

PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024



**Mandarin
Presbyterian
Preschool**

Letter from the Director



Welcome to MPP 2023-24 ☺

Parents,

As our new school year begins you need to know that we are SO EXCITED to have you be part of our program. Mandarin Presbyterian Preschool's program is definitely God's ministry and we know that each new year is a blank slate given to us by God. We are humbled and honored to be able to work with you and your child!

MPP has been serving parents in our area since 1964 ☺ (That's staying power for sure!) For generation upon generation, our aim has been, and continues to be, to encourage children to adapt to 'school life' with confidence that they can be themselves, enabling them to learn and be challenged to grow emotionally, academically and spiritually. Their physical growth is going to happen without our help!!

I am so excited to be starting my first full year as director here at MPP. Coming back to this amazing place last school year was a gift from God, and I look forward to serving Him by serving you and your child. Thank you for choosing us to nurture and love your little one. ☺

Blessings,

Lee Samuels

Lee Samuels

Director

Lsamuels@mandarinpres.com

904-680-6406

Staff

DIRECTOR – Lee Samuels
Lsamuels@mandarinpres.com

Phone: [680-6406](tel:680-6406) or 680-6404

2 YEAR OLD TEACHERS

MWF – Christina Meloni
TTH – Stacie Constable

3 YEAR OLD TEACHERS

Amy DeBerardine
Lindsay Hipp
Kelly Keitzer
Candace Minnicks

4 YEAR OLD VPK TEACHERS

Vania Davis
Jeanne Orman
Harmon Patterson
Carolyn Schmoyer
Jane Sutton
Sheila Warren

MUSIC TEACHER

Elizabeth Clayton

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MWF Susan LeVoy

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Kim Barkema
Catherine Glassick
Terry McMahon
Carolyn Schmoyer
Laura Webb

Andjela Collins
Kelli Jerris
Dottie O'Brien
Jessica Shelton
Maria Whitcombe

Caitlin DiBenedetto
Stacey Johns
Whitney Price
Maria Smith
Tiffany Wilkowski

Staff Qualifications:

Our staff has a variety of qualifications and certifications. Most teachers have at least a 4-year college degree in a field generally related to education. Our employees have taken the required DCF courses, have been fingerprinted, screened for criminal and abuse background, and have character references on file. All are involved in yearly continuing education. We have staff certified in First Aid, CPR and CDA's as required by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF).

MPP Calendar 2023-24

August	17-18	Explore MPP Days (Meet the Teacher)
	21, 22	8:45 Classes begin, please walk your child into his/her class 9:10 Orientation for all parents
September	4	Labor Day – NO SCHOOL FOR ALL (<i>Monday</i>)
	15	Room Mom Meeting, 9:10
October	30, 31	Halloween Costume Parade, Trunk or Treat, Class Parties
November	1	Registration for 2024-2025 School Year begins for MPC Members and MPP students
	10	Veteran's Day Observed — NO SCHOOL (<i>Friday</i>)
	20, 21	Classroom Thanksgiving Feasts (<i>Monday, Tuesday</i>)
	22-24	Thanksgiving Holidays — NO SCHOOL (<i>Wed. through Friday</i>)
December	14, 15	Christmas Programs & Parties (<i>Thursday, Friday</i>) **No Lunch Buddy 12/14 & 12/15
	18—Jan. 2	Christmas Holidays — NO SCHOOL
January	3, 4	Classes Resume (<i>Wednesday, Thursday</i>)
	15	Martin Luther King Jr Day — NO SCHOOL (<i>Monday</i>)
	22, 23	Vision is Priceless (vision screenings)
February	13, 14	Valentine's Day Parties (<i>Tuesday, Wednesday</i>)
	19	President's Day — NO SCHOOL (<i>Monday</i>)
March	11-15	Spring Break -- NO SCHOOL
	27, 28	Easter Egg Hunts & Parties (<i>Wednesday, Thursday</i>)
	29	Good Friday – NO SCHOOL for all
April	1	Easter Monday – NO SCHOOL for all
May	13-17	Last week of our regular 2023-2024 school year
	14, 15	End of Year Programs for all classes (<i>Tuesday, Wednesday</i>)
	16, 17	Graduations for VPK students & End of the Year Parties (<i>Thursday, Friday</i>) **No Lunch Buddy 5/14–5/17

Mission Statement

The mission of **Mandarin Presbyterian Church Preschool** is "Loving Children to Love Jesus Christ." We are here to serve children and families throughout the community by creating a foundation for social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth and development in a nurturing, Christian environment.

