



## Bracken Preschool Parent Handbook

Bracken Methodist Preschool & Kindergarten

20377 FM 2252

San Antonio, Texas 78266

(830) 624-1429 school

(830) 606-6717 church

[www.brackenchurch.com](http://www.brackenchurch.com)

Email: [preschool@brackenchurch.com](mailto:preschool@brackenchurch.com)

Director: Michelle DeLeo

Edited July 25, 2023

**Welcome!**

The following policies are designed to assist us in ensuring an organized operation and a satisfying experience for you and your child.

**Purpose:** To provide a safe and nurturing educational experience in a Christian environment.

**Mission Statement:** To be a place where children and families feel welcome; where children grow spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually; where God’s presence can be felt.

**Goals:**

1. To support families by making them feel welcome; providing a safe, nurturing environment for their children; providing support through literature, training, and community resources; and including them as active participants.
2. To support children by providing a high quality educational early childhood program; to provide experienced and trained staff; and create the foundation for success in school and life.

**Licensing**

Bracken Preschool is licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and exceeds the minimum standards of care. **Parents are entitled to see the following information:**

- the Minimum Standards available on the web at [www.txhhs.texas.gov](http://www.txhhs.texas.gov) or your local licensing office. We also keep a copy in the office.
- the most recent Texas Health and Human Services Commission Inspection or Investigation Report. Also available on the web at [www.txhhs.texas.gov](http://www.txhhs.texas.gov) or from the local licensing office. A copy is always posted near the entrance of the school.

**Parents may also contact the local Licensing office at:**

Child Care Licensing  
3635 S.E. Military Drive  
PO Box 239900  
San Antonio, TX 78223 – (210)-337-3399

Texas Health and Human Services, City Health, and fire officials routinely inspect our school.

**Important Telephone Numbers**

School Office	(830)624-1429
Church Office	(830)606-6717
PRS Child Abuse Hotline	(800)252-5400
Poison Control	(800)222-1222

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

### **Enrollment Procedures**

**All children must be enrolled before attending Bracken Preschool. The following must be completed and submitted to the center:**

1. Enrollment Form
2. Health Statement to include Hearing and Vision screening for children ages 4 and older
3. Child Assessment Form
4. School Policies Forms
5. Medication Records
6. Acknowledgment that you have received and read information regarding;
  - The Parent Handbook [www.brackenchurch.com/preschool](http://www.brackenchurch.com/preschool)
  - Potty Training Information if applicable
  - Guidance and Discipline Policies as stated in the handbook.
  - Child Abuse Prevention, assistance and community support organizations information.
  - Vaccine-preventable disease policy as stated in the handbook.
  - The importance of Physical Activity Caring for our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

Any changes in address, telephone number, or work location should be reported promptly in writing to the school office. Telephone numbers of emergency contacts and individuals authorized to pick up the child should also be current. **Parents will be notified in writing 30 days in advance of any policy changes.**

### **Access to children's records**

- Caregivers during hours of operation or use in an emergency
- Parents during a parent conference with caregiver or director
- Licensing upon request during hour of operation

Bracken Preschool's first commitment is to the rights and interests of children. In that regard, we believe that children should be enrolled and provided for without bias and not on the basis of their sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. Materials and equipment reflect the diversity that exists in society and avoids stereotyping of any group.

### **Parent Handbook**

You will receive a link to the Parent Handbook via Brightwheel when your child starts school. If you need a hard copy of the handbook, let the office staff know. Please keep the handbook through all of your child's years at Bracken Preschool. It may not be revised annually. It contains information that should answer all your questions about all aspects of the program. Any revisions or updates during the school year will be addressed in writing and an updated handbook will be provided. **Please contact the office if, at any time, you have any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures.**

**Acceptance of operational policies is located on the admission form and signed at the time of enrollment.**

### **Group Placement and Transition**

The placement of children in a classroom is determined by his/her age. Once placed, children will remain in that classroom for the duration of the school year. The continuity of care is important to your child's development so every effort is made to minimize disruptions. However, when necessary, the Director may move a child, after discussion with parents and teachers in order to find his or her best placement.

