

Pine Castle Christian Academy Preschool

One Family. One Purpose

Parents and Students Preschool Handbook

2022- 2023

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Welcome...

We are pleased to have you as a member of our school family at Pine Castle Christian Academy Preschool. We are glad that you have chosen us to be your child's school. We know the first years of life are important for children and we believe that the parents are the child's first and best teacher. We pray that your child's learning experience here will be one that lasts a lifetime. Thank you for entrusting your children with us. We are here to serve you.

Overview...

Pine Castle Christian Academy Preschool is a state-licensed center serving young children between the ages of newborn and five years. We are licensed for 54 students. Our Director, teachers, and substitutes all meet or exceeds the requirements set forth by the state of Florida for working with young children.

Our Mission...

The mission of Pine Castle Christian Preschool is to prepare our Eaglets to impact the world for Christ one student at a time, by creating a safe environment that is developmentally appropriate, and nurturing for all our preschool children.

Our Vision...

The vision of Pine Castle Christian Preschool is to be a college and life preparatory Christian school where children learn through play, focuses on families that want an affordable Christian education, love and care for young children to ensure life changing development, and provide an academic culture that inspires and teaches excellence within a diverse community. The framework is integrated with our biblical perspective to uncover the unique design of each child, who is nurtured and challenged to be whom they are called to be for God's kingdom.

Core Values...

- **Modeling Christ-like character** by exemplifying His love
"Whoever claims to live in Him as Jesus did." 1 John 2:6

- **Equipping students** with a Biblically based foundation and Christian world view in academics, athletics and arts
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 11 Timothy 3:16, 17
- **Educating with excellence** through academic, ethnic, financial and spiritual diversity
“...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatian 3:28
- **Partnering in Christ** with families and community
“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.” Hebrews 10:24, 25
- Provide opportunities in **developing servant leadership**
“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. 1 Peter 5:6
- Laying a lasting foundation by **creating a Godly Legacy**
“A good person leaves an inheritance for their children’s children.” Proverbs 13:22

Philosophy of Education...

- 1) The Bible is the authoritative, inerrant, infallible Word of God and all truth is derived from Him. God’s Word is the foundation of the educational experience at PCCA. The integration of Biblical truth is planned into a learning experience, so that students will learn how to think critically in the context of Biblical truth, how to defend their faith, and how to live a lifestyle that is in alignment with the Christian faith. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- 2) An academic framework is in place that, from the earliest ages, challenges and prepares students for the next level of school by preparing quality early education. We strive to help each individual student develop his or her full age-appropriate potential to expand their unique capabilities. This framework necessitates the students’ mastery of skills and knowledge needed for a successful, productive life. All instruction will be driven by a Biblically-integrated curriculum guide and supported by age appropriate instructional resources. The curriculum and instructional resources are aligned with the values and policies of the school, and positioned for excellence through a creative approach, pertinent and timely content, successful methodology and measurable, actionable assessment. (Proverbs 22:6. 2 Peter 1:3-8)
- 3) A vibrant spiritual culture is fostered that looks beyond the perceived potential of each student, pointing them to Christ and directing them to seek, pursue and begin fulfilling God’s purpose in their lives. Students should come to view their faith as a real, practical

relationship with their God and acknowledge His hand guiding and directing their lives on a daily basis. (Ephesians 6:12, Hebrews 12:2)

- 4) Promoting an outward focus that envisions the welfare of the world around us and provides practical opportunities for our students to serve others and experience what it truly means to be **IN** the world as salt and light, but not **OF** the world. (Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16, Mark 16:15, Matthew 5)

Curriculum...

We use the WEE Learn Curriculum that provides a wide range of activities designed to meet the needs of each child at their level of development for continuous growth. The activities provide opportunities for each child to develop language, reading, writing, and math skills appropriate to his or her stage of development. WEE Learn provides a framework on which children grow and develop as Jesus did – “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Children learn about God’s world and how to live in it through activities that embrace physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

Enrollment...

1. Complete the registration packet in its entirety and submit and submit all required document, such as immunization records, birth certificate, and so forth.
2. Submit all fees at the time of enrollment. All fees are non-refundable. Registration and materials fee must be paid prior to enrollment. Your child must start with-in 2 weeks of original selected date. If you wish to change the date, please notify the school immediately.

Change in Information: It is the responsibility of the PARENT or GUARDIAN to inform us of ANY changes in address, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, persona authorized to pick up your children (MUST BE IN WRITING), credit card or financial information, or new allergies.

