

PINEWOOD CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

198 Knight Boxx Road ♦ Middleburg, FL 32068 ♦ Phone: 904-272-6408 ♦ Fax: 904-644-0566 ♦ www.pcaknights.org

Morning Drop-off and Afternoon Pick-up Procedures

To ensure the safety of our students, all cars must load and unload in the designated zone. Carpool line will be open each morning from 7:50 a.m.-8:05 a.m. PreK families must drive through the carpool line; please hang your Prek bookmark tag from your mirror so we know to send a patrol or teacher to your car to escort your child into the building. For the first day, you may park and walk your child inside to our classroom. After that, we ask that you please drop off your child in the carpool line. The door to the building will close at 8:05 a.m.- after that, you must check your child in at the office.

Prek students are dismissed at 12:00 p.m. When picking your child up, please hang the car tag name sign that you receive at orientation from your mirror. Carpool line will close promptly at 12:15 p.m. After that, you must pick up your child from Extended Care (\$8.50 / hour). You must list in writing the **name and phone number of everyone** that you appoint to pick up your child. This list will be kept in your child's file. If there is any change in who will be picking up your child, please send a note to let us know. The individual picking up your child will need to show picture identification that matches your listed names on the emergency release. We take the safety of your child seriously and therefore we reserve the right to refuse the release of a student if these procedures are not met.

By Florida law, we CANNOT release your child to someone not on your designated list without written permission; a phone call will not be accepted. In the event of a true emergency, and someone not on your list must pick up your child, you must send a request in writing or via email to receptionist@pcaknights.org (this email address should only be used for this purpose - all other inquiries should be directed to teachers) Include the following information: your name and current phone contact information (as we will call and verify your request) and the name and phone number of the person who will be picking your child up (he/she must present their driver's license to verify their identity before picking up your child).

Attendance / Tardy Policy

Prek-3:

Consistency is important for learning. Therefore, while not required, daily attendance in Prek-3 is strongly encouraged. However, if your child is sick, please keep him or her home (see section on Illness, Medication, and Hygiene below). If grandma is in town and wants to take your child to the zoo, please let her! All we ask is that you tell us so that we can plan accordingly; send an email to absent@pcaknights.org on any day your child will be absent. *Please note that 3-day students will not miss anything on Mondays and Fridays; 5-day students will have extra playtime and enrichment activities on those days,

The door where students are dropped off in the morning will be closed promptly at 8:05 a.m. If you arrive after the door is closed, you will need to check in at the office.

VPK/Prek-4:

It is very important that VPK/Prek-4 students are in school each day. If your child will be absent, please send an email to absent@pcaknights.org on the morning of the absence. **Please do this any time that your child has missed school explaining the absence.**

If family vacation times are scheduled during the school year, please note that your child will still be expected to achieve the state required standards.

VPK students must attend at least 80% of the school year for the tuition to be paid by the State of Florida. In the event you are getting close to the number of days absent, you will be notified. **Parents are required to sign the monthly Parental Choice Certificate (attendance sheet) on the last day of each month.** This attendance is submitted to Episcopal Children's Services.

Morning carline closes at 8:05 a.m. At this time, the door where students are dropped off will be closed. If you arrive after the door is closed, you will need to check in at the school office and then walk your child to class.

Discipline Policy

Three- and Four-year-olds are at a crossroad when it comes to discipline. It is at this age that children transition from simply conforming to the will of others (e.g. parents) to exercising their own independent wills. This manifests itself in many ways ranging from statements like “I do” to full blown temper tantrums. Obviously, in a school, there must be rules and procedures to govern the behavior of the group. Accordingly, the following guidelines will be used to address behavior concerns in PreK at Pinewood Christian Academy:

Choice

In order to develop independence, children need choices. At Pinewood, Pre-K students will have lots of opportunities to make their own decisions including choosing a center in which to play, choosing a job for the week, and choosing how to spend free time / recess. We will also apply this to disciplinary situations; every misbehavior will be characterized as a choice, and choices have consequences (whether positive or negative).

Consequences

Establishing clear expectations and upholding those expectations is essential for children to learn the cause-and-effect nature of their actions. At Pinewood, our Pre-K classes will have rules, procedures, and discipline plans which guide both children and adults in situations that call for correction. We will clearly tie consequences to misbehavior so that the children experience the logical results of their words and actions. For example, if a child is mistreating his/her classmates, then we separate that child from the group (i.e. time out from the group activity*) and tell him/her, “If you can’t be nice to your friends, then you won’t be allowed to be with your friends.”

**Time-out from a group activity is not a punishment but a strategy to assist a child in calming down, reassessing the situation, and re-establishing some inner control. It also provides the teacher and child an opportunity to talk about feelings. Ideally, the child determines the length of “time-out” by letting the teacher know he/she feels ready to return to the group and participate in an appropriate manner.*

Compassion

Developing self-awareness and self-control is a process that begins in early childhood and, for some, extends even into adulthood. Therefore, the following two principles will be foundational to discipline at PCA:

- Children are people – they have their own thoughts, feelings, needs, and wants
- Children are not little adults – we cannot expect the level of self awareness from them that we do from adults

At Pinewood, we understand that young children oftentimes do not know how to properly express their thoughts, feelings, needs, and wants. Therefore, whenever practical, we will seek to understand their motives so that we can help them navigate conflicts and learn from their mistakes.