### **Disenrollment**

**Complete Withdrawal:** A thirty-day written notice, given to the Director, is required for complete withdrawal from the program. The parent is responsible for 30 days of tuition after such date. As the budget and staff decisions are greatly impacted by enrollment changes, we would very much appreciate the notice of complete withdrawal as early as possible so we can attempt to fill the slot. You must pay a registration fee in order to re-enroll.

### **Termination of Enrollment**

In extreme situations, a child's enrollment may be terminated by the Director after informing the parents of the problem through conferences, trying to work with the family to resolve the issue through various efforts, and giving adequate notice and suggestions for other arrangements or referrals. A child's enrollment may also be terminated if the parent's account is delinquent. Bracken Preschool will only initiate an enrollment termination under the following circumstances:

1. The child does not appear to be adjusting to the school environment and termination is in his/her best interest;
2. The health and safety of other children are at risk.

Any refunds will be at the discretion of the Director.

### **Hours and days of operation**

Bracken Preschool is open Tuesday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Office 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Preschool Classes 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. or 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Please do not drop your child off before their designated arrival time or pick them up after their scheduled departure time.

A school year and summer calendar are available upon enrollment. The school year runs August – May and Joy Camp is 8 weeks in the summer.

**Bracken Preschool follows the inclement weather reports of the Schertz, Cibolo, Universal City ISD. School closures due to weather are not made up.**

Late morning arrivals in our younger classrooms are sometimes difficult on the other children. The sight of another parent can evoke a separation reaction to the child adjusting to being away from home. Additionally, late arrivals in our older classrooms make maintaining the classroom routine difficult. Activities begin promptly and a late arriving child may feel uncomfortable walking into a setting in which all the other children are busily involved in their morning activity. We ask that you please consider this and make the necessary arrangements to have your child at school on time. If your child is going to be late or absent please call the school by 9:30 a.m. If your child is sick, please keep us informed so we can alert other parents to possible communicable diseases.

**Drop-ins**

We take children as drop-ins, on a space available basis for currently enrolled children. Children may drop-in for the day school hours (9-2) for \$30.00 or (8-3) for \$40.00. Payment for a drop-in is to be paid that day. We do not allow substitutions for days missed.

**Fees**

There are no discounts for holidays or absences.

**Late Fees**

- A late pick up fee is charged when a child is not picked up by their enrolled time 2:00 or 3:00. You will be charged \$15.00 per child for any part of the 10 minutes past that they remain in care. Additional late time will be billed at \$1/minute plus a staffing charge of \$13.00/half-hour for any part of the half-hour. Chronic late pick-up may result in dismissal. If you have to pick up your child from the office, it is considered late. You will be given a notice the following day letting you know the fee was charged to your account.

Tuition and fees are due on the first school day of each month. A late fee of \$15.00 will be assessed after the fifteenth of the month. Special circumstances may be discussed with the Director. Non-payment after 45 days will result in immediate expulsion if a payment plan has not been arranged with the Director.

**Arrival and Dismissal**

**Sign In / Sign Out**

Children must be brought into the center and released to the assigned staff member. Parents must mark their arrival time and must provide a signature on the sign-in/out sheet. It is a requirement of the **Texas Health and Human Services**.

Make sure that your child's teacher is aware that you are taking your child from the school and check for any artwork, soiled clothing, and notes to parents. Once you have

signed your child out, they are your responsibility. Please do not allow them to enter other classrooms or remain unsupervised.

### **Visitors**

Parents are welcomed visitors at Bracken Preschool at all times to observe, to eat lunch with their child, to volunteer to help in the classroom, or to share a special talent with the children. In addition, **parents may visit the center any time during the centers hours of operation to observe program activities, the building, the grounds, and the equipment without prior approval.** Check in the office when visiting so we may be aware of who is on campus. Long term volunteers will be required to have a background check.

**Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.**

### **Release of Children**

Children are released only to persons authorized by written permission from the parents. Before the child is released, the designated person will be required to show a picture I.D. to the office. Either a copy of a valid photo identification, an instant photograph of the individual, or recording the driver's license number and car tag numbers will be used in order to record the identity of the individual. No child will be released to an unauthorized person. If a parent calls to authorize the release of a child when a written note is not possible, the center will verify that the caller is actually the parent by calling one or both parents back. Bracken Preschool will not release children to older siblings under the age of sixteen. Any person picking up a child in an impaired condition (ill or under the influence of drugs or alcohol) will be asked to find alternative transportation.

### **Child Custody Issues**

It is Bracken Preschool's intent to meet the needs of children especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to the staff and will be held in the strictest of confidentiality. Bracken Preschool cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless we have been furnished with legally filed, executed, and current documents. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to Bracken Preschool. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

## **PROGRAM**

### **Daily Activities**

“Research has shown that learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. The quality of these interactions is enhanced by providing structure and a variety of opportunities to practice and explore new skills.” “Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement.

Outdoor play also extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space”. - THHS

Daily activities will include a 30 – 45-minutes daily opportunity for outdoor play, weather permitting, in which a child may use both small and large muscles. Alternative large motor indoor activities will be provided when weather does not permit outdoor play. The following criteria will be used to determine when extreme weather conditions pose a significant health risk that prohibits or limits outdoor play –

- Air quality levels that may pose significant health and safety risk determined by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Extreme hot (over 100) or cold (below 40) temperatures to include lightning and thunderstorms

A balance of active and quiet play that incorporates group and individual activities, both indoors and outdoors, structured and unstructured to include child-initiated activities and teacher-initiated activities will be provided daily. Children will engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of learning center activities that promote all areas of development.

### **Screen Time**

Screen time will not be used for children under the age of three years. Screen time may be used as a supplement as related to the planned activities that meet educational goals, and are age appropriate in PK3, PK4 and Kinder classrooms.

### **Clothing and Individual Supplies**

Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable. Keep in mind that many of your child’s favorite activities may tend to be messy, like finger painting and digging in the dirt. Clothing and shoes should be easy for children to take off and put on during toileting and napping. **Children should wear sneakers or rubber-soled shoes that are best for climbing and running.** The children will go out every day unless it is raining so dress them accordingly. **To protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease, we encourage wearing clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather and sun-protective for the sun. Protective sunscreen and insect repellent can be applied by the parent prior to school.** Jewelry to include teething necklaces (except earrings that do not dangle) are prohibited for safety reasons.

We require that all children have a change of clothing at school. Please put seasonally appropriate clothes in a gallon zipper lock bag, mark the bag with your child’s name, and include outerwear, underwear, and socks.

### **Diapering and Potty Training**

Children not yet potty-trained must provide wipes and disposable diapers. If your child is in the process of potty training, please send him/her in clothing that is easy to take off and put on. **Pants with an elastic waist without buttons or zippers are very appropriate** and helps with your child feeling very successful with potty training. Diaper rash ointment may be applied with parental permission and a medicine form filled out. For

children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of plastic. Our potty-training guidelines will be provided at the beginning of the year for children who are or may enter this stage of development.

### **Nap/Rest Time**

It is important, and a licensing requirement, for children to be offered a time to quiet down and rest from all the activities of the day (PK 4 & Kindergarten classes do not rest on a mat). Please send your child to school with a rest mat and small blanket to cover up your child. The bedding should go home weekly for cleaning. Please do not include bulky or oversized covers and pillows.