3. We do not discriminate based on race, gender, age, religion, disability, 3103or national origin.

Withdrawal Policy...

Two weeks **written notice using the withdrawal form** must be submitted in the event you have to withdraw your child to avoid a \$300.00 withdrawal fee. All outstanding tuition must be paid in full by the withdrawal date per your parent contract for services.

Because Pine Castle Christian Academy Preschool is a year-round program, we will consider your child enrolled until the end of July. If you wish to withdraw your child for the summer months (June-July), you must follow the same withdrawal policy to avoid a withdrawal fee of \$300.00 by submitting the withdrawal form. However, it is your responsible to re-register your child for the following school year to save your spot in August.

Preschool Weekly Tuition and Fees...

Full-Time Hours 8:00 – 6:00pm **Part-Time Hours** 8:00 – 3:00pm

Age:

| | | |
|--------------|----------|----------|
| Infants | \$250.00 | \$200.00 |
| Toddler | \$225.00 | \$190.00 |
| 2/3-year-old | \$160.00 | \$135.00 |
| 4/5-year-old | \$140.00 | \$115.00 |

Fees:

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Registration Fee | \$75.00 per student | |
| Materials Fee | \$75.00 (k2/K3) | \$100.00(k4/K5) includes planner |
| NSF Fee | \$30.00 | |
| Late Tuition Fee | \$25.00 | Late pick-up fee \$1.00 per minute |
| Lost Planner Fee | \$10.00 | |
| Special Service Plan | \$200.00 | \$150.00 |

All payments will be automatically withdrawn the Friday prior to the upcoming week. A late fee in the amount of \$25.00 will be applied to your tuition if payment is not submitted by Monday. **After two weeks of non-payment, your child will be withdrawn from the program.**

Holidays: Full tuition is due every week regardless of observed holidays, except for your free week of choice from August-July. Please see the school Calendar for Holidays observed.

Holidays for preschool and VPK are not the same. Preschool is a year-round program and VPK is based on the numbers of hours set forth by the state.

School Readiness: Parents will be responsible for all payments after 3 excused absences per month.

Discipline and Expulsion Policy...

Unfortunately, there are occurrences where we will have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this academy:

Immediate Causes for Expulsion

- The child is at risk or causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Verbal abuse to staff.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.

Proactive Actions that can be Taken to Prevent Expulsion:

- Staff will redirect the child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.

- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.

Schedule of Expulsion

- If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the school.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion policy.
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required for the child or parent to return to the school.

Pine Castle Christian Academy will not under any circumstance:

- Humiliate or frighten a child as part of the disciplinary action.
- Discipline using food, rest or toileting.
- Spank or cause physical harm or physical punishment.

Parent Signatures for Expulsion Policy must be completed prior to admission.

Prior to admission of a child to a childcare facility, Pine Castle Christian Academy will notify the parent in writing of the disciplinary actions used by the facility.

Arrival...

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE CHILDREN ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING WITHOUT AN ADULT.

For your child's safety, your child will need to be accompanied into the building with an adult. All students must be clocked-in and out each day at the counter using the pin that will be given to you. **It is the parent's responsibility to sign your child in and out. Students should arrive by 8:00am** so they are given the opportunities to participate in morning activities.

Breakfast is served between 7:30am - 7:55am and will not be provided after this time. Parents who know in advance that **a child will be late are required to notify the school by 9:00am so the child can be included in the lunch count.** Cut-off time for dropping off your child is at 11:00 with a doctors/dentist note.

Drop off and pick up time is the best time to briefly “check in” on your child’s day. If you want more information on your child’s interactions, development, and behaviors in the classroom, we strongly encourage you to send the teacher a message through JupiterEd or schedule a meeting. If you have an issue or concern to discuss with the teacher, it is best to set up a time outside of drop off and pick up time. **We will refrain from talking about your child in front of them or in front of other parents to respect the confidentiality of your child.** Drop off and pick up time is the child(ren)’s time.

Absences/Dismissals...

We would appreciate notification for any reason your child will not be here on a regular school day. You may call or send an email to inform us of an absence. If your child is to be picked up early, we should know to ensure that we are in the classroom. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself, be sure that individual is on the pick-up list you completed. In an emergency, a phone call will be acceptable to notify us of who will be picking up your child. If the individual picking up your child is not on the contact list, we will require written notice signed by the parent/guardian giving authorization to pick up your child and identification will be required from the individual in the form of driver’s license or picture ID. For your child’s safety, please cooperate with this policy. The safety of your child is extremely important to us.

