



Preferred School Care



Parent Handbook Before & After School Program

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Welcome!

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Preferred School Care Afterschool Program. We are thrilled that you have chosen PSC as an opportunity to broaden your child's learning. The goals of our program are to provide an educational, socially enriched out-of school experience.

We provide homework assistance, enrichment activities according to the age and grade level of the students. PSC also has strong ties to its community and connects with each school's achievement plan.

Your parental involvement and continued support are welcomed. You are welcome to visit our program to become acquainted with the staff and become familiar with program routines. Please take time to read the information in this handbook and familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your school's Site Director or call our main office at 770.739.1462.

We look forward to serving you and your child throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Bill Selmon, President

Overview

Preferred School Care is an organization which specializes in the management of before and after school programs. Its owner and founder, Mr. Bill Selmon, is committed to providing children with a safe, nurturing environment during before and after school hours.

Preferred School Care prides itself in providing children with skills that promote education, recreation and social growth and development. PSC also integrates technology and artistic enrichment activities into the program which allows children to reinforce their skills and experience interactive and self-directed learning.

Mission

Our mission at PSC is to provide quality before and after school child care services for the children of working parents. Preferred School Care programs are designed to provide a safe, nurturing and supportive academic/social environment for students.

Philosophy

Preferred School Care has developed a program to answer the needs of today's busy parents. Quality child care is a commitment we are dedicated to providing because we believe our children are precious and valued gifts. The philosophy of Preferred School Care (PSC) is to develop the whole child by promoting social acceptance, emotional health, intellectual ability, and physical health. These needs are met through a fun and innovative program, which provides children with opportunities regarding individual choice, group participation, critical thinking skills development, and recreational activities all within a safe, fun, and social environment. We, at Preferred School Care, believe that children are our future and that, **"WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY!"**

Licensing & Accreditation

Programs are licensed annually as part of the Bright from the Start: Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). In addition to meeting state child care regulatory rules and regulations, several programs are accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

Staffing

Preferred School Care promotes the hiring of qualified individuals without regard to race, color, creed, sex, age, or national origin, provided they meet the requirements established for the Before/After School Program.

Prospective employees will be required to complete an application for employment, pass the Atlanta Public School System national background check and complete an interview with the Site Director and/or owner. The prospective employee may be required to work in a substitute status prior to being hired for permanent status.

There will be a 90 day probationary period for all new employees and old employees in a new position. All employees will receive a performance evaluation twice annually salary increases are based upon performance.

Employees of Preferred School Care are expected to work as a team in a positive, productive and professional manner in order to enrich the lives of children.

Hours of Operation

The after school program hours are Monday – Friday from 2:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and the before school care hour (if applicable) is 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. The program follows the Atlanta Public School student school calendar for holiday closings, teacher work days, etc. We are not open during the fall, spring, winter or summer breaks.

Program Schedule

- **Arrival time & Snacks:**
 - When students arrive to the program, they are provided with a healthy snack. During this time they are encouraged to develop friendships through conversation and play.
- **Outdoor play time:**
 - Students have the opportunity to build friendships during outdoor play.
- **Academic & Homework time:**
 - Homework assistance and guidance is provided each day. Once homework is concluded, students can choose from a variety of student led activity centers that reinforce the skills being taught in the regular school day.
- **Enrichment time:**
 - Depending on school location, enrichments may vary. Students enjoy a range of activities, such as arts and crafts, creative building, science experiments, teacher-led games, music and drama, computer games & sports. With student input, our teachers work diligently to prepare ongoing activities that are meaningful, engaging, and fun.

Enrichment Clubs

In addition to our afterschool program, at several school locations, we offer “parent-funded” Enrichment Clubs. Please visit our website for more information about these clubs.

Dress Code

Children must be dressed appropriately for school activities and according to weather conditions.

Homework

A period for children to work on homework will be provided; however, our program staff does not require the completion of homework. Staff will answer questions about homework and assist as needed or as requested by a child. For those children who not have homework, after enrichment/learning activities will be offered.

Please discuss the importance of homework with your child. In order for children to have the benefits of the total program, children are discouraged from spending more than 45 minutes in one homework block.