A "hands-on" approach is encouraged through imaginative play, exploration, and experimentation. **Mandarin Presbyterian Church Preschool** encourages responsibility and independence in the children, while building their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Our preschool program is an outreach of **Mandarin Presbyterian Church**. We consider all children to be members of God's diverse family. Enrollment is open to all children.

Admission

- Children must be 2 on or before September 1st to be eligible to attend MPP
- To enter our 3 year old program, children must be **TOTALLY POTTY TRAINED**. No pull-ups or diapers are allowed for children in our 3 year old and 4 year old classes. **Be sure your child can independently go to the potty to take care of his/her needs, including wiping.**
- The following must be received in order to secure placement in MPP:
 1. Completed Registration form
 2. Registration fee – NON-REFUNDABLE
- Medical forms required by DCF must be received within 30 days following the first day of attendance:
 1. Immunization form (see example on website under Enrollment/Admission)
 2. Physical Exam form (see example on website under Enrollment/Admission)

Failing to have these forms could result in a fine for MPP. More importantly, we will be required to exclude your child from attending MPP until the forms are provided.

Withdrawal

- Written notice of withdrawal must be submitted to the Director.
- If notice is given at the beginning of the month, full tuition for that month is required.
- If notice is given after the 10th of the month, tuition for the current month **PLUS** the following month will be required.

Fees

- **Registration Fee and VPK Donation**
 1. Non-Refundable Registration Fee for 2 and 3 year old students is \$150.00
 2. Suggested donation for VPK students: *at least* \$200.00 as funds from the state do not cover the expenses we incur to carry out our excellent program.

- **Tuition (Our tax ID is #59-097-8265)**
 1. ***Annual fee divided by 9 months to be paid September through May (no payment in August!*** (Due to fixed expenses of the program, no adjustments are made for holidays, school breaks, or illness)
 2. Checks (payable to “MPP”) or Cash accepted
 3. ***Tuition is due on the 1st of each month, delinquent on the 5th
 4. ***Late payment fee = \$5.00 **per day** your child attends **after the 5th** unless other arrangements are made.
 5. Returned checks will generate a **\$35.00 fee**
 6. \$10 discount on tuition is available for families with multiple enrollees. You may deduct \$10 from the tuition payment for the **SECOND child**. (Excludes VPK students)

Tuition Fees: MWF 2s and 3s = \$250.00/month
 TTH 2s and 3s = \$200.00/month
 M – F 2s and 3s + \$450/month
 VPK 4's = NO MONTHLY FEE for tuition

- **Fee for Late Pick-up at the end of the school day for your child:**
 1. Please be in the car line **BY** the scheduled time of your child’s dismissal
 2. ***At 10 minutes past the scheduled dismissal a **\$10.00 fee** will be charged, every 5 minutes after you will be charged an additional **\$5**.
 3. Late fee payments are due the next scheduled day of attendance.
 4. Late fees also apply to “Lunch Bunch” dismissal at 3:00 p.m.

Communication Folder

Your child will receive a “communication folder” labeled with your child’s name which will be used by MPP to send daily papers home and also for you to return paperwork to MPP. **Please be sure to return this folder every school day.** If the folder becomes lost or damaged, a fee of \$3.00 will be required for replacement.

The folder may be used for:

- Tuition payments
- Notes for the teacher or the office
- Paperwork or crafts from the school day

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Early Drop off: 8:15-8:45 should you need to utilize this service (see below)

Arrival: 8:45 a.m. (unless utilizing Early Drop-off)

Dismissal: 12:00 for 2s and 3s with another dismissal at 3:00 for Lunch Bunch.