School Readiness: Children are allowed three excused absences per month. After the third absence, parent will be financially responsible.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK): Pre-Kindergarten helps ensure that the child is intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially ready to enter school. Students need to be present 80% of the time to graduate the VPK program. Excessive absences could result in withdrawal from the program.

Communication...

We encourage you to communicate with us frequently formally and informally in person and through scheduled conferences. We encourage you to let us know how to best serve your child and what activities best motivate your child. We encourage you to share your concerns and ideas and work collaboratively on finding the best solutions for any situation that may occur.

We will be available to speak with you by phone during rest time (between 12:30 and 1:30PM daily). We will be available to talk in person by mutually convenient appointment, taking both of our schedules into consideration. All e-mails and phone calls will be returned

within 24hrs except for weekends and holidays. We want parents to feel comfortable communicating with teachers and staff, therefore, all communications with families are confidential.

Resolving Parents Issues and Concerns...

In the event an issue should arise that needs to be resolved, please discuss the issue with the teacher. If you are not satisfied with the result, the Director will be available to help resolve the issue. If the matter is a business or financial issue, the Director and Accounts Manager will be happy to meet with the parents to resolve the matter at hand.

Clothing and Rest Time...

While a uniform is required, many of the activities we provide are hands-on and can be messy. Therefore, we request a change of clothes for your child. A change of clothes (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt) should always be available in your child's cubby. These clothes will get dirty. It is important that your child's belongings are all labeled. If your child will be here for nap time, a sleep mat and a small blanket are recommended. If your child needs a pillow during rest time, please provide a small pillow as the cubbies are small. Bedding items will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and return the following Monday. Please, no sleeping bags, large blankets, or large pillows. Please do not send bulky items, as they will be returned to you. We recommend a soft small animal for rest time only. Toys are not to be brought to school. Teachers and staff are not responsible for outside toys. Our center has a large variety of toys that are appropriate for all ages that are rotated to provide your child with a variety of learning experiences.

Infants: Please bring a fitted sheet and 2 complete changes of clothes in a Ziplock bag for your child. **Absolutely** no bulky items, plush, pillows will be allowed in the cribs. All diapers and wipes are provided by the parents.

Outside Play...

Outside active play is important for healthy growth and development for young children. As a result, we play outside every day at least once a day weather permitting. All children will enjoy both indoor and outdoor active play each day. Therefore, proper shoes are essential. Shoes with velcro are recommended instead of shoes with laces since your child is not yet able to tie his or her shoelace. **Crocs or opened-toed shoes are not allowed!** Please avoid sandals, open-heel shoes, and flip-flops as they are not safe on the playground. During

the winter season, it is important that your child is dress appropriately for outdoor play in waterproof mittens, hat, boots, pants, sweater or jacket to stay warm.

Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks...

We provide free breakfast and lunch for our students here at the Castle. If you choose to bring your child's lunch, please pack easy-to-eat finger foods that require no special preparation or warming-up. **All plastic containers and cups must be labeled with the child's name.** Foods that are choking hazards such as grapes should be avoided or cut into quarter pieces. Please avoid sending sodas and candy, send healthy lunch choices such as vegetables & dips, fruit cups, cheese, yogurt and crackers are great lunch options. ***Please inform us of any food allergies your child has.***

Infants: All infants food are provided by the parents.

Pacifiers and Bottles: Pacifiers and bottles are ONLY accepted in the Infant room. Please label all your child's belonging with his/her full name.

Food Related Activity: Parents will be advised of any classroom food related activity such as special occasions and learning activities that include food consumption. Written documentation will be provided to the parents that will require the parent/guardian signature. The purpose is due to food allergies such as dairy, peanut, ect. for all students to be safe when they partaking in food related activities.

Illness Policy...

No child with a temperature of 100 degree and above, who is vomiting or who has had more than one instance of diarrhea will be permitted to stay in school. The child is required to stay home for a period of 48 hours. Children exposed to communicable illnesses will need a doctor's note to return. Children who become ill during school cannot remain at school. If the child becomes sick during the school day, the parents will be contacted to pick up the child immediately. Ill children will be taken to PCCA clinic in the front office to be isolated from the other children until the parent arrives.