Character

We accept that children are not “blank slates” when they start PreK. They come to us with personalities and patterns of behavior that define who they are as individuals. We also recognize that children need to adapt to social norms, especially in a school environment, to maximize the potential of the group.

At Pinewood, our goal is to teach children how to properly interact with their peers while also protecting their individuality. Therefore, while discipline plans are implemented for the good of the class, we acknowledge that every child is unique and at a different place on the developmental spectrum, and that correction must be tailored to address individual needs as well.

Extended Care

Extended Care opens each day at 7:00 a.m and closes at 6:00 p.m. Please send a note in your child's folder if he/she will be attending Extended Care for the day. You should also send in a separate lunch (in a separate lunch box) for Extended Care. If your child will be staying in Extended Care regularly, you will only need to send one note at the beginning of the year and supply a sleeping mat of your choosing. Each family is to complete an Extended Care registration form even if you are not planning to use this service (a registration fee will only be charged in the event that the service is used).

Birthdays

We begin celebrating birthdays as soon as school starts and we love to celebrate with our PreK students! You are welcome to send/bring in a treat to recognize your child's birthday, but ***please let us know in advance***. Treats may include mini cupcakes, cookies, donuts, and/or ice cream. If your child has a food allergy, please provide us with an “alternative” birthday treat that we may use in place of the class treat. Birthday party invitations cannot be distributed at school unless you plan to invite the entire class. Helium balloons are not permitted in the buildings on campus. Presents may not be exchanged at school.

Dress Code

Boys and Girls can wear any khaki or dark blue bottom (skirts, shorts, pants, skorts) and polo shirts in gray (light or dark), hunter green, white, or navy blue. There is a limited edition “black-out” polo for sale this year as well. Chapel (held on Thursdays) and the field trip uniform is khaki bottoms and hunter green polo shirt or “Lil’ Knights” t-shirt. Belts are not required for the PreK students, however shirts are to be tucked in. If your child wants to wear a belt, they must be able to operate them without assistance. Sleeveless tops, tank tops (even under girl's jumpers) and sandals are not allowed (even with straps on the back). Clothing should be plain, without embroidery unless it is the PCA logo. In the winter, any kind of coat can be worn outside but only PCA logo sweaters/ jackets are to be worn inside. Please send in a change of clothing in a gallon zip lock bag (appropriate for the season) in your child's backpack and we will keep it in their cubby the remainder of the year, in case of accidents or spills. The change of clothes does not need to be a uniform.

Dress Down Days

Prek-3:

Dress Down Day cards for your students may be earned through 5 hours of volunteer work. Volunteer time can be earned by doing things for us at home or for volunteering at school functions. Dress Down Days are every Friday, but since not all Prek-3 students come to school on Fridays, we will make our Dress Down Day on Wednesdays for **Prek-3 students only**. ***Students must have a Dress Down Day card in their folder that morning in order to participate.*** If the student does not have a Dress Down Day card, a regular uniform must be worn. Students arriving in dress down clothing without a card will be sent to the office and parents will be called to bring a change of clothes. Please pay close attention to the guidelines on the back of the Dress Down Day card for Dress Down Day clothing guidelines.

VPK:

Dress Down Day cards for your students may be earned through 5 hours of volunteer work. Volunteer time can be earned by doing things for us at home or for volunteering at school functions. Dress Down Days are every Friday. ***Students must have a Dress Down Day card in their folder that morning in order to participate.*** If the student does not have a Dress Down Day card, a regular uniform must be worn. Students arriving in dress down clothing without a card will be sent to the office and parents will be called to bring a change of clothes. Please pay close attention to the guidelines on the back of the Dress Down Day card for Dress Down Day clothing guidelines.

Chapel

PreK students will attend Chapel each Thursday morning promptly at 8:25 a.m. On Chapel days, the students must wear a hunter green polo shirt or "Lil' Knights" t-shirt tucked into khaki bottoms, skirts or jumpers. Parents and younger siblings are encouraged to attend Chapel, and we would love for you to join us.

There will be a PCA staff member at a table outside of the Sanctuary building where you will sign in upon arrival to Chapel. While each class has assigned seating, we do ask that you please sit with your child behind the other classes in the parent seating area. You must inform a teacher if you are going to take your child out of the class seating area to sit with you. Once Chapel ends, please bring your child immediately back to their teacher. Do not leave the Sanctuary with your child at any time without notifying their teacher. In the event of an emergency, you will have to sign your child out in the school office and out of the teacher's care before leaving campus with them. This is for security reasons and we must know where your child is at all times.

VPK/Prek-4 leads two Chapel programs, one in October ("What I Want to Be") and another one in the spring, such as ("Scat the Cat"). We will send home more information closer to the event dates.

