

PARENT HANDBOOK

THE PRESCHOOL & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

CYPRESS

First Friends

first
KIDS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of First Friends and First Kids Cypress is to show the love of Jesus to children and their families through teaching them God's word; equipping them to worship and to serve; and by empowering parents to be the primary disciple makers of their children.

PRESCHOOL & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASICS

Check In and Security Tags

First Friends and First Kids desires to maintain the most secure environment possible for every child in our programs. In order to do so we have the following check in procedures:

- Check in at our computer stations BEFORE dropping off your child. Select the child's name to print off the security tag, name tag and parent name tags. Place the name tag on the child BEFORE entering the secure area.
- To sign a child into a classroom, fill in the information on the sign in sheet located at the door of the classroom. Your signature is required for signing in and signing out on a daily basis. Make note of your location and current phone number, in case we need to contact you about your child during the program. With known allergies, please make note on the sign in sheet and notify the respective teachers.
- On Sundays, the responsible adult MUST wear a Preschool/Childrens' Parent/Guest name tag in order to gain entry to the Preschool Suite. Access to the Suite is restricted to authorized individuals and is monitored by designated personnel.
- The responsible adult picking up the child must present the security tag upon pick up. If the security tag is lost or misplaced, the classroom teacher will direct the pick up person to the Front Desk Supervisor to have a replacement security tag issued.
- For a replacement security tag, the following procedure will be followed:

The responsible adult must show their driver's license to the Supervisor at the Preschool Desk.

The Supervisor will match your ID with the information in our database to ensure that person is connected with the child or on the list of approved persons to pick up the child.

A replacement security tag will then be issued.



Weekday Programs:

Alternative Pick-up

If another person will be picking up your child, please let us know in advance and provide us with his/ her contact information on the alternate pick up form. We will then ask for their driver's license upon pick up, and they will be given a security tag. Your child will not be released to anyone who is not on the alternate pick up form, or who cannot prove their identity with a valid form of picture identification (driver's license, passport). Any updates or changes must be made in writing.

Personal Items

Labeling - All items must be labeled, including bottles, cups and diapers, with child's name.

Things to pack:

Infants

- Plastic or stainless steel bottles only (no glass bottles)
- Pacifier (if needed)
- Supply of disposable diapers
- Change of clothes
- Bib

Ones and Twos

- Supply of disposable diapers
- Change of clothes
- Water bottle

Threes through Fives

- Change of clothes (if necessary)
- Supply of pull ups (if necessary)

Weekday Programs:

Nap mat, blanket, lovey, etc. (One year old children will begin napping on nap mats when they enter the walker room.)

Snack and Meals

Nut Free Zone - Please do not pack nuts or nut products of any kind for your child. This includes peanut/almond butter, almond/cashew milk, hazelnut spread, etc.

Food Allergies - Ingredients for any special snacks will be posted by the classroom door. For children with special food needs, please talk with your child's teacher to see what accommodations need to be made. For severe allergies, please see Epi Pen Policy.

Morning Snack

Saltines, Goldfish, Graham crackers, or Cheerios will be provided for your child. Due to the large number of children participating in Sunday morning and Wednesday evening programming, we cannot serve individual snacks from home including food pouches.

Bottle Feeding

Babies will be given bottles prepared according to the instructions given. Please only send plastic or stainless steel bottles as we cannot have glass bottles in the classrooms.

Weekday Programs:

Please serve your child breakfast before arriving. We cannot heat, microwave, or refrigerate food for children. In the infant rooms, we are only able to warm bottles of milk.

For weekday programs serving lunch, please provide a sack lunch/ baby food, with eating utensils and a drink. ALL food containers/ pouches/ items must be labeled.

Lunch Packing Guide:

Please pack a healthy lunch for your child, including a water bottle or drink to be used at snack time and lunch time.

Any items that contain nut-alternatives (soy butter, sunbutter, etc.) must be clearly labeled.

Please ensure that children can eat packed food independently (within their abilities) and that food does not require teacher preparation beyond opening container lids.

Parents need to pre-cut any foods that could be a choking hazard before packing it for the child's lunch.

