



# **PARENT HANDBOOK**



**VENICE NOKOMIS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL, INC.**  
**208 Palm Avenue, Nokomis, FL 34275**  
**941-484-4415**

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**ATTACHMENTS**

CONTRACT (*to be signed and returned*)  
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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**Non-English Speaking: See Director for Interpreters**



### 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. We use **verbal and written communication** on a regular basis to inform parents about their child's day at school (the Center). 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 **field trips** and participate in special events and fundraisers.



- Two parents serve on our **Preschool Board** for a 2-year term. Are you interested in serving?
- Parent input on **program planning** is always welcome. We appreciate all 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** in the classroom are welcome, although it is our experience that volunteering in your own child's classroom can sometimes inhibit your child's normal classroom activity. Your child may tend to concentrate too much on the fact that you are sharing your time with other children and your child may miss out on opportunities to interact as usual. Parents interested in volunteering in any area of the Center, can speak with the Director about days and times that are available.
- **Parenting classes, Bible studies** and other opportunities for growth are offered each school year.
- We have many **resources** (books, brochures, videos and informative articles) available to parents on a wide variety of topics. These materials are loaned for a 2-week period to any parent.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

- Physical examination by a doctor must be submitted upon enrollment. This includes immunization record, TB, Chicken Pox vaccine and Hib. Immunizations need to be recorded on a sheet furnished by your physician.
- Emergency card, supplied by the school, MUST be on file and have current phone numbers where parents can be reached in an emergency.
- "KNOW YOUR CHILD'S DAY CARE" pamphlet must be read.
- Registration fee is paid in advance. First month's tuition is due first day of school. After that, tuition is due the first of each month and considered past due after the first Monday of the month. A \$15 late fee will be added to late tuitions EACH WEEK.

### TUITION

- Monthly tuition is due the first day of the month. Those paying weekly must pay on Monday of each week.



- Although some months have more days than others, your tuition is the same each month. Tuition is based on 38 weeks of school mid-August thru May (Christmas break-two weeks and Spring break-one week 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.
- One (1) months’ notice must be given when changing number of days your child attends school or terminating enrollment.
- A late fee of **\$15 each week** is charged for past due accounts
- When paying tuition at the beginning of the month, we ask that you also bring a snack food to help fill our snack closet for the month (see: LUNCHES & SNACKS).
- SCHOLARSHIPS are available on a short-term basis. Families are required to perform volunteer hours when receiving scholarship funds (see scholarship request form).

### CLOTHING

- Please consider your child’s safety and independence when dressing him/her for school. Sandals, flip-flops and cowboy boots are **NOT ALLOWED** (not good running or play shoes). Shoes should fit and be comfortable on child’s feet.
- 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 PARENT CERTIFICATE OF VERIFICATION FORM

Note: 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 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 I.D. any person we do not know when they arrive to pick up a child.



### **BAD WEATHER**

- When bad weather heads our way, be sure to listen to your local news – if the public schools in our area close, we will close too.
- We may also close if flooding becomes a problem or the toilets cannot be flushed because of complications with our septic tanks.
- 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. We may move to the **Safe Room** next to Chapel.

### **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 Center with any contagious symptoms (see: KEEPING A HEALTHY CENTER).

### **MEDICATION**

- The Center **WILL NOT** be dispensing 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.** 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 Center 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 parent 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 per 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. The card MUST be on file before your child can attend class!
- Accident reports are filled in for every incident that occurs at school. You will be asked to sign the report before your child leaves the school.

### **ACCESS**

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

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

- All rooms have a phone and an intercom that can allow teachers to contact someone immediately in an emergency.
- A phone is taken to the playground in the AM and PM each day during playground times.
- All rooms have a bell at the door that dings as the door is opened to alert the teacher that someone is either entering or exiting the room.
- 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 and on the playground.
- We have monthly emergency evacuation drills.
- The fire extinguishers are inspected each year.

### **CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS**

- When the teacher determines that evaluations of a student indicate delays, she will discuss it with the Director. Further screening may be needed and then a conference will be set up with teacher, Director and parent.
- With parent input and support, a plan will be laid out to meet the needs of the child.
- 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 child receives the best possible services. Many services and techniques have been implemented in the past to aid with developmental delays.
- We feel it is best for the child to remain in the Center, 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) on 38 developmental skills to be sure each child is progressing in all areas of development.



- 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 introduction of books, foods, words, music and more that are familiar to the child.

### **DISCIPLINE**

- Teachers use positive reinforcement and encouragement at all times.
- 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 description 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 & 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 behaviors
- 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
- 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.

### **LUNCHESS AND SNACKS**

- We have **two snack** periods each day (early morning and 4:00pm).
- Provide snacks that are nutritional and include at least two food groups with child's name on it. (Examples: apples, bananas, chips, dips, pretzels, goldfish, graham crackers, cheese, crackers, celery, carrots, granola bars, Doritos & salsa, peanut butter, grapes etc.)
- **NO CANDY OR SWEETS!**
- 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 refrigerator (there is one in each class, but **refrigerators are small – 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 or cheese are nutritious and appetizing).
- **NO CARBONATED DRINKS OR GLASS CONTAINERS**



### SPECIAL TIMES

- **Birthdays** are celebrated at school, and 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 a party. If you choose to have a lunch party, notify the teacher in advance so children won't bring their lunch boxes on that day.
- **Children's Worship** with our pastors is 20 minutes of songs, a prayer and a mini sermon that is age appropriate for the children. 10:00am Wednesdays as part of Music Appreciation
- **Music Appreciation** is 20 to 30 minutes of singing songs and playing/learning about different instruments. We are accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Liz VanBuren. 10:00am Wednesdays

### PICTURES

- A local photographer comes to school twice during the school year to take photographs of the children.
- In the **Fall**, we will have individual, studio-quality photographs taken, and they can be purchased three weeks later (no pre-ordering necessary)
- In the **Spring**, studio-quality photos will be taken again, **and** we will have a CLASS photo with your child's teacher sent home in May.
- You will be notified in advance about picture day.

### TOYS

- The preschool has many toys for the children to play with.
- 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 for those belonging to the school.
- We appreciate your child leaving all toys at home.
- Books or records to share with the entire class are acceptable, as well as small dolls or stuffed animals for naptime only.

### FACILITIES

- Your child will soon begin to know many of the regular people around the church.
- 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 give us a good indication.

Many young children cannot 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 come in contact with 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 5 times in a 30-minute period – it is too excessive, and the child will be sent home.
- If a child coughs or sneezes 5 times in a 30-minute period – it is too 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 cannot 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 of our 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, AND 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.
- KING SIZE pillowcase for naptime. The pillowcase should completely cover the rest mat. Pillowcase will be taken home at the end of each week to be laundered. Be sure to return pillowcase the following week. It is best to keep two pillowcases in the cubby just in case you forget to return it after laundering. **There is a \$2.00 rental fee for using a preschool pillowcase.**
- A **small blanket or small stuffed toy or doll** is needed for naptime, as well as something **soft** that will comfort your child and help them to relax. We cannot allow large items because of the size of our cubbies. **Sleeping is not required, but children should be able to rest quietly.**
- Children in the 2-year-old class should each bring a box of wipes.
- 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 cubby and bring in more as needed.
- **Label all items your child brings to school –including their lunch/Bento box.**

**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.