1. Children who do not sleep will be encouraged to rest quietly for 45 minutes. Children who do not fall asleep after this time will be offered quiet alternative activities such as looking at books
2. Teachers are expected to assist children who have difficulty in falling asleep by rubbing their backs, humming, singing, or talking quietly to them
3. Sleeping children must always be supervised. Teacher may engage in quiet conversation, participate in planning meetings, or ready materials for afternoon activities during naptime, if children can be supervised at the same time
4. Cribs (when occupied by children) should be spaced at least 3 feet apart. Whenever possible they should be arranged alternately head to foot. All children will use only the crib assigned for their use
5. Crib mattresses are to be wiped with bleach solution (1/4 cup to one-gallon water) weekly, or more frequently whenever soiled
6. Infants crib sheets will be changed daily, or more frequently whenever soiled
7. Each item of sleep equipment (sheets, blankets) will be assigned to one child and used only by that child, unless it is freshly laundered. Bedding will not be shared
8. Infants will be placed on their backs when placed in the crib for naps. Pillows will not be used by infants and we do not allow swaddling. All bibs will be removed from infants and toddlers before placing in crib or on mat for nap. Propping infants in cribs or placing them in car seats, bouncy seats inside a crib is prohibited
9. Infants who fall asleep in strollers, bouncy chairs, or swings will be moved to a crib as soon as possible
10. Each crib will be cleaned and sanitized with dilute bleach (1/4 cup to one-gallon water) solution before being assigned to another child. All bedding will be laundered before being used by another child



### **Infant Safe Sleep**

The safe sleep policies must be signed by parents who have children that meet the criteria. The policy is included in the enrollment packet.

### **Nutrition, Meals, Snacks**

Parents are required to provide their child's daily lunch and beverage. A signed admission form acknowledges that Bracken Preschool is not responsible for its nutritional value or meeting the child's daily food needs. We request sensible, wholesome foods. Please limit lunch items to finger foods and foods that do not require refrigeration or heating. Each lunch should be labeled and include a drink, napkin, eating utensil, and coolant if necessary. Encouraging self-help skills is an important part of our preschool day. It helps your child if their lunch has containers they can open on their own.

A supply of drinking water will always be available to each child with meals, after active play and throughout the day. Each child is required to bring a labeled sports water container to school each day,

A comfortable place with an adult sized seat that enables a mother to breastfeed her child will be provided.

**Any time a child needs a special diet, the parent/guardian must provide a licensed medical authority's signed statement that includes the following: the medical or special dietary need that restricts the child's diet; the foods that must not be served to the child; and the foods that must be substituted. As our school does not have kitchen facilities to prepare food, parents/guardians must provide the foods needed by their child on the special diet. We will work with parents/guardians to assist and support their need and ask for parent's/guardian's help in compliance with TDFPS/USDA requirements.**

We are unable to serve nutrient concentrates and supplements such as powders, liquid protein, vitamins, minerals and other nonfood substances without written instructions from a physician.

The school prepares written menus of snacks, posts them where families can see them, and has copies available for families.

A snack may be provided by the school. Snacks served will be nutritious foods, e.g., fruits, vegetables, cereals, and crackers. Water, juice or milk will be served with the snack. The school will make every attempt to purchase 100% juices for snack and when serving fruit juice will limit the amount of juice to no more than 4 ounces per child daily. Staff do not offer children younger than four years these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Substitutions will be noted on days when they occur.

## **Toys**

Children frequently want to share their treasures from home. We discourage children from bringing toys from home, although we do allow items of comfort, such as a soft cuddly stuffed animal, to be brought to school to help your child sleep more comfortably. Bringing toys from home makes it difficult to share and they could get lost, stolen, or broken. The staff will not be responsible if they are lost or damaged. Bracken Preschool does not allow toys of violence like guns, swords, or violent action figures. Children may not bring cosmetics, gum, candy, or money to school.

Please label all children's personal belongings with their name. The school will not be responsible for lost items. A lost and found box is located on the shelf at the entrance of the school.

## **Chapel**

Classes will attend Chapel services in the Sanctuary on designated days as scheduled on the Curriculum Enhancement Calendar. Classes sit with their teachers and participate by singing songs and sharing in short, developmentally appropriate "Bible lessons." More information will be available prior to starting Chapel.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are special at Bracken Preschool. They are celebrated in the individual classrooms. You may bring a birthday treat for each person in your child's class. Please discuss the details with your child's teacher. No gifts will be exchanged. Birthday invitations for parties away from Bracken Preschool may be distributed only if all children in the class are invited.