Snacks

Please send in two healthy snacks with your child each day in a lunch box - NO PAPER BAGS. The lunch box must fit into a backpack that can accommodate a folder and a jacket (and an extra lunch box if staying for Extended Care). Please do not send in a complete lunch for a snack as the children will not have time to eat it all. Please send in a labeled spill-proof and leak-proof water bottle for snack and recess time. Please label all "Tupperware" containers (top and bottom).

Children are not allowed to share their snack unless they bring in enough for the entire class as a special treat and the teacher is notified in advance.

Please be extra mindful of teachers' instructions regarding classmates with food allergies such as gluten, dairy, and nuts. It is our goal that all students are safe in the least restrictive environment we can provide.

Field Trips

VPK/PreK-4 students take two off-campus field trips each year. The school pays for these trips for the VPK children so spaces are limited to each student and one parent chaperone per student. Please make alternative care arrangements for siblings on field trip days. We do not arrange transportation for field trips; we will meet at the field trip location and NOT at the school. Students must wear their chapel uniform (hunter green polo or Lil' Knights t-shirt and khaki bottoms) for all field trips. Sandals and open-toed shoes should not be worn.

Safety

All parents wishing to visit or volunteer must first check in at the office and wear a visitor sticker for the entire time they are with the class. Any adults who would like to volunteer in the classroom this year will need to complete the online Safe Care Course found on the school website (go to pcaknights.org/current-families and click on "SafeCare Online Training"). Please complete the course, print out the certificate, and bring it to the front office. We run background checks on every adult who has contact with our students behind the locked doors. If your child stays at PCA beyond PreK, you will not have to do this again for 5 years.

PreK participates in fire, lockdown, and severe weather drills so that the children know what to do in case of an actual emergency. Should an actual emergency occur, you will be notified as soon as possible.

Potty Training Policy

Children enrolled in our PreK program must be toilet trained before attending school. Children must be wearing underwear. Wearing pull ups is NOT considered toilet trained. A child having potty accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. We schedule class potty breaks four times a day, but children are allowed to use the bathroom at any time.

We understand that toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, “accidents” are unusual incidents that happen infrequently. In these instances, we will talk your child through the clean up process, and changing of clothes, and we will send a note home notifying you of the accident. If the child has a “bad” accident that they are unable to clean up themselves independently, we will call you to come and help your child clean up and/or take them home for the day.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. PreK staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. We will keep a complete change of clothing appropriate for the season (that you send in at the beginning of the school year and will switch out in the colder months) in your child’s cubby in case of an accident or spill. The change of clothing does not need to be a uniform.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time. This policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in a school setting is time consuming, and this time that teachers spend attending to and cleaning accidents is time they are not spending interacting with children and facilitating curriculum in a safe manner. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and happiness of children and staff.

Illness, Medication, and Hygiene at School

Please do not send your child to school if they are sick. This helps keep germs from spreading and the rest of the class stays healthy. If your child runs a fever, he/she must be fever-free without medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Please send in a note when your child returns to school after being sick; a doctor's note is required if your child is returning after recovering from a communicable disease. In the event your child has head lice, they will be sent home and can only be readmitted with proof of treatment (treatment box or note from treatment center) and a head check in the front office.

A doctor's note for all prescription AND over-the-counter medication/oils is required. All medication (including cough drops, oils, and lip-balms) must be kept in the school office. Forms are available in the school office if your child will need to take medication at school. We understand some families that are attending our school choose not to immunize their children; if your child is not immunized due to religious or other reasons, please make sure the proper paperwork is on file in the front office.

Parent and Teacher Communication

Each child will bring home a folder daily. This will be our primary means of communication in addition to the *Class Dojo* class page. Please check the folder each day and take out any papers, along with the *Class Dojo* class page. ***We normally do not check backpacks as the children learn to unpack them on their own, so please be sure that any notes for us are in the folder.*** You will receive a monthly calendar and newsletter beginning in September to keep you informed of our topics of study, Bible verses, and class activities.

For VPK students, The State of Florida requires 3 assessments each year. We will have two scheduled conferences this year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring, to discuss these assessments. If there is a need, we will conference in January to discuss Assessment Period 2. These conferences are used to update you on your child's progress. A sign-up sheet will be available for Fall conferences at Open House in September.

Prek-3 parent conferences are held in May only. If at any time parents would like to request a conference outside of the dates of these conferences, please send an email to the teacher requesting one.

***If you have any questions or concerns at any time during the year,
please do not hesitate to contact us through the school office at***

***(904) 272-6408, or through the email below, or through the Class Dojo
class page for your child. We will be happy to help in any way that we can.***

In Christ,

VPK/Prek-4 - Lil' Yellow Knights

Michele Pena

Lead Teacher, Prek Director

michele.pena@pcaknights.org

VPK/Prek-4 - Lil' Green Knights

Lindsey Harrison

Lead Teacher

lindsey.harrison@pcaknights.org

Prek-3 - Lil' Red Knights

Courtney Mikhalevich

Lead Teacher

courtney.mikhalevich@pcaknights.org