VPK: Dismissal times vary.

CELL PHONE USE:

As you enter the parking lot, please disconnect from any phone calls.

Morning Drop-off

- Early Drop off: 8:15 – 8:45 Mon. – Fri., cost = \$5/morning. Park on the ‘skinny’ parking lot side (opposite our drop off area). Go through the double solid wooden doors and bring your child back to the preschool hallway!
- All other students are to be dropped off beginning at 8:45 as our standard day begins at 8:45 a.m.
- Enter the parking lot on the playground side of our buildings. (*See Attached Map*)
- Please take turns, be kind, and merge to entrance lane for drop-off/pick up.
- ***Please do not let your child out of the car without the help of an assistant.***
- ***Please come to a complete stop and put your car in park before opening any car doors.***

Dismissal: As you enter the parking lot, please disconnect from any phone calls.

Our staff is instructed NOT to place your child in the car if you are on the phone. At the end of their day, your sweet child deserves your undivided attention.

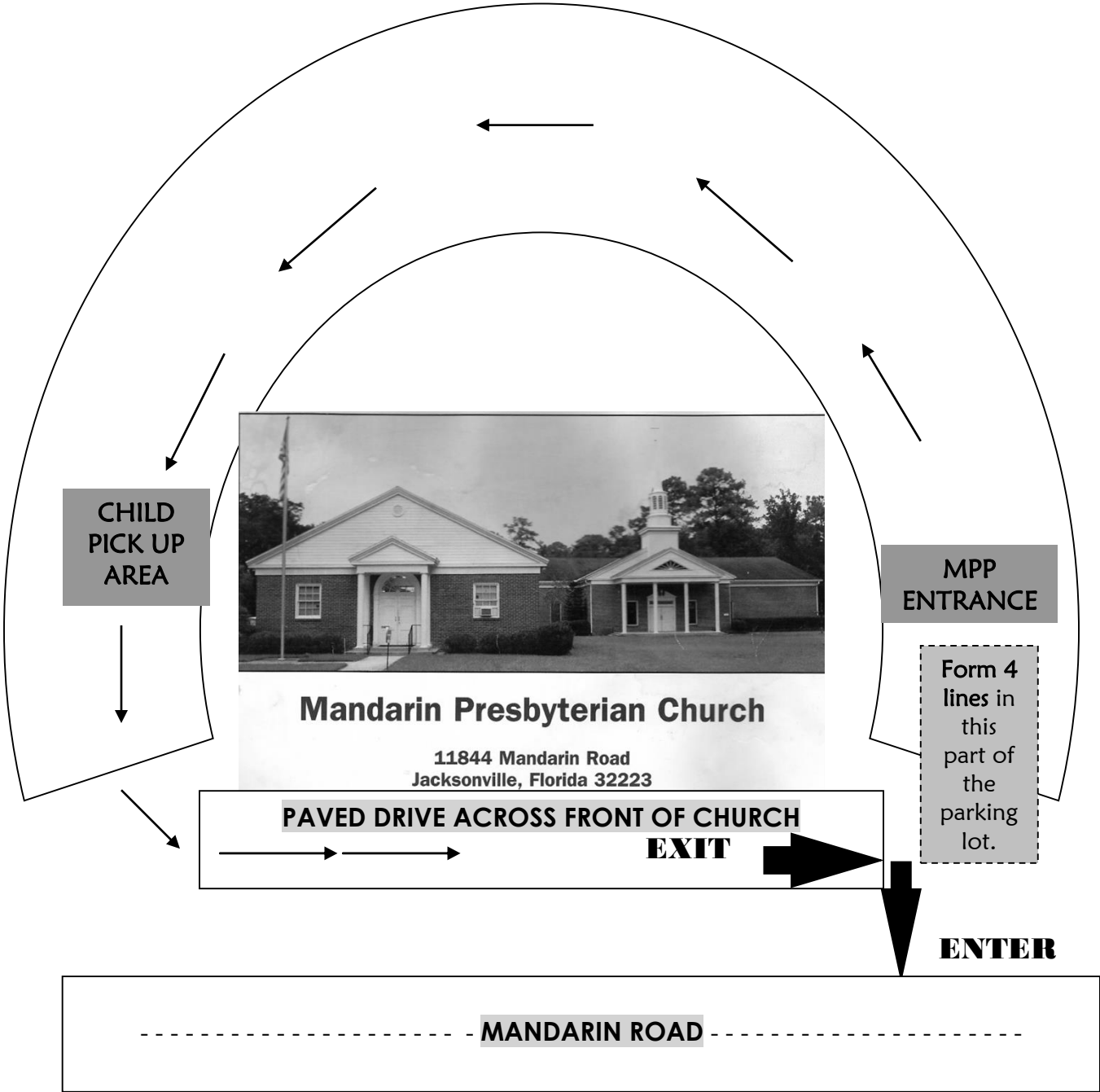
- Please ***be in line by the scheduled time*** of your child’s dismissal. Enter as you do in the morning and proceed all the way around the building. Pick up is on the opposite side of the building (***See map on next page***)
- Please **FORM 4 LINES** in the parking lot as you wait for dismissal in order to keep cars off Mandarin Road. (***See map on next page***)
- Children will be put in the car by our staff. You will then pull forward and into a parking space to buckle your child into his/her car seat.