Do NOT bring your child to school if he or she has:

- Had a fever greater that 100 degree on the past 48 hours;
- Had diarrhea or vomiting in the past 48 hours;
- Any undiagnosed rash;
- Sore or discharging eyes or ears;

- Profuse colored nasal discharge; or
- A communicable disease

Children must be free from these symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours **WITHOUT THE AID OF FEVER REDUCING MEDICATION BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL** and be able to participate in all indoors and outdoors activities prior to returning to school.

COVID-19...

The health and safety of every person in our school is of the highest priority. Students and staff are expected to practice social distancing, wear face covering, temperature check upon arrival, wash hands frequently, and use hand sanitizer. Every effort will be made to practice healthy habits, but there will be occasions when a student or staff member encounter someone who may have been exposed to COVID-19. In the event your child or a staff member have been directly exposed to someone with COVID-19, we will follow the CDC guidelines. We will notify parents and all individuals who has tested positive will need to quarantine for 14 days from the last day of attendance at school. If COVID-19 symptoms develop, seek medical attention immediately. Symptoms may appear two-14 days after exposure to the virus. The most commons symptoms associated with COVID-19 are fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. If symptoms develop, keep your child home, except to seek medical care, and separated from others in the home as much as possible. A viral test is needed to confirm if someone has a current infection. **A doctor's note is needed to return to school.**

Medications and Allergies...

If your child requires medication while in our care, you must complete the "Medicine Authorization Form" for each day your child needs medication. The medication must be in the original packaging, labeled with the child's name and taken directly to the office. No medication should ever be placed in your child's backpack or bag. **Absolutely no medications are allowed in the classroom.** The Office Manager will administer the medication and document the day and time in our Medication Logbook. Florida law requires strict guidelines, therefore; we can only offer medication once a day while your child is at school. If your child needs medication more than once while here at school, we suggest the child remain home.

Accidents and Emergencies...

The welfare and safety of all our children is of the utmost importance. In the event of an accident or emergency, the child's teacher and Program Director will take great measures to

handle the situation and to ensure the best interest of the child is considered. Parents will be notified immediately in such an instance.

If a child has been injured or causes an injury to another child, an Accident/Incident Form will be filled out stating what happened, when and where the situation occurred, and what type of care was provided for the child. The child's teacher, the Director, and child's parents will sign the form. The original copy will remain in the child's file and a copy will be given to the parents. If the parents cannot be reached and the child requires further medical attention, the emergency contacts or the child's physician will be contacted.

In the event a serious emergency should require an ambulance, rescue (911) will be called. Parents or their emergency contacts (if the parents cannot be reached) will be notified immediately. The entire incident will be documented, and copies will be given to the parents. **Please make sure your emergency phone numbers are up to date. You MUST have an alternate adult who can pick up your child if you cannot be reached. Parents, please make adequate arrangements to pick up a sick or injured child within a half hour.**

Fire Drills:

Every month a fire drill is conducted at our school. These fire drills are a preventative measure to ensure that everyone knows what to do if a real fire occurs.

Severe Weather:

If we are on the premises during a severe weather, we will proceed to the safe zone which is the middle of the hallways away from all glass and doors. Attendance will be taken, and parents will be notified immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so. In the event of severe weather, our program may shut down. If you are uncertain as to whether our program will be open, please follow the decisions made by Orange County Public School System. If the public-school system closes due to severe weather, then our program will also be closed.

Lock Down:

In the event of a lockdown, the classroom has a safe place for students to remain calm and quiet. We will remain there until the all-clear signal is given. We may be crowded and a bit uncomfortable...but safe. Our administrator has access to our emergency numbers if needed.

Abuse & Neglect...

By law, the Program Director and all staff must and will advise all appropriate local and state agencies of any suspicions of child abuse or neglect of any child in our program. All staff are trained and required to report abuse. It is our responsibility to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Discipline and Management...

For the safety of everyone in the program, it is our desire to discipline children through love and a variety of measures that are appropriate and will not cause harm. We will attempt to discipline children by creating a classroom atmosphere that is caring. We will teach them what we want them to do by using positive reinforcement, understanding developmental levels, providing choices, being consistent, modeling appropriate behavior, using clear statements, being firm yet kind, teaching problems solving skills, ignoring inappropriate behavior and using redirection.

