



PARENT HANDBOOK



VENICE NOKOMIS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL, INC.
506 Church Street, Nokomis FL 34275
941-484-4415

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to offer a Christian atmosphere to young children that is rich with understanding, encouragement and educational opportunities.

PHILOSOPHY

Children are welcomed into a loving and caring environment that is healthy and safe. Creative Curriculum is implemented through developmentally, age-appropriate practices and regular assessments to meet the needs of every child and reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum.

Teachers follow the **Florida Standards** and individual assessments to prepare and carry out lesson plans. Children will engage in activities that promote learning and development in the areas of **social, emotional, physical, language, cognitive and spiritual**. Teachers will implement techniques of **Positive Behavior Support** to help support both a sense of individual worth and being part of a community while building a child's self-concept and stimulating positive decision making. The children will learn about prayer and faith through spiritual lessons and experiences.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is CREATIVE and THEME-BASED. We provide a variety of Learning Centers the children can choose from (Block-Transportation, Dramatics-Housekeeping, Library, Science, Manipulatives, Music, Arts & Crafts and Writing). Children can select their own activities during the day from age-appropriate materials that are available. We offer open-ended activities that are both child-initiated and teacher-directed. Throughout the day, children can work individually or in large or small groups.

The schedule provides for alternating quiet and active play. We select theme topics each month that we use as a guideline for lesson planning, but we also use the **Emergent Curriculum** concept of developing a lesson plan around a child's idea, question or interest. Creativity and flexibility in the schedule give the children many opportunities to be a part of the activity that most interests them. The Creative Curriculum outlines 38 different developmental areas that the teachers observe in children. Each September, January, and April the teachers complete a screening tool on each child in their care.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is important. **Brightwheel** will provide instantaneous communication between the school, classroom and teacher. You will learn about upcoming events and what your child is learning. Photos also. We communicate verbally and through the app, Brightwheel. Every parent will be required to sign-up for this free app.



We do developmental screenings on each child three times a year and have a **parent/teacher conference** at least twice a year. Parents will sign off on information given to them at each conference. If you would like to specifically observe your child's interaction in the classroom, we can schedule a time for you to participate in a day's activities. Please discuss this with your child's teacher.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Parents are always welcome to attend and participate in special events and fundraisers.
- Two parents serve on our **Preschool Board of Directors** for a two-year term. Are you interested in serving?
- Parent input on **Program Planning** is always welcome. We appreciate all the ideas and suggestions. A written or verbal comment to a board member, teacher or the director will be discussed at the monthly preschool board meetings.
- Yearly **parent surveys** give parents the opportunity to voice concerns and ideas to benefit the program.
- **Volunteers** are welcome. We have two fundraisers that require extra help from parents, as well as many opportunities to help with odd jobs around the school.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

- A current physical examination by a doctor must be submitted upon enrollment. This includes immunization records on the Florida forms furnished by your physician – EXEMPTIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.
- Emergency cards, supplied by the school, **MUST** be on file and have current phone numbers where parents can be reached in an emergency.
- The KNOW YOUR CHILD'S DAY CARE pamphlet must be read.
- A Registration Fee will be invoiced through Brightwheel. Tuition is due at the beginning of each month and is invoiced on Brightwheel. A late fee will be assessed for delinquent accounts.

TUITION

- Monthly tuition will be invoiced via the Brightwheel app.
- Although some months have more days than others, your tuition is the same each month. Tuition is based on the 38 weeks of school mid-August through May (the Christmas two-week break and Spring two-week break are not included).
- Since we are a nonprofit school and are trying to keep tuition costs down, we are unable to give discounts for days missed by your child due to vacations or illness. However, there is a "sibling" discount when you have two or more children enrolled.



- A one-month notice must be given when changing the number of days your child attends school or terminating enrollment.
- Scholarships are available on a short-term basis. Families are required to perform volunteer hours when receiving scholarship funds. See director for details.