Late Fees: Refer to “Fees” on page 5

Release of Children:

- All students will be released via the Car-Line.
- If you need to pick up your child prior to dismissal OR if you are not going to be on time for dismissal, please call the office (680-6404).
- Car Pools are encouraged & each participating parent must provide a note for our file.
- A note is also required if your child is being picked up by anyone other than parents or designated car pool drivers. Identification will be required

NO Cell Phone use in our Drop-off or Dismissal Traffic Lines.
Once you reach the playground, please end your phone calls
for the safety of all involved.
We cannot place your child in the car while you are on the phone.



Curriculum

Classroom time is structured around teacher directed hands-on activities, plus time for group and individual play at centers in the classroom, circle time, snack and bathroom time, playground time and Bible stories. Music, cooking and science experiments enhance and reinforce learning and augment the curriculum.

Twos: We focus on . . .

- Social Skills. Getting along with other children, sharing with friends, respect for those in authority, and following rules are all important to success in school.
- Process. With young children we believe process is more important than product. This will be reflected in their art activities as they relate to a unit.
- Developing and Refining Physical Skills. The size of the classroom allows for large muscle development as well as plenty of space for specific areas for drama, housekeeping, exploring books, and block play, etc.
- Basic Skills. We focus on listening, creating an interest in books, and speaking clearly enough to be understood.

Threes: We focus on . . .

- Social Skills. Continuation of social skill development.
- Basic Academic Skills. The threes are introduced to emergent reading skills such as beginning phonological awareness, comprehension (sequencing & retelling) and an awareness of letters. Math skills included identifying patterns, shapes, counting, numbers, comparing and sorting, and positions.
- Development of small muscles necessary for learning to write
- Classroom time is structured so that there is a teacher directed activity that is usually done in groups of two while other children are involved in social play.

Fours: We focus on. . .

- Phonics, upper and lower case letter recognition and formation, spatial relationships, positions, ordinals, and a variety of other skills necessary for reading and math.
- Various units of study including, but not limited to, holidays as they occur, good manners & the Golden Rule, plants and growth, dinosaurs, Dr. Seuss, sea life and space.
- Cooking and Science experiments to enrich learning

Christian Education

Teaching children about Christ and how He would have us live is a big element of our program. We draw inspiration from the ultimate source: the Bible! Most of all, we want children to KNOW that God loves them so, so much! Christian values are taught daily using Bible stories through activities at Circle time, in the music we sing, in the prayers we say, and special lesson times.


Assessments / Progress reports / Conferences

Students are assessed at various times during our year.

- Parents of 2s & 3s will receive a hard copy of the assessment.
- VPK Students will be assessed 3 times/year. The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy is used to determine progress. Parents are provided with hard copies of Fall/Winter/Spring assessments.