The Health Department guidelines require all snacks brought in for consumption by others must be pre-packaged or foods prepared from a grocery store, bakery, deli, or restaurant. This is to guarantee that foods we serve come from kitchens that has been inspected and are regulated by the Health Department. See your teacher for a suggested snack list and allergies that may be in your child's classroom. **No large cupcakes** – mini cupcakes are allowed.

## **Curriculum Enhancement**

Bracken Preschool will schedule special activities and events throughout the year. Some activities will take place on days that children are not in attendance. In these cases, the children are welcome to participate in the special event if accompanied by their parent or other adult. Parents are always welcome to join us.

## **Field Trips**

Our Pre-K/Kinder classes will celebrate the end of the year with a field trip to Morgan's Wonderland. The Kindergarten class will go on academic fieldtrips throughout the school year. These trips may require an additional fee. Parents will be notified of any field trip by posted notice. Parents are encouraged to participate and drive their child to the field trip. You must sign a permission slip in order for your child to participate.

## **Guidance**

**The development of pro-social behaviors is a major goal of a good quality early childhood program. Modeling the expected behavior, redirecting children to an acceptable activity, and setting clear limits are methods of positive guidance that are used here at Bracken Preschool. Children are given opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, negotiation, and talking with others to solve interpersonal problems. When dangerous or disruptive behavior persists, the child will be removed from the activity and other children for a brief time. Corporal punishment, and other humiliating or frightening discipline techniques, is never used to include placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet. Discipline will never be associated with the natural developmental progress such as toilet training or by withholding food, drink, nap or active play. All staff expectations of children's behavior are developmentally appropriate, individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Staff use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; and reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;**

## **Biting**

Biting is a common occurrence among young children. Research indicates that one in 10 children bite another child at least one time. Biting occurs for a variety of reasons: a misdirected attempt at communication or interaction; aggression or defense of property or territory; sensory exploration, or a response to teething.

Biting is more disturbing than most other types of aggressive behaviors to parents, caregivers and children, and it is always taken very seriously.

The child who bites is removed from the vicinity of the bitten child.

Other than a short, clear message – “Biting hurts! No biting.” – Interaction is kept to a minimum; teachers stay calm to avoid reinforcing the action.

The child who is bitten receives comfort and the bite receives appropriate first aid.

When a child is bitten at school, the parents of that child and the parents of the child who bit are notified.

In responding to biting, the paramount goal is to prevent recurrence; keeping children safe is the most basic priority. The biting incident is reviewed to help determine causes/contributing factors; when identified, these are immediately addressed. Once a child has bitten, teachers are alert to catch and redirect further attempts.

Children whose biting seems to be related to oral stimulation may be given alternatives that are allowable to bite. Children whose biting seems to target particular individuals are

redirected to play with other partners. Children who bite in an attempt to engage peer attention are given opportunities to learn and practice appropriate communication and interaction strategies. Children who bite may be shadowed with one-on-one monitoring during some activities and routines.

The program is committed to supporting children's optimal development, to addressing children's individual needs, and to creating a caring community. Every effort is brought to bear to extinguish biting behavior, without vilifying or rejecting the child who is biting. Dismissal from the program is the last resort. If all of the program resources have been brought to bear and a child's biting of other children continues in spite of those interventions, parents may be asked to keep the child at home for a period of time or to withdraw the child from the program.

### **Web Resources on Biting**

[toddlerstoday.com/resources/articles/firstbite.htm](http://toddlerstoday.com/resources/articles/firstbite.htm)

[healthychild.net/SafetyFirst.php?article\\_id=165](http://healthychild.net/SafetyFirst.php?article_id=165)

[ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/biting.html](http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/biting.html)

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Health Forms**

Bracken Preschool is required to have a current annual medical statement from each child enrolled. All immunizations must be kept up-to-date and the statement signed by a physician. Please provide a copy of any immunizations that occur during the school year. All 4- and 5- year olds are required by the Department of Human Services to have vision and hearing screenings. For more information on immunization, please visit:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize>

A child may be exempt from immunization requirements for medical reason or reasons of conscience, including religious belief. To claim an exemption, you must meet the criteria specified by the DSHS along with proper documentation.