CLOTHING

- Please consider your child’s safety and independence when dressing him/her for school.
- Shoes should fit and be comfortable on child’s feet.
 - **NOT ALLOWED**: sandals, flip-flops, crocs and boots.
- Girls should wear shorts under dresses and skirts.
- All long hair needs to be pulled back in a bun or ponytail.
- We encourage children to be able to help themselves when going to the bathroom. This is difficult with tight clothing, belts, overalls and jump suits.
- It is the parent’s responsibility to have the child dressed properly for school activities.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The following attendance guidelines must be followed in all classrooms:

- Students will arrive at their scheduled times and be signed in by an adult.
- **Students will be picked up at their scheduled times - \$1 per minute late fee.**
- Each student will be signed in and out by the adult in charge of the child using Brightwheel.
- VPK students must have adult verification signature at the end of each month on the PARENT CERTIFICATE OF VERIFICATION form provided by the preschool.
- **VPK students are only allowed to miss 20% of days available to attend before possible dismissal from the preschool program. The State of Florida will not pay for missed days over 20%.**

DISMISSALS

- Elementary age siblings will not be allowed to remove children from the classroom or playground. An adult must be present.
- We have a “No Phone Zone” during pick-up. Please put your phone away when picking up your child.
- We ask that you notify the school if you will be late or if someone other than immediate family members will be picking up your child. If you know in advance, please complete an “Other Than Family” dismissal form. We will always ID any person we do not know when they arrive at pick-up.

BAD WEATHER

- When bad weather heads our way, be sure to listen to your local news – if the public school in our area closes, we will close too.



- We may also close if flooding becomes a problem or the toilets can't be flushed because of complications with our septic tank.
- Be sure we have all emergency numbers where you can be reached.
- If severe weather arrives while children are at school, we expect you to either pick up your child as soon as possible or call the preschool (941-484-4415) regarding the status of closing the school.

HEALTH

- Children are not always well. When they are not feeling good, they want and need to be home in a comfortable environment where they can rest.
- We often have sick children brought to school who are spreading their germs to other students and teachers. We will not accept children in the preschool with any contagious symptoms (see: KEEPING A HEALTHY CENTER).

MEDICATION

- The preschool **WILL NOT** dispense medication.
- This is a safety measure taken for your child.
- If your child must be on medication, ask your doctor for a medication schedule where you will be available to give the required dosage.
- **DO NOT PUT MEDICATION IN LUNCH BOX OR THERMOS – THIS INCLUDES VITAMINS!** Lunch boxes sometimes get in the hands of another child by mistake!

CHILDREN'S FILES

- A file will be kept on each child for the entire time the child is enrolled in the preschool to keep educators informed of the child's development and progression from year to year.
- The information in the file should include, but not be limited to, two yearly evaluations signed by parents at parent/teacher conferences, samples of child's abilities, anecdotal notes, and parent/teacher communications. Ages and Stages completed by parent and Creative Curriculum evaluation completed three times a year.
- This file should go with each child as they leave the Venice Nokomis Community Preschool.

SAFETY

- We are regularly checked by the HEALTH DEPARTMENT and FIRE DEPARTMENT to ensure your child is in a safe environment.
- We take every prevention method possible, and we have first aid available for minor injuries.
- If your child is injured seriously, however, you will be notified immediately.



- It is very important that we have CURRENT PHONE NUMBERS on your child's EMERGENCY CARD so you can be reached without delay. Emergency information must be on file before the child can attend class.
- Accident Reports and Incident Reports are filled in for every incident that occurs at school. All reports must be signed the day of the incident. A copy can be requested for any report.

ACCESS

Our policy is that parents have open and available access to their child as needed. Advance notice is appreciated if possible.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- All rooms have a phone. Weather alert radios are in the office and room #4.
- A phone is taken to the playground in the morning and afternoon each day during playground times.
- A bell is located at the front door to alert teachers when the door is opened. The front door is open to parents from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. daily. The door is locked at 9:00 a.m. and the doorbell must be rung by parents and visitors to enter the preschool.
- The playground is locked before and after playtime and has a 6-foot-high fence to keep out vandals that would jeopardize safe play on the equipment.
- First aid boxes are available both inside the school, in each classroom and on the playground.
- We have monthly emergency evacuation drills.
- The fire extinguishers are inspected each year and staff are trained on how to use them.

CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

If prior screenings and evaluations have been conducted on your child, these reports must be provided to the preschool. Examples: developmental delays, occupational therapy, speech/language, behavior.

- When the teacher determines that screenings on a child indicate there are delays, she will discuss it with the director. Further screening and assessments may be needed and then a conference will be set up with the teacher, director and parents.
- With parent input and support, a plan will be laid out to meet the needs of the child.
- We expect that parents will provide all information possible about their child when enrolling (behaviors, social/emotional, medical and family issues) to ensure that the preschool staff can ensure their needs are met.
- Depending on the degree of concern, either in-house techniques will begin, or the ELC Warm Line or the Florida Center will be contacted.