Formal conferences are scheduled as requested.

Dress code + Personal Belongings

- Please dress your child in comfortable clothes and shoes.
 1. Remember that we are a preschool and **love to have “messy fun”!**
 2. Dress your child in clothing that allows independence when using the restroom.
- **The best shoe choice is sneakers and socks! Crocs & Flip-Flops or shoes w/o heel straps are NOT allowed.** Our desire is to keep children as safe as possible and experience has taught us that these types of shoes are a hazard on the playground. 
- **LABEL ALL CLOTHING and PERSONAL ITEMS** (especially outerwear) lunch boxes, totes, etc.
- In case of accidents, we keep clothing and underwear to change your child into. In this case, please wash and return the borrowed clothing to MPP.
- Donations of shorts, long pants and underwear are gladly accepted!
- Two year olds should bring a backpack or diaper bag each day with a change of clothing and diapers to last the morning.
- **Toys are to be left at home unless directed by your child’s teacher for special occasions!!**

Snack and Water

- Please pack a ***children’s water bottle*** (Nalgene, etc.) ***labeled with first & last name*** for your child to bring to school daily for drinking water. The bottle will be returned at the end of the day.
- ***“Zip-Snacks”!!*** ***Parents will send a non-refrigerated daily snack for their child:*** cut fruit or vegetables, trail mix, cereal, pretzels, goldfish, cheese, crackers, raisins, etc. ***It is our desire that the snack be peanut free to protect those children with food allergies. Please send snack in a BAGGIE marked with your child’s name for easy disposal.***
- Frequently we will cook or serve a special snack that reinforces the lesson of the day.
- Special snacks for your child’s class must be prearranged with teachers.
- Please mention **food allergies** to the teacher.

Extended Day (Early Drop Off + Lunch Buddy)

Early Drop Off:

- Monday - Friday from 8:15-8:45
- Please park and call the office (680-6406 or 680-6404) so we can meet you to bring your child into our buildings.
- Cost = \$5.00/morning

Lunch Buddy: A service available as needed for MPP parents or care-givers.

- Monday thru Friday from 12 Noon until 3:00 p.m. for ages 3 and up who are **fully potty trained (able to independently go to the bathroom and take care of needs)**.
- **Cost = \$15 Monday through Friday**
- Lunch Buddy students will eat lunch, play in the classroom, do a short teacher-directed activity/story time, and go outside to the playground. **Nap time is not part of Lunch Buddy.**
- Simply send you child in with a lunch, a drink and \$15. Please label your child's lunch box! No notice is required in advance of the chosen day/s for your child to stay.
- **Regardless of class schedule, any MPP student may come to Lunch Buddy any day of the week.** (For example, if your child is enrolled in a MWF class, he/she may come to Lunch Bunch at 12:00 Noon on a T or TH.) Just call the office **by 10:00 a.m.** to let us know.)
- We begin loading cars at 2:55 p.m. All children must be picked up **BY** 3:00 p.m. At 3:10 p.m., a late fee of \$10. Is assessed payable the next scheduled day of attendance, and an additional \$5. for every 5 minutes after.

Holiday Parties

For the safety of the children, holiday events will include staff & designated party parents only.

We celebrate: Harvest (Halloween), Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines, Easter, End of Year. You will be encouraged to sign up to help with a party. Teachers will share applicable instructions.

Birthdays & Invitations

- Birthdays are generally celebrated at snack time. Special snacks must be arranged with the teacher in advance.
- Invitations for a party away from school: be sure to **invite each child in the class**.
- If you do not wish to invite every child, please **MAIL** the invitations to the respective homes requesting the class list from the teacher or email Lsamuels@mandarinpres.com .

Field Trips

For a child, some of the most exciting times of the school year revolve around field trips. **Our VPK classes leave the school premises** for field trips which often correlate with units of study. To ensure each child's safety, every VPK student must have an adult present with him/her on field trips. Two and Three year olds do not leave our premises.