Avoid foods that may be choking hazards, and please note the following foods may pose a risk of choking:

- Whole hot dogs
- Whole grapes
- Raisins
- Large pieces of raw vegetables
- Hard candy
- Popcorn
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Chewing gum

For more information, please consult the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines on choking prevention.



Schedule

A basic schedule for your child is described below. Schedules will vary based on age and classroom. Each room has a detailed schedule posted in the classroom.

- Bible Story group time
- Art activity
- Learning centers
- Imaginative play
- Snack
- Music/ stretch and grow
- Playground (indoor or outdoor), buggy ride, and/ or nature walk

Weekday Programs:

Schedule also includes

- Lunch
- Nap/quiet time
- Chapel
- Spanish

PRESCHOOL POLICIES

Allergies and Epi Pens


Parents/guardians are responsible for informing Houston's First/First Friends Preschool and Children's Ministry about their child's potential risk for anaphylaxis and for ensuring the provisions of ongoing health information and necessary medical supplies. The church will take reasonable measures to avoid allergens for affected children.

Even with the church's best efforts, staff and parents/ guardians need to be aware that it is not possible to achieve a completely allergen-free environment. However, the church will take precautions to reduce the risk of a child having an anaphylactic reaction by developing strategies to minimize the presence of allergens in the preschool area.

Epi-Pen Policy

When leaving a child in the care of a Preschool Program, parents of a child with severe allergies must bring two epi-pens in their original box with the prescription label. These pens will be kept at the Preschool Desk for emergency access. Epi-pens must be current and not with expired expiration dates.

Parents must also complete the Food Allergy Action Plan which will be kept in a notebook at the desk. The Food Allergy Action Plan must also include a picture of the child.



If your child has a medical condition or severe allergy, he/ she will be required to wear a medical alert bracelet to help teachers and staff react quickly to any medical emergency. A paper alert bracelet may be obtained from the Preschool Desk.

An epi pen will not be administered to a child with allergies without a written form of consent from the parent and doctor. If we do not have a doctor's prescription for your child's medication, we will ONLY be able to call 911 in the event of an emergency.

If a child in a classroom needs the epi-pen, the following procedure will be followed:

Any teacher or volunteer will immediately call the front desk and bring the child to the front desk for a Coordinator to intervene.

The coordinator will immediately call & text the parents and ask for assistance from a nurse if there is one available. In the absence of a nurse, a coordinator will immediately call 911 and security if there is any swelling or rash presentation on the child.

If there is a nurse available to evaluate the child, then the nurse will monitor the child and determine if an epi-pen should be used or if an alternative step from the Food Allergy Action Plan should be implemented. If it is determined that the child should need an epi-pen injection, then the nurse or supervising coordinator should administer the epi-pen in the thigh muscle of the child.

Only a nurse, staff member, or coordinator may administer an epi-pen.

A second pen should be ready to use in the event that the child is still experiencing problems and EMS has not arrived.

Illness Policy

Children who are ill are not to attend programming.

We define illness as:

- Fever (within the last 24 hours) (for children and infants older than three month, an oral temperature of 100.4, rectal temperature of 101.4, axillary temperature of 99.4, temporal temperature of 100.0)
- Diarrhea (within the last 24 hours)
- Vomiting (within the last 24 hours)
- Rash
- Impetigo
- Persistent nasal mucous secretions
- Persistent cough
- Eye infections (red or running eyes)

- Uncovered skin lesions or wound infections
- Yellow skin or eyes (Jaundice)
- Head lice/bed bugs
- Sore throat
- Childhood diseases (Scarlet Fever, German Measles, Mumps, Chicken Pox or Whooping Cough)
- Other communicable diseases such as Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease.

Parents will be called to pick up their child if the child shows any sign of illness. The preschool teachers and staff cannot diagnose any illness. Therefore, in protection of the other children in the program, a child showing signs of illness will be asked to be picked up immediately.

Child will be sent home for diarrhea that occurs two times during session.

All open wounds, large scrapes or cuts must be properly covered with a bandage and remain covered while the child is in attendance.