- When professionals evaluate the child, the teacher and director will work together with parents to be sure the child receives the best possible services. Many services and techniques have been implemented in the past to aid with developmental delays.
- The child may remain in the preschool if services are available for the child and providing it is in the best interest of the child emotionally, socially and intellectually.

ASSESSMENTS AND SCREENINGS

- Twice a year we send home screening forms titled “Ages and Stages Questionnaire” in your child’s birth month and half-birth month.
- We expect you to complete the form and return it to school as soon as possible. This form gives us necessary information to assist your child’s teacher to know where your child is developmentally in academic, physical and social skills.
- We also assess each child three times a year (September, January and April) in all areas of development, social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy and math.
- VPK students are assessed three times yearly using VPK assessment.
- If you have a question about this, please see your child’s teacher.

INCLUSION – DIVERSITY POLICY

- Inclusion creates diverse groupings in a classroom. Students learn from each other and grow socially and emotionally from shared experiences.
- All races, religions and nationalities are welcomed.
- Children will not be excluded for developmental delays providing there is a support system to meet the needs of each child.
- Staff will work with families to embrace the home language with the introduction of books, foods, words, music and more that are familiar to the child.

DISCIPLINE

- Teachers always use positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Redirecting negative behavior will be done whenever possible.
- Calm time (directing the child to the quiet area) is used as the result of continued negative behavior, giving the child time to calm him/herself down with the aid of the teacher, Tucker Turtle, books, blowing bubbles, etc.
- Behavior charts and natural consequences are also means of changing behavior.
- Parent/teacher/director conferences are held as needed.



UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

(Including physical and verbal aggression & bullying against peers and staff)

When the usual procedures are not working, we will take the steps necessary to do what is best for the child of concern and the rest of the children and the teacher in the classroom.

- Written and verbal descriptions of behavior that is unacceptable will be given to parents.
- A parent/teacher conference will be held to make a specific plan that will be followed by teachers and parents. A date for a return conference and a date for expected compliance will be set.
- When a child's behavior becomes AGGRESSIVE or BULLYING, the child will be sent home immediately on the first offence. If/when that same child repeats the aggressive behavior, the child will be asked to leave the school until such time that we can be assured that the child's behavior has been dealt with by a professional, and we can be assured that the behavior will not be repeated. The teacher, director and Board of Directors will assist in making these determinations.
- Parent support and cooperation will be expected at each step of the process, or the child will be terminated at the school's discretion.
- Professional help will be requested by parents and teachers in a timely manner.
- When all steps have been taken to adjust the behavior, but the behavior continues, it may be necessary and in the best interest of the child to find a program that will better meet their needs.
- AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR and BULLYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED – without parent cooperation the child will be expelled.

EXPULSION AND SUSPENSION POLICY

Our preschool program has policies in place to create a safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate environment for young children. Working together with parents, teachers and community resources, we provide quality early learning experiences for all children. We ensure that policies and resources are in place to prevent or limit expulsion or suspension of young children; however, there are times when expulsion or suspension is necessary.

Here are some reasons for expulsion or suspension of a child:

- When the school's discipline policy is not acceptable to parents of a disruptive child.
- Excessive biting, violent behavior or use of profanity.
- The child's parents' unwillingness to support teachers in changing negative behavior.
- When parents and teachers together determine the child could be more successful in an alternative environment.
- When all options have been exhausted and the child's negative behavior continues to disrupt the classroom environment.



Expulsion or suspension NOT related to a child's behavior can also occur. There are times when a parent's actions or behaviors can cause a child to be expelled or suspended. Here are some reasons:

- Documented **HABITUAL DISREGARD** for drop off and pick up times.
 - **DROP OFF TIME IS BASED ON THE CHILD'S SCHEDULE.**
 - **PICK UP TIMES ARE 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.**
 - Parents receive a note and fee at **FIRST** offence.
- Documented habitual disregard for sick child policies.
- Documented abusive behavior toward staff or other parents.
- Documented pattern of chronic absences without documentation of illness or any special circumstances.
- Failure to comply with medical and immunization requirements.
- Documented consistent non-payment of fees.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

- We have **two snack periods** each day (9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.).
- Provide snacks that are nutritional and include at least two food groups with the child's name on it. Examples: apples, bananas, grapes, pretzels, goldfish, graham crackers, cheese, crackers, celery, carrots, granola bars, yogurt.
- **NO CANDY OR SWEETS!**
- A thermal water bottle will be brought to school daily with water in it. We feel children do not get enough water to drink and they are usually getting milk and juices with their meals and at home.
- **LUNCH** is brought to school and put in a small refrigerator. **BENTO BOXES OR DISPOSABLE BAGS ONLY.**
- Lunches, including drink and nutritional food, should include at least four food groups. Finger foods are a good alternative to sandwiches. Examples: cut-up meats, veggies, fruits and cheese are nutritious and appetizing.
- **NO CARBONATED DRINKS OR GLASS CONTAINERS.**

