher having a difficult time. This is what we are trained to do.

The average adjustment time is about two weeks. To prepare your child for school you should stop by a few times before school starts to familiarize the child with the new surroundings and meet the teacher. The night before school starts do not spend a lot of time talking about school. This causes unnecessary anxiety. Try to contain your own emotions.

On the first day of school, be sure your child has a good, unhurried breakfast. Tell your child that the two of you are going to go to school this morning and play with the boys and girls. Explain how the day will progress. "We are going to school and mommy will stay with you while you make new friends. I will let you play with your friends while I talk with the other mommies. After a while I will go shopping (to work, do housework, etc.) and I will be back to get you after lunch time."

Be sure to keep any promises you make and follow the teacher's lead as to when it is time to leave. Not all children cry the first day, some do on the second, others a month later, and some not at all. Each child is different. On the first day you may stay as long as you like. After that we advise dropping the child off quickly and returning sooner if needed. The biggest fear is "will Mommy come back and get me?" You can always feel free to call the office and we will check on the child for you.

Many times a special trinket or item from your purse will help to remind the younger children that you will be back. One mom gives her son a lipstick kiss on a small piece of paper that he keeps in his pocket. When he needs reassurance he pulls it out and looks at it.

## *FINANCIAL POLICY*

All parents must sign a financial contract at the beginning of each school year, when rates change, or if there is a change in the child's schedule.

Tuition is due the first school day of each month. Checks should be made payable to Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Nursery School or SOPNS. Members of First Presbyterian Church of Sherman Oaks that are on active membership rolls and in good standing receive a 10% discount on monthly tuition only.

Monthly billing is not produced. Your current contract serves as your billing notice. Persons needing receipts for employee programs should contact the school office.

Accounts not paid in full by the 10th of each month will automatically have late fees added to the tuition amount. Accounts are past due-as of the 15 th of each month and will result in the suspension of the student until the account is paid in full, including late feels and/or penalties.

**NO TUITION ADJUSTMENTS OR CREDITS WILL BE MADE FOR CHILDREN MISSING CLASSES DUE TO ILLNESS, VACATION, ETC.** All holiday months are paid as regular months with no adjustments made. Special holiday care may be offered during scheduled vacations. This cost is included in the regular tuition of students on extended day schedules. An additional fee is charged to children on half-day schedules and must be paid in advance to reserve a space for your child

#### **ALL MONIES PAID TO SOPNS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE**

All returned checks are charged a \$25 returned check fee. Returned checks are not re-deposited and must be replaced within three (3) school days or the student will be suspended until the check has been replaced with cash and all fees paid in full. Persons having a second returned check will be required to pay on a cash-only basis for the remainder of the school year.

#### ***CHANGING YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULE***

Notification must be given in writing to the Director at least one week prior to the beginning of the month if you intend to request that your child's schedule be changed. The Director must confirm that the change can be accommodated. If you decrease your child's schedule, you may not be able to get the additional days in the future. Schedules will only be changed at the beginning of a month, and each schedule change is subject to a \$10 administration fee.

#### ***INTENT TO WITHDRAW***

A one-month written notice of withdrawal must be given to the Director. You will be held financially responsible for one month whether your child attends or not. **ADVANCE PAYMENTS ARE NOT REFUNDED.** Continuation of enrollment beyond the final date

## *SCHOOL READINESS*

There are some children, though chronologically ready for preschool, who may not emotionally or socially be ready to participate in our program structure. The Director reserves the right to request that a child be withdrawn from the program when he or she is not able to function within the expectations of the program. Each child is handled on an individual basis and the Director will work with parents and teachers to determine appropriate actions.

## *SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN*

Children with both physical and mental disadvantages are welcomed into our program as long as the following criteria can be met-

1. Children are an appropriate age in compliance with our facility license.
2. Staff is available that is equipped educationally and experientially to work with the given child and his/her particular disability at the child's age level.
3. The child's particular disability allows him/her to be included into regular preschool classes with reasonable accommodation.
4. The child's particular disability does not require of personnel any more time than would be given to other children in the child's particular classroom, and does not cause or place other children in physical, emotional, or psychological detriment or danger. \*

\* Parents of children who would be successful in our program with the addition of specific personnel in the form of a "shadow" or other aide and/or specific equipment, are responsible for the hiring of appropriate persons and the providing of special equipment, including paying for personnel and equipment. The school will assist in appropriate Justice Department clearance for personnel.

## *PLAYGROUND USAGE*

Due to liability and insurance restriction we must ask you to please remember the playground is closed before and after school. Siblings of children enrolled in the school are not permitted to use the playground at any time and must be in the classroom with the parent during pick-up time if you choose to bring them along.

## ***SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS***

The school office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Because our first priority is always the children, there may be times that it is necessary for us to be away from the telephone. Please be sure to leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

***IN***

Thank you for taking the time to read the Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Nursery School *Parent Handbook*, and best wishes for an enjoyable and educational school year.