A TB screening is not required by our local Health Department.

### **Parent Notification**

Parents will be notified immediately if there is an allegation that the child has been abused, neglected, or exploited, as defined in Texas Family Code 261.001, while in care: If a child is injured and the injury requires medical treatment by a health-care professional or hospitalization; shows signs or symptoms of an illness that requires hospitalization; has been involved in any non-routine situation that placed the child at risk, has been involved in any situation that renders the child-care center unsafe, such as a fire, flood, or damage to the child-care center as a result of severe weather. We will also notify parents of less serious injuries when the parent picks the child up from the center.

Less serious injuries include minor cuts, scratches, and bites from other children requiring first aid treatment by employees.

Parents will also be notified within 5 days when the following deficiencies occurs:

- A safe sleeping standard using Form 2970, Notification of Safe Sleeping Deficiency
- Abuse, neglect or exploitation standard using Form 7266, Notification of Abuse/Neglect/exploitation Deficiency
- Crib safety requirements
- Play Yard allowances
- Prohibited infant equipment
- Restrictive sleeping device
- Back to sleep infant requirements
- Infant swaddle and head/crib covering

### **Staff Immunizations**

Bracken Preschool follows the guidelines of the Comal Health Department regarding personnel immunizations. The department recommends but does not require the staff to be immunized.

### **Special Needs and/or Allergies**

Health records should include any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular or urinary conditions, diabetes, seizures, or other ongoing health problems); and supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (document by a health professional) or the family's beliefs. **All medical and/or allergies require an action plan form filled out and signed by a physician prior to the start of school to include medical conditions, intolerances and allergies.**

### **Emergency Medical Authorization**

Bracken Preschool is required to have a current emergency medical authorization on file for each child enrolled. This form must be kept up-to-date and signed by the child's parents or legal guardian. In the event of sudden injury or illness, the parent will be contacted. A staff member will give the child first aid treatment or CPR when needed and contact the physician or other health care professional identified in the child's record. If a parent cannot be reached, the child will be taken to the hospital. The medical personnel will determine the most appropriate course of action. The school will continue to attempt to notify parents or other emergency contacts as listed on the form. Parents will be notified of all injuries or incidents that occur. Bracken Church maintains liability insurance coverage that covers injury to a child while the child is on premise.

### **Medication**

Bracken Preschool prefers not to administer medication to children and will not give the first dose of any medication. Bracken Preschool will not give fever-reducing medications

to reduce or mask a child's fever. When absolutely necessary for a child to receive medication during the day, the staff will strictly adhere to the following guidelines for administration of medication set by the Minimum Standards of the Texas Health and Human Services;

- Parent authorization to administer to include in writing, signed and dated. This authorization expires on the first anniversary of the date provided. A parent's authorization is not required if administration of medication to a child in a medical emergency to proven the death or serious bodily injury of the child so long as medication is provided as prescribed, directed or intended.
- Prescription and non-prescription medications will be administered only when it is in the original container labeled with the child's name, date, directions, physician's name, and expiration date. The medication will be administered only as stated on the label that details the name and strength of the medication as well as directions on administering and storing.
- As needed medication requires a medical alert form with proper documentation.
- Insect repellent and sunscreen must be applied before school.

If your child needs to receive medication during the school day you must leave it at the office and complete a release form to allow the Director to administer that medication. Please do not leave over the counter or prescribed medication in your child's diaper bag or backpack as this can be a safety issue if another child was to come in contact with that medication. This includes diaper rash ointment, sunscreen, and Chap Stick. Parents will be called to notify them if medicine was administered with an as needed medication form.