SPECIAL TIMES

- **BIRTHDAYS:** When celebrated at school, we ask that you furnish a special treat for your child's special day. Fresh fruit, frozen yogurt, etc. are a great way to celebrate.
 - Please check with the teacher in case of **FOOD RESTRICTIONS.**
 - If you choose to have a lunch party, notify the teacher in advance so children won't bring their own lunch on that day.
- **CHILDREN'S WORSHIP** is part of our Music Appreciation time each week and includes a short message about kindness, helpfulness, loving our neighbor, a prayer and songs.



- **MUSIC APPRECIATION** is each week for 20-30 minutes. The child participates in singing, playing instruments and preparing for special music programs held twice a year. Piano accompaniment is provided by Ms. Liz VanBuren each Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.

PICTURE DAY

- In the **Fall and Spring**, we will have individual, studio-quality photographs taken, and they can be purchased the following week. They are not pre-paid.
- You will be notified in advance of Picture Day.

TOYS

- The preschool has many toys for the children to play with; please do not bring toys to school.
- When children bring toys from home, we usually have problems. It is difficult for the toys to be shared, the toys get broken or lost, or the toys are confused with those belonging to the preschool.
- We appreciate your child leaving all toys at home.

FACILITIES

- He/she will also become familiar with areas of the church and will feel at home in his/her surroundings.
- **NO SMOKING** in any rooms or within 100 feet of a classroom or playground.

KEEPING A HEALTHY CENTER

The VNC Preschool teachers and board members have had discussions on how we can continue to keep a healthy center and still meet the needs of parents who must have care for their preschoolers. We have asked for input from three local pediatricians.

We have found that there are certain criteria that we can use to determine if a child is highly contagious but there are varying ideas on how contagious a child is when they have a cold, sinus infection or allergies. We have made the decision to set our guidelines so children can attend school only when they are well enough to have a full, active day at preschool without spreading their germs to others from coughing, sneezing or drainage from the nose or eyes.

Our concern is not only for the children who will contract an illness from another child, but also for the child who is ill. We have had experience with children whose medication causes them to exhibit negative behavior, children who are so tired they are falling asleep in class and others who will not eat or drink during the full day of school. We know that when we, as adults, do not feel 100% we would prefer to be at home relaxing in our own surroundings. Children feel the same



way. They do not always know how to communicate how they are feeling but we, most often, can see the changes in their behavior that gives us a good indication.

Many young children can't care for a common cold or allergies by themselves. It is difficult for them to wipe their nose with a tissue constantly while playing, therefore, they usually use their sleeve or hand to wipe the mucus and then continue playing. This is a sure way to spread germs. A cough or sneeze is difficult to cover when playing, and when germs are airborne after a cough or sneeze, other healthy children are bound to encounter the germs.

We have a 24-hour rule for all symptoms. Your child must remain away from preschool for 24 hours after having any symptoms of an illness that could possibly be contagious to others.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD BE SYMPTOM FREE WITHOUT MEDICATION

The following guidelines are for the health of all children and our teachers, and we will enforce them to keep the healthiest center possible.

- If a teacher must wipe a child's nose five times in a 30-minute period – it is too excessive, and the child will be sent home.
- If a child coughs or sneezes five times in a 30-minute period – it is excessive, and the child will be sent home.
- Any mucus or redness in the eyes must be treated and have a doctor's note to return to school.
- Allergies and sinus infections are not necessarily contagious, but a child who can't control the mucus from the nose is spreading germs and should not be at school. Sinus infections need to be discussed with a doctor.
- A child with a rash of any kind must be removed from school until the cause is determined.
- Diarrhea or an abnormally loose stool can be a sign of illness – children should remain out of school for at least a 24-hour period after these symptoms.
- Asthma affects many students. We often assist with breathing treatments for students who are chronic, but if your child is not acting well enough to have a semi-active day at school, we will send them home.

WE CARE ABOUT EACH AND EVERY CHILD AND WE KNOW PARENTS WANT WHAT IS BEST FOR THEIR CHILD. SOMETIMES, WHAT IS BEST FOR THE CHILD IS TO BE HOME WITH A FAMILY MEMBER WHEN THEY ARE NOT FEELING WELL.