If a child is diagnosed with Hand, Foot, and Mouth disease, strep throat, chickenpox, or mumps, a doctor's release will be required to return to the program. Parents will be contacted if a child appears ill during a session.

Medication

If your child requires medication, the parent or caregiver is responsible for administering the medication. The Preschool Staff cannot administer any medication, including (but not limited to): diaper cream, cortisone children's cream, antibiotic ointment, etc., with the exception of those with a Food Allergy Action Plan.

Weekday Programs:

Please report all illnesses or other absences by 9:30 that day. You may call the Preschool Front Desk

Behavior Policies

Aggressive Behavior Policy

Managing behavior is challenging when a child is putting himself or others in danger or is not able to regulate his own feelings or actions. When a child is struggling to regulate in a class situation and causes a disturbance that is endangering himself or others, decisive action will be taken by the Coordinator.

1st time

1. Teacher will address aggressive behavior with positive management techniques and contact the Coordinator. The Coordinator can assess the situation and offer behavior support to the teacher, if applicable.

2. Teacher will complete the Aggressive Behavior Report and return the report to the Coordinator immediately.

3. The Coordinator will notify the parent to discuss the problem either on the phone or in person immediately after the incident occurs and discuss what has helped the child regulate in the past. We will do all we can to help the child regulate with suggestions provided by the parent.

- Coordinator observes and gives techniques to connect with child.
- A parent is required to sign the incident report when picking up child.
- The Report will be entered into the Aggressive Behavior Tracker.

2nd time (within a 3 month time frame)

Repeat steps 1-3 above according to the 1st time guidelines.

Coordinator will communicate to the parents of involved classroom to provide awareness that there are struggles in managing regulation in that class and we are doing everything possible to help the child come to a point of regulation during class time.

3rd time (within a 3 month time frame)

Repeat steps 1-3 above according to the 1st time guidelines

Parents of child will be called to come to the church to create a plan with Coordinator for helping their child better regulate in the classroom. Plan will include reflection on child's history and what has worked well for him in the past.

4th time (within a 3 month time frame)

Repeat steps 1-3 above according to the 1st time guidelines

Take a break from the program for 2 weeks or longer and guide parents to resources to help child self-regulate.

If professional services, such as a counselor or regulation specialist are needed, the parent will be asked to sign release of information. The consulted professional will need to give a recommendation for re-entry to the program.

Biting Policy

Biting is a uniquely challenging behavior for both preschoolers and their parents. For information about why children bite, and strategies to deal effectively with the behavior, please consult with your child's pediatrician, the American Academy of Pediatrics, or the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Per policy, we are unable to release information about the other child(ren) involved.

1st Time

1. When biting occurs the teacher will wash the area with soap and water, and apply ice to the affected area.
 2. The teacher notifies the Coordinator on duty and writes up the incident using the Aggressive Behavior Report.
 3. The parents of both children (the one who bit and the one who was bitten) will be notified by the Coordinator, and will sign the Report.
- If a second bite occurs within the same session, parent or caregiver will be called to pick the

child up. This will count as one episode.

- The Report will be entered into the Aggressive Behavior Tracker.

2nd Time (within a 3 month time frame)

Repeat steps 1-3 above according to the 1st time guidelines.

Parents of child who is biting will need to complete a background check in the event that they are required to shadow their child.

3rd Time (within a 3 month time frame)

Repeat steps 1-3 above according to the 1st time guidelines.

Parents of child who is biting will meet with Coordinator to plan effective strategies for "shadowing" their child in the classroom: quick intervention before biting can occur, parent-administered discipline after biting attempt, leaving early if needed.

The parent will be required to monitor and assist the biting child for six consecutive program sessions. After three sessions, the parent will meet with the Coordinator to evaluate the progress of the child's behavior. In the event that the behavior continues after six sessions of parental assistance, the child may be asked to take a three-week break from the program.

Volunteer Policies

We depend on volunteers in order to minister to the many families that attend the Cypress Campus! We ask all approved parents to volunteer with preschool once a month.