E-mail & Contact Info

Our predominant form of communication will take place through e-mail, so please let us know of any email changes. Likewise, if your contact info (phone numbers, address, etc.) changes, please let us know!

Website

New website = www.mandarinpres.com/preschool

Volunteers

Visitors and volunteers may be welcomed into the classroom at different times to help with special projects. Please know that Volunteers can be a life-line for a school and when it is possible to have utilize them, we will happily share that info!

Per the Dept. of Children and Families:
NO Smoking on school premises

Illness

Sick children belong at home in a comfortable setting. *Please do not send sick children to school.*
If your child exhibits any of the following, please keep them home:

Fever **within the last 24 hours**

Diarrhea

Sore throat accompanied by fever

Undiagnosed Rash

Heavy congestion or persistent cough

Colored nasal discharge (*If your child has allergies exhibited by clear runny nose, please have a physician write a note to that effect.*)

- If a child seems ill, the parent will be contacted. In this case, we request pick up within 30 minutes.
- **When your child contracts a contagious illness, please contact us *immediately*** to insure the safety and well-being of other children and staff.
 - Per DCF, guidelines** for re-admittance following contagious illnesses:
 - FLU/COVID/OTHER VIRUS – When the Health Department or child’s Primary Health Care Provider determines that the risk of transmission is no longer present (note from physician).
Fever and symptom free for 24 hours.
 - STREP THROAT – No sooner than 48 hours (2 days) after start of oral medication or 24 hours after injection
 - CHICKEN POX – All lesions are dry and crusted
 - IMPETIGO (Blisters covered with honey-colored crusts) At least 24 hours after the beginning of medication. Should there be no improvement within 48 hours, child should be reassessed by pediatrician.
 - PINK EYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS) – Redness of eye with burning, itching, and discharge; at least 24 hours after the start of medication
 - LICE – following medical treatment
 - PIN WORMS – No restrictions following start of treatment
 - HEPATITIS – Physician’s statement required for re-admittance
- **To have medication given at school:**
 1. Authorization form must be filled out and approved by the school office
 2. Medication must be in the original prescription container showing the child’s name and dosage instructions and expiration date on physician prescription
 3. Physician authorization must also be given for over-the-counter medication to be administered.
 4. MPP reserves the right to refuse medications or procedures at any time.

Absences

We care about your child! We welcome the opportunity to pray for your child in the event of illness or for another reason. Please call the office (680-6406) and let us know.

VPK parents must adhere to the VPK Attendance Policy (next page).

VPK Attendance Policy

MPP will offers the VPK Program for 540 hours per track each school year.

- ❖ Funding for the VPK program is linked not only to attendance but to the success of our students upon entrance into Kindergarten.
- ❖ Attendance during scheduled instructional days is imperative in order to remain in our VPK program.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of parents to comply with our VPK attendance and tardiness policy.

General Information:

- Monday through Friday students = 8:45 – 12:00 Noon.
- Monday / Wednesday / Friday students = 8:45 – 3:00 Mondays and Wednesdays, and 8:45 – 12:00 on Fridays.
- Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday students = 8:45– 3:00 Tuesdays and Thursdays and 12:15 – 3:00 on Wednesday afternoons.
- If a child is going to be *absent or late*, you must call our office at 680-6404.
- Parents will be required to sign a monthly attendance verification form.

Tardiness:

- Your child must arrive in the VPK classroom no earlier than 8:45 and no later than 9:00. All children are expected to be in class ready to begin the day at that time.
- Arrival times will be recorded in each classroom. Late arrivals are disruptive to the functioning of the class and are difficult for the child as well.