ITEMS FOR YOUR CHILD’S CUBBY

- **Change of clothes, including shirt, pants, underwear and socks** (be sure to supply appropriate clothing as the seasons change).
- Paint-shirt to protect clothing during messy activities.
- **CRIB SHEET** will be provided by parents to completely cover rest mats. It will be sent home at the end of each week to be laundered. We have no extra crib sheets so the teacher will call you to bring one if there is not one in your child’s cubby.
- A **small blanket or small stuffed toy or doll** is needed for rest time. We cannot allow large items because of the size of our cubbies. Sleeping is not required, but children should be able to rest quietly.
- Supply lists will be provided during orientation process.
- Children in pull-ups must furnish an ample supply of pull-ups each week. We do not have space to store large quantities of pull-ups, so please monitor your child’s supply of pull-ups.
- **Label all items your child brings to school including their lunch/Bento box and water bottle.**

**You and your family are invited and encouraged to attend
SUNDAY WORSHIP – 11:00a.m.**

**PRESCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION
7:30a.m. to 5:30p.m.**



CONTRACT

Child's Name: _____

INSURANCE

Venice Nokomis Community (VNC) Preschool has liability insurance to cover children and families while at the preschool. The policy for "accidental" health benefits will take over when your own insurance does not cover the medical costs of emergency medical treatment.

_____ *I have insurance for my child and understand the school's insurance will cover any costs my insurance doesn't if there is an accident.*

_____ *I do not have insurance for my child and understand the school's insurance will cover any medical costs if there is an accident.*

YOGA

A trained YOGA instructor will provide weekly stretching, proper breathing, coordination & balance activities and more. The classes will be at the preschool with a preschool aid assisting the instructor. The fee is \$12 monthly for ½ hour session with your child's classroom. (VPK students are exempt from paying any fees during the 9am-12pm VPK classroom time; donations are accepted.)

_____ *I give permission for my child to participate in YOGA weekly.*

FEES

- **Late Tuition:** \$15 weekly
- **Late Pickup:** \$1 per minute
- **Pillowcase Rental:** \$2

_____ *I will make every effort to avoid the need for these FEES.*

PHOTO RELEASE

Many photos are taken on a regular basis of all students. Many of the photos are placed in a portfolio to show your child's progression through the year. Some photos are posted for parents to see (including our website and Facebook page) or might be sent to the newspaper to show a fun activity in which the children were involved. Photos will always be in good taste with the interest of the child being priority.

_____ *I give permission for my child to be photographed while at preschool.*

_____ *I do not want my child's photo used for community viewing – only for his/her portfolio.*



ATTENDANCE POLICY

I agree to be diligent about drop-off, pickup, signing in and out, and providing absence excuses as needed.

_____ *I have read the Attendance Policy in the Handbook and agree to follow it.*

EXPULSION AND SUSPENSION POLICY

_____ *I have read and understand the Expulsion/Suspension Policy in the Handbook.*

CURRICULUM ASSESSMENTS

VNC Preschool uses Creative Curriculum and assesses all students three times a year on its 38 developmental skills. An Ages and Stages Questionnaire is provided to parents on the child's birth month and half birth month. VPK students are assessed three times a year on Star Literacy also. Parents are required to complete and sign off on the kindergarten checklist in May and that form will be sent on to your child's kindergarten teacher.

_____ *I want my child to participate in the assessments that are supporting my child's developmental growth.*

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

_____ *I have read the attached Non-Discrimination Policy*

PARENT HANDBOOK

*I have read the **Parent Handbook** for Venice Nokomis Community Preschool, Inc. and I agree to follow the school's procedures.*

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Venice Nokomis Community Preschool, Inc has a Non-Discrimination Policy (attached) and is open to all races, religions and financial status.



NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

(Adopted March 30, 2017)

EMPLOYEES:

Venice Nokomis Community Preschool, Inc. prohibits discrimination against and harassment of any employee or any applicant for employment because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, or sex or any characteristic protected under applicable federal or state laws.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Venice Nokomis Community Preschool, Inc. prohibits discrimination against and harassment of any board member or any applicant wishing to service on the board because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, or sex or any characteristic protected under applicable federal or state laws.

STUDENTS:

Venice Nokomis Community Preschool, Inc. prohibits discrimination against and harassment of any student or any applicant wanting to enroll as a student because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, or sex or any characteristic protected under applicable federal or state laws.