All in-classroom volunteers must be approved through the following steps:

Church Membership

HoustonFirst.org/the-loop/connect/explore-membership

Approved Background Check

www.ministryopportunities.org/FBCHouston (and enter "preschool" when prompted)

Approved NexGen Application

<https://hfbc.formstack.com/forms/nextgenvolunteerapp>

Volunteer Training

To ensure all volunteers are trained with the most up-to-date policies and procedures, we ask approved classroom volunteers to attend NexGen trainings throughout the year.

Weekday Programs:

Resource Room Volunteers

Weekday program members who are not current church members are able to volunteer in the Resource Room with classroom preparation. This is an immense help for our teachers!

Special Events

All attending guests must have a current background check. Please RSVP with the Coordinator to ensure your background check is approved and up-to-date.

PRESCHOOL PROCEDURES

Weather-Related Closures

In the event of a weather-related closure, notification will be made in the following ways:

- Check the church website. If the office is closed, we will post a notice by 6:30 am.
- Check the church's social media channels (Facebook and Twitter: @HoustonsFirst)
- Call the main church number and listen to the recording.
- Please don't assume that the church office is closed because your child's school is closed.
- It is your responsibility to check.

Evacuation Policy

To prepare for an evacuation in advance, your child's teacher will do the following:

- Put the classroom rope close to the door at the beginning of class.
- Locate the evacuation map in the room and study it.
- Be familiar with the primary AND secondary evacuation routes.
- Help the children practice walking on the rope with fast walking feet.

During an evacuation:

- Alarm sounds
- Walkers: get in line holding onto the rope
- Babies and Crawlers: put in cribs (4 per crib)
- Teachers will lead the children along the evacuation route to their assigned area parking lot.
- Classes will remain in their assigned area until an all-clear signal has been given by Coordinator.
- Children will not be released during an evacuation. Children must return to class before they are checked out, with security card and signature on sign-in sheet.
- If the situation is unsafe for children to return to class, a Coordinator must approve the release of children to authorized adults with security tags.

Shelter in Place Policy

To prepare for a Shelter in Place situation in advance, your child's teacher will do the following:

- Put the classroom rope close to the door at the beginning of class.
- Locate the approved Shelter in Place locations on the evacuation map in the room and study it.
- Be familiar with the primary AND secondary Shelter in Place routes and locations.
- Help children practice walking on the rope with fast walking feet.



Severe Weather Procedure

In the case of severe weather, the classes will seek safety using the following procedures:

- Coordinator will notify the classrooms to “Shelter in Place” over the intercom.
- The teachers will lead the children into a classroom or other approved area without outside windows.
- The children and teachers will “Shelter in Place” in the restroom or against the inmost wall of the classroom.
- If the class is on the outside playground, they will come back in the building ASAP and go to the closest room and join that class in the restroom.
- If the class is on a walk or buggy ride, they will be notified over the radio and will “Shelter in Place” in the nearest bathroom away from outside windows.
- Coordinators will make sure the classrooms are in a safe area and all children are accounted for. Then Coordinators will “Shelter in Place” as well.
- Classes will remain in “Shelter in Place” position until “ALL CLEAR” is given over the intercom. A Coordinator will come by to individually check on each room.

Lockdown Procedure

If an intruder is on campus, we will lockdown the building according to the following procedures:

- Coordinator will notify the classrooms to “Report to Advisory” over the intercom.
- The teachers will lead the children into the restroom, lock the door, and sit on the floor quietly with the lights off.
- If the classroom does not have a restroom, the teachers will move the children to the corner of the room that cannot be seen from the door window.
- If the class is on the outside playground, they will come back in the building ASAP and go to the closest room and join that class in the restroom.
- Desk/ Door volunteers will make sure the doors to the Preschool Suite are locked (1st & 2nd floor) and the area is secure.
- The class will remain in lock down position until further instructions or the “ALL CLEAR” is given over the intercom. A Coordinator will come by to individually check on each room.

We will practice the building evacuation, lockdown, and severe weather procedures on a yearly basis in order to familiarize staff, volunteers, and students with the safest routines during emergencies. These drills are essential to providing an effective and safe environment for all program participants.



HOUSTON'S FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH

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HoustonsFirst.org