Absences:

- Daily attendance in the VPK program is essential for optimum learning.
- Funding from the state of Florida is calculated on attendance. The chart below outlines how many days/month your child may miss without a funding penalty for MPP.
- **MPP reserves the right to dismiss a child from our program for excessive absences.**

Monday - Friday

Months	# days may miss
August	0
September	3
October	3
November	2
December	2
January	2
February	3
March	2
April	3
May	1

Mon / Wed / Fri

Months	# days may miss
August	0
September	2
October	2
November	2
December	1
January	2
February	2
March	2
April	2
May	1

Tues / Wed / Thurs

Months	# days may miss
August	0
September	2
October	2
November	2
December	1
January	2
February	2
March	2
April	2
May	1

Discipline & Expulsion Policy

Children are a gift from God, and as a Christian preschool we take our responsibility to provide a nurturing, loving, safe environment very seriously. Our policy re: Discipline & Expulsion are as follows:

Unacceptable behaviors include:

1. Disruptive behavior
2. Physically aggressive behavior toward another child / adult
3. Behavior which could be harmful to the child himself
4. Defiant disrespect for authority by refusing to obey the attending adult

Our teachers are trained to “redirect” rather than “react” to classroom behavioral issues. When behavior is unacceptable, we do our best to redirect the child. The following is a progression of steps we follow when dealing with discipline issues:

1. Gently call the behavior to the child’s attention, letting them know it is unacceptable and not to be repeated. Redirect the child.
2. If the behavior continues, the attending adult will privately tell the child that separation from the group (quiet chair) may be necessary.
3. Provide an opportunity to think about the behavior in a quiet corner or time out chair.
4. Should the behavior persist, the adult will remove the child from the classroom to talk about why the behavior is unacceptable and why it is creating a problem for the class. The child will return to the classroom if he/she agrees to stop the offensive behavior and abide by the teacher’s instruction. If the child is defiant and not willing to change behavior, then we move to the next step.
5. Persistent discipline issues will require a meeting with the Director, parent and teacher. A plan will be developed which can be implemented in the classroom and at home.

Dismissing a child for any reason would be a last-measure action on our part. However, if we are unable to meet the needs of the other children in the classroom due to disruptive behavior on the part of one child, the needs of the class must be weighed against the needs of the individual.

Expulsion: The expulsion of a child (termination of the Childcare Contract) is not a decision that is taken lightly, and happens only in exceptional circumstances.

Behavior concerns tell us children need more time, support and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we will collaborate with parents in supporting children’s social and emotional health. On **rare occasions**, we may work with families to seek the best care for their child when our program can no longer meet the needs of an individual child.

Reasons for expulsion include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated physical aggression towards other children/ staff
- Repeated verbal aggression towards other children/ staff
- Placing self or others in danger.

Expulsion is a **last resort** and we will work hard with you to keep your child safe and in our loving program.

Weather

- **Outdoor Play:** Unless it is raining or below 40 degrees, *outdoor play time will occur*. Please dress your child accordingly.
- **School Closure:** MPP *generally* follows the guidelines of the Duval County School System for closures due to hurricanes, tornadoes, or other emergency situations. If Duval County Schools are closed, *generally* MPP will also be closed. *If MPP will be closed, you will receive a text from the Director or your child's teacher.*
- **Severe Weather:** Occasionally, severe weather develops during school hours. If school is in session when an announcement of closing is made, you will need to immediately come and pick up your child.
- **"Make-up" Days:** MPP reserves the right to determine policy for "make-up" days

Show and Share

To be determined by each classroom teacher.

Please be mindful that MPP is an outreach ministry of Mandarin Presbyterian church and as a Christian school, all items sent in should be appropriate.

- Examples of sharable items: photos, children's story books, trophies, etc.
 - **No "weapons" are allowed** (toy guns, spears, or items that promote aggressive behavior.)
- We cannot be responsible for damaged or lost items.

Summer Program

- 3-5 year olds who are fully potty trained & independently able to take care of bathroom needs) are eligible to participate in our Summer Fun Program
- Five to six weeks offered with fun, exciting themes each week
- Children may attend as many weeks as you desire
- Cost for the summer of 2023 yet to be determined
- Registration will begin in April 2023
- Sample Theme Topics
 - Creepy Crawlies
 - Lovin' Legos
 - Ready, Set, Play!
 - Mad Scientist
 - Bike Parade
 - Go for the Gold
 - Wild, Wild West
 - Super Duper Superheros
 - Days of Knights
 - Shipwrecked
 - Gone Fishin'
 - Under the Big Top