For children needing more time to work on homework a designated area of the program may be offered.

Enrollment Policy

Students must be properly enrolled in our program by completing our enrollment packet. Parents or guardians must complete an enrollment application and all required paperwork. Parents are responsible for providing written information about their children regarding known allergies, physical, mental health and/or developmental disorders that may limit the child's participation in our program and activities.

Changes in Enrollment Information

Whenever any information provided to PSC on the enrollment or any other form changes, parents must provide updated information immediately. Current files are crucial to prompt parental notification regarding the health and safety of your child.

Payment Policy

Registration Fee – Students must be properly registered for the after school program by parents or guardians. In addition, a registration fee must be paid at time of enrollment. Additional registration fees may be required based on which program you are enrolling (i.e. before care, enrichment clubs). **Registration fees are non-refundable and apply to all participants.**

Payments – After school weekly fees varies depending on the school location. Please check with your site director for the fee at your child's school. Discounts are provided for enrollment of more than one child. **Our after school program is a PREPAID program.** All Payments are due on Monday for the week. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged to your account if fees are not collected by Tuesday close of business. Payments made on Friday are for the upcoming week.

Scholarships – Requests to be considered for scholarships must be addressed at each individual school location. Required paperwork must be submitted before a decision is rendered.

Program Days – If you attend any of our programs for **2 or more days**, you are required to pay the entire weekly fee.

NSF Charges – For all returned checks a \$35.00 processing fee will be charged to your account. If **2 or more** checks are returned, your payment MUST be PAID by cash or money order. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Late Pick-Up - Child pick-up time is promptly @ 6:00p.m. Late fees are \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 p.m. The **late fee policy will be strictly enforced for all parents. Continued late pick-ups may result in dismissal from the program.**

Withdrawal Policy

If you choose to withdraw from the program during the school year, please request a withdrawal slip from your program's Site Director. This form can be completed and returned to the Site Director for processing. Withdrawal forms should be received at or before Friday when the next weeks payments are due.

Otherwise, you will still be considered to be enrolled in the next session and will be held responsible for payment for the upcoming week. You will remain responsible for any outstanding fees. Fees are non-transferable and non-refundable.

Nutritious Snacks

PSC provides nutritious USDA certified afternoon snacks. Our snack program is sponsored by the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP). No outside food is allowed unless otherwise directed by a doctor.

Examples of snacks are:

- Cheese crackers and 100% fruit juice
- Animal crackers and applesauce
- Cookies and milk

Toys & Personal Items

Children should not bring any toys or personal items to after school unless requested by teacher for special days like Show & Tell. Children should not bring any video games such as PSP's, and Nintendo DS to school at any time. PSC is not responsible for such lost and/or missing items brought to our program.

Sign In & Out Procedures

Parents or guardians must sign their children out every day. No one under the age of 16 will be permitted to sign out or transport a child from our Program. Students will be released to the custodial parent/guardian or those listed on the registration form. The site director reserves the right to restrict unauthorized persons from signing out students. In an emergency, the child can be released to a non-listed party with written permission from the parent/guardian or a phone call to the director. A picture ID, i.e. driver's license, will be required.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

(Varies depending on school location)

Arrivals:

- **School-Sponsored Activities:** If a child attends an activity , i.e., Scouts, soccer, chess or another other school sponsored activities, etc., during the after school hours, a written notification to the Site Director is necessary. The notification would include the type of activity and time the child will arrive back in the program. The person returning the child to the program must sign in the child on the Program Attendance Log.
- **Scheduled Appointments:** For appointments that occur during the after school hours, parents/guardians must sign a child in on the Program Attendance Log once the child arrives back at the program site.

Departures:

To ensure that the transition between the after school program and home occurs in a safe, smooth, and consistent manner, we require parents/guardians to complete the following vital tasks:

- The parent/guardian is responsible for picking up the child from the program location.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for signing the child out each day at the program location.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for picking up the child and his/her belongings in the designated area as provided by the program.

Open Door Policy

PSC encourages open communication between families, staff and management. We ensure that staff and families have an effective way of negotiating difficulties and differences that arise during their interactions. If parents have any questions, comments, concerns, or grievances regarding their child's participation in the program they may contact the Site Director at their school.

PSC handles these differences that arise and that are not simply resolved through communication either through individual meetings with teacher, director and/or owner. Please feel free to call on us -- our doors are always open and we are only able to address matters that are brought to our attention in a timely and an appropriate manner.

Communications

Bulletin boards and informational flyers are ways we share important information. We also value your feedback through parent surveys. Information gathered and compiled allows PSC to continue improving our programs.

Parental Access

Parents and guardians of children are welcome to visit at any time that the child is in attendance. However, before visiting child care areas, please check in with our staff on duty and/or the site director.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to volunteer and participate in all PSC functions and activities; but must have a background check to work with students in our program.

Accident & Emergency Procedures

Preferred School Care recognizes the need for safe conditions. All employees are responsible for the safety of the children in the programs. Any accident concerning a child, visitor or employee must be reported to the Site Director immediately. An incident report should be filled out completely by the person most familiar with the accident. The Site Director then decides the next action (e.g., call parents, 911, etc.)

Medical Emergencies

Any serious injury or illness of a child requiring hospitalization or professional medical attention must be reported to the PSC office immediately so that the incident report can be forwarded to the Georgia Child Care Licensing Office within 24 hours after the occurrence of the reportable situation.

Evacuation Procedures

If the building is determined to be unsafe or unusually uncomfortable, parents will be notified and asked to pick up children immediately. In the event of the need to evacuate the building because of fire or any other evacuation type emergency, PSC will follow the evacuation procedures established by the school system. Evacuation plans are posted throughout the building. Site directors must review these procedures with staff and initiate periodic drills/ practices. Each staff member will be familiarized with emergency evacuation procedures for physical plant problems (including loss of heating, cooling, water, electricity and structural damage); serious injury/death; and lost child.

Transportation

PSC does not provide transportation – except to local field trips. A transportation agreement (permission slip) must be completed and on file in order for a child to participate.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather conditions or unanticipated hazards may result in the cancellation of the scheduled day. If weather forces early closure of program, parents will be notified and asked to pick up children immediately. Please make emergency arrangements for your child in such cases. **Refunds are not granted on days of early dismissal.**

Sick Children / Student Emergency Procedures

Should your child become ill with symptoms causing moderate discomfort to the child, such as, but not limited to any of the following: elevated temperature, vomiting or diarrhea; or suffer an accident of any nature, during the time he or she is in the care of PSC, the center will contact the parent immediately.

If a child shows signs of illness, he/she may not stay in the After School Program for the safety of other participants. When a child becomes ill at the facility, parents should be notified of this illness. Please see the following policies on certain illnesses:

- **Fever:**
If 100°F or above, a parent should be called and the participant sent home.
- **Ring Worm:**
Must be covered in order for the child to participate.
- **Chicken Pox:**
Scabs must be dry before returning to activity.
- **Head Lice:**
No live lice may be present anywhere on the child's head while attending.
- **Poison Ivy:**
Must be medicated and covered in order to participate.

If your child's illness or injury requires professional medical attention, PSC will be authorized to secure such medical attention and care. PSC will contact 911, and notify parents immediately. The nearest hospital or medical facility is listed on each school's bulletin board. **If an emergency occurs and parents/emergency contact person cannot be reached, an ambulance should be called at the parent's expense.**

Should a child wander away from the PSC center or otherwise become missing, the Atlanta Police Department (via the 911 center) will be notified. Parents, principal, and PSC main office will be notified immediately.

Medications

In efforts to provide your child with the highest level of care and safety, PSC administers medications in accordance with School Board Policy. Only medicines in a labeled container and prescribed by a doctor may be administered. Containers must provide instructions regarding dosage and times to administer. The site director must have written permission from the parent authorizing administration of medication.

Contagious Disease

Staff members or any other person being supervised by the staff, shall not be allowed in the center who knowingly have or present symptoms of a fever, diarrhea or any other illness that might be transmitted to others.

Notification of Communicable Diseases

PSC will notify parents if we suspect your child is ill or has a communicable disease and you will be required to pick up your child immediately. Children shall not be admitted nor allowed to remain at the center if the child has a temperature of 101 degrees or higher, and other contagious symptoms, such as but not limited to rash, diarrhea, or a sore throat. Your child may return after 24 hours free of these symptoms or with a physician's note that they are no longer contagious. This requirement is imposed by the Bright from the Start (Department of Early Care and Learning) and is intended for the protection of all our students.

Behavior and Guidance

PSC staff's goal is to recognize children for positive behavior with special notes, praise, and encouragement. However, if a child is disruptive, disrespectful to students and/or teachers, refusing to follow directions, discipline procedures will be addressed using one or a combination of the following methods:

- Appropriate reflective time provided to calm student
- Teacher/Director speaks with student.
- Parents notified by phone and/or in writing
- Scheduled meeting with parents
- Suspension from program

Suspension and/or dismissal from the program will depend upon the severity of the infraction; however, intentional harm to ASP staff, another student, or school property is justification for immediate and permanent removal from the program.

An Incident Form will be used to document behavioral occurrences.

Bullying Policy

No Bullying Allowed. Bullying is a pattern of **repeated aggressive behavior over time** – directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance. Bullying can be carried out physically, verbally or socially/emotionally.

Once a bullying situation has been identified the following process will be implemented:

1. Intervene with the student(s) responsible for bullying.
2. Intervene to support the child who has been bullied.
3. Notify the parents of the child who has been bullied and the parents of the child who has exhibited bullying behavior.

It is the intent to teach children that any type of bullying **is not** acceptable and to reinforce pro-social skills, attitudes and behaviors.

PSC & Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

PSC believes in integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) which helps children develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2015). Children need these skills which are critical to being a good student, citizen, and worker.

Enrollment of Student's With Disabilities

PSC is committed to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and ensuring equal opportunity for enrollment of students with disabilities.

Children who require special care and procedures are admitted to the PSC only after it is agreed by both parent and management that we can accommodate the child adequately. Our programs are not equipped with a nurse on staff for one on one care.

Inclusion Policy

We do not discriminate in our admission policies based on race, sex, religion, place of national origin, or physical or mental abilities. Children with special needs will be considered for admission on a case-by-case basis. The Site Director will meet with parent/guardians before enrollment to determine if the program is the right environment for the children. In the initial meeting the Site Director and parents will discuss the child's abilities and/ or diagnosis, as well as what the staff can expect in regards to the child's needs and behavior. Strategies to help in child's successful participation will also be discussed. With the permission of the parents, classroom and/or special education teachers will also be invited to attend the meeting. After enrollment, parents will be asked to be available via phone during program hours should issues arise that require parent support. Staff and parents will continue to meet regularly to monitor the child's progress.

Commitment to Diversity

The PSC staffs appreciate and honor the diversity of the children and families in the after school program community. We value diversity in our community, including cultural diversity, and social, organizational, and personal diversity. We are an inclusive community, which does not bar participation by children with physical or mental disabilities.

Parent Grievances & Concerns

Please know that any concerns or grievances can be made without interference or retaliation. If the problem cannot be resolved through the conversation with the Site Director, please feel free to contact the Program Manager in writing stating the issue and a proposed remedy within two business days. The Program Manager will have three (3) business days to respond in writing with resolution and an explanation of how to further appeal. If the problem is not resolved the parent may contact the Program Administrator within two business days in writing. The program Administrator will have five business days to respond in writing. The decision of the Program Administrator is final.

NO Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited on any property owned or leased by the Atlanta Public Schools as well as in any vehicle owned or insured by APS. All employees, students and visitors are prohibited from smoking on district property and in district vehicles. PSC discourages using tobacco in any form.

Weapons/Drug Policy

Weapons and drug possession are not allowed in any PSC programs.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read and thoroughly understand the Preferred School Care Before/After School Program's Policies and Procedures.

Child's Name

APS School Location

Parent Signature

Date

Site Director's Signature

Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS SIGNED SHEET TO SITE DIRECTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU!

Making a Difference Every Day