If a child exhibits inappropriate behavior (willful disobedience/actions or words that are harmful), the teacher will utilize one or more of the teaching tools to assist the child. Our teachers use "re-direction" techniques to help the child make the right choices. If the child persists with the inappropriate behavior, he or she will be removed from the rest of the children for a short period of time. The teacher will then speak to the child privately and teach alternate methods for handling difficult situations. The child will then be encouraged to rejoin the other children in the classroom. Children will only be taken to the Director's Office after all classroom measures of redirection have been used. The Director will call the parent to speak to the child over the phone to encourage the child to rejoin the class. If the child fails to continue the inappropriate behaviors, the parents will need to come and pick up the child immediately.

If the unacceptable behavior continues, the teacher, Director, and Behavioral Specialist will work together to determine if the child has a special need or an unresolved problem that is causing the behavior. If in our opinion a conference is need, the Director will contact the parent to come in for a conference. We will work together to develop a plan that is most beneficial and safe for the child to return to the classroom.

If the child has caused harm to another child, the teacher will complete an Incident Report Form. The teacher, Director, and parents will sign the form. **If the behavior persists, the parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately.** Under no circumstance will we allow any child to be harmful to another. Every attempt will be made to prevent such action from happening.

Biting Policy:

Our teachers are trained to help children learn about safety and living with others. Reasonable, realistic limits are set for ages and stages in an enriched learning environment to help young children make appropriate, pro-social choices. Re-direction, providing choices, consistent actions, praise and encouragement help to prevent problems before they occur. In the case of biting, there are necessary boundaries that have been established by Pine Castle

Christian Academy for the benefit and safety of every child in our pre-school program. It is important to understand that biting is a common stage among children who are around the age of two years old. Beyond that age, it is not common. After the age of two, if the biting persists it may be an indication that something physically, emotionally, or mentally is a source of the biting.

In the event your child is bitten, immediate first aid and comfort will be given to the child who was bitten. A child biting another child will result in immediate redirection. Verbal guidance will be given about what is not okay to put in his or her mouth, and the parents of both children will be notified. An Incident Report Form will be completed with required parent signature. One copy will be given to the parent and the other placed in the child's file.

Consequences for biting another person:

First Incident:

- **No visible mark:** Written warning given to parent.
- **With visible mark:** Parent phoned and parent/teacher conference at time child is picked up.
- **With visible and open wound:** Parent phoned, child brought to office for immediate parent pick up, parent/director conference.

Second Incident:

- **No visible mark:** Parent phoned, parent/teacher conference.
- **With visible mark:** Parent phoned, and child brought to office for immediate pick up, parent/director conference; child is removed from the preschool for one day.
- **With visible and open wound:** Parent phoned, child brought to office for immediate pick up, parent/director conference and child is removed from preschool for 1 week.

Third Incident:

- **No visible mark:** Parent phoned, child brought to office for immediate pick-up, and parent/teacher/director conference.
- **With visible mark:** Parent phoned, child is brought to office for immediate pick up, parent/teacher/director conference and child is removed from the program for 1 week.
- **With visible open wound:** Parents is phoned, child is brought to office for immediate pick up, parent/director conference and child is removed from the program for the rest of the school year.

If a child is removed from the program for any amount of time, payment is still required for missed days except in cases of immediate expulsion.

If at any time, the safety of another child is at stake, the Director has the right to immediately remove a child in order to protect the other students in the class. We understand that children will bite for various reasons and we will be proactive to eliminate such actions. We will strive to provide a safe learning environment for your child and all students. However, we understand that the ages and stages we serve can provide challenges such as biting. Thus, if your child is ever bitten, you will be notified verbally and in writing about the incident.

At no time we will release the name of either party. Due to privacy law, we will always keep names confidential.

Assessment...

Our program will use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to assess each child. The ASQ is a standardized, research-supported developmental screening tool. The screening will allow us to check your child's progress according to expected patterns of development. There is no cost for the developmental screening.

"Our Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment monitors and assesses children's academic progress. It provides valid and reliable feedback regarding children's progress in attaining the skills in the Standards for Four-Year-Old, so that teachers may use this information to guide instructional decisions in the VPK classroom." There is no cost for the VPK assessment.

Families will be made aware of their child's progress verbally or in writing at least quarterly, with written reports at least twice a year. Parents are encouraged to meet quarterly with their child's teacher to discuss your child's progress. If, during the course of our evaluations, we suspect that your child may have a developmental delay or special needs, we will alert you in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner. We will provide you with documentation and an explanation for our concern. We will suggest the next steps you can take in the referral process.

We will prepare our Eaglets to impact the world for Christ.