## **EPI PEN**

If your child has a medically prescribed EpiPen, the Bracken Church Preschool staff will:

1. Use it in accordance with the directions, and as prescribed by a physician, and in emergencies only. The EpiPen will only be used in the event of an allergic emergency as prescribed by a physician, and will be administered in accordance with the emergency medical treatment plan as supplied by the parents for the child. The use of this device is for emergency supportive therapy only and is not a replacement or substitute for immediate medical or hospital care.
2. Keep the EpiPen ready for use at all times. It will be stored in the Emergency Medical closet located on the first floor next to the elevator.
3. We will note the expiration date on the unit and request a replacement from the parents prior to that date.
4. Call 911 and the parents, or authorized representative immediately after administering an EpiPen.
5. If 911 is called, we will notify the prescribing health care professional, Department of State Health Services and Texas Child Care Licensing with 24 hours.
6. Employees who are allowed to administer epinephrine auto-injectors will attend annual training.

**We do not keep unassigned Epinephrine Auto-injectors.**

### **Illness and Exclusion Guideline**

We ask that you not bring your child to school if you suspect he/she might be ill. Please do not send your child to school if he/she

- is ill or has been given medicine to control a fever over 100. Your child must be free of symptoms (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea) for at least 24 hours

-lethargy

-abnormal breathing

-uncontrolled diarrhea

-vomiting episodes

-rash

-mouth sores

-any signs that your child is ill

-a diagnosis by a healthcare provider without medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parents will be notified and the child will be in the office until a parent or designated person on the child's emergency card arrives. Any child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Bracken Preschool reserves the right to require a physician's statement to return to school. Children sent to school are expected to play and be active. Please do not send your child if he/she "must remain quiet" and cannot go outdoors or requires a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of other children.

Parents will be provided written notice within 48 hours when a child attending the center has contracted a communicable disease deemed notifiable by the Texas Department of State Health Services. We follow the communicable disease exclusions as required for schools as defined by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

### **COVID-19 Procedures**

If a person has tested positive for COVID-19 Bracken Preschool will immediately contact the Comal Health Department and follow their instructions. We do not offer refunds for any missed days.

**Parents will be notified** within 48 hours when there is an outbreak of lice or other infestation in the group. Notice will either be posted in a prominent and publicly accessible place and/or sent in Brightwheel. If a child becomes ill while in care but does not require immediate treatment by a health-care professional or hospitalization, we will contact parent to pick up the child; care for the child apart from other children; give appropriate attention and supervision until the parent picks the child up; and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation if the child has diarrhea or vomiting. If a child becomes ill or injured while in care and requires immediate treatment by a health-care professional or hospitalization, we will contact emergency medical services; give the

child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed; contact the child's parent; contact the physician or other health-care professional identified in the child's record; and ensure the supervision of other children in the group.

### **Accidents/Emergencies**

The staff maintains current certifications in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The teachers will follow basic first-aid procedures for injuries and notify parents of any accidents requiring first aid at school through a written accident report. Should further emergency action be needed beyond basic first aid, teachers will provide immediate care, and call the parent, the child's physician, and/or EMS as needed while ensuring the supervision of other children in the group. Children will be transported to North Central Baptist located at 520 Madison Oak Drive, San Antonio, TX 78258, (210) 297-4000 in the Stone Oak area unless otherwise stated on the child's health form. The center is not able to transport an injured child. Our program has comprehensive procedures to prepare for and respond to medical and dental emergencies for children. The procedures include individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support). Written records will be used when an injury to a child in care requires medical treatment by a health-care professional or hospitalization; an illness requires hospitalization of a child in care; an incident of a child in care or employee contracting a communicable disease deemed notifiable to the Texas Department of State Health Services and any other situation that placed a child at risk, such as forgetting a child in a center vehicle or not preventing a child from wandering away from the center unsupervised.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

Our emergency preparedness plan is designed to ensure the safety of children during an emergency by addressing staff responsibility and facility readiness with respect to emergency evacuation, relocation and sheltering/lock-down. The plan addresses the types of responses to emergencies most likely to occur:

1. An evacuation of the children and teachers to a designated safe area in an emergency such as a fire or gas leak.

In the event the center must be evacuated due to an environmental emergency (gas leak, toxic fumes, or chemical release) or natural disasters, the staff will do one of the following depending on the location of and type of problem;

- Bomb Threat or Gas Leak Evacuation – In case of a bomb threat or gas leak we will evacuate to the furthest end of the upper blacktop and wait for further instructions from the Fire Department
- **Building Evacuation** – If an emergency situation arises and the school needs to evacuate the building, the children will be walked over to the Fellowship Hall;



- **Area Evacuation** – If an emergency arises and the school needs to evacuate the area, the children will be driven by employee vehicles to Northeast Bible Church at 19185 FM 2252, Garden Ridge, TX 78266. In case of an area evacuation, please listen to local radio and television stations for important emergency information

Evacuation of children under the age of 24 months and children with limited mobility and/or those who need additional assistance will be transported using strollers, emergency cribs and/or held by a staff member when the relocation is on property. Relocation off site will be in staff vehicles or using the assistance of law enforcement.

Teachers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. Teachers will supervise and remain with children until the evacuation is lifted and they return to class or are picked up by a parent. Teachers will sing and read to children during evacuation. They may also use evacuation boxes that contain simple activities for children.

Emergency communication telephone numbers is: 1. Michelle DeLeo 210-912-1725  
2. Reverend Russell Baley 726-437-5485

Administrators will communicate via phone to appropriate authorities as necessary. Fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department. The administrator and teachers will take the emergency folder with contact information to include telephone numbers and emails, authorization for emergency care for each child in care and will contact families via phone, text and/or email.

Teachers and staff will stay with designated children until each child is released. Reunification with parents will occur once parents are notified and they arrive to the designated location and pick up their child.

2. A relocation of the children and teachers to a designated, alternate shelter in an emergency such as a flood, a hurricane, medical emergency, or communicable disease or outbreak

Children will shelter in the building (classroom, hall or restroom) during a serious storm, loss of power or other emergency that necessitates sheltering, unless we are notified to evacuate. The teachers will walk children quickly and in an orderly manner to their pre-designated emergency location within the classroom and/or building. This would be a location away from the windows and near an interior wall. Teachers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. Teachers will supervise and remain with children until the sheltering is lifted and they return to class or are picked up by a parent

3. The sheltering and lock-down of children and teachers within the center to temporarily protect them from situations such as a tornado, volatile person on the premises, or an endangering person in the area.

**Lock-down** – When there is a dangerous person inside the building the following will occur. The administrator on duty will blow a horn to alert the staff of the danger. The administrator will call 911. Teachers will remain in their classroom and lock the doors. The teachers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. They will secure windows, close all window coverings and move away from windows when possible. They will stay quiet and turn off any light or sound that may indicate their presence. Teachers and children will stay in their secure locations until an announcement is made confirming the threat is clear.

**Lock-down** – When there is a dangerous person in the school area, the following will occur. The administrator on duty will inform the staff of the danger. The administrator will lock all entrances to the school. The teachers will remain or return to their classrooms and lock the doors. The teachers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. Teachers will secure windows, close all window coverings and move away from windows when possible. Teachers will stay with children in their secure locations and continue normal activity until an announcement is made confirming the treat is clear.

Lock-down drills are practiced four times a calendar year.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Bracken Preschool conducts monthly fire drills and severe weather drills quarterly with the children.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Fire and **evacuation** drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Parents or emergency persons listed on the enrollment form will be contacted. If your child is injured, a trained staff member will provide first aid and you will be contacted. If necessary, your physician will be notified and 911 emergency personnel will also be called. If your child needs to be transported by an ambulance, a staff member will accompany your child.

The designated person in charge is Michelle DeLeo, Director of Bracken Preschool. In her absence, Mandy Pelletier or Jennifer Read, Office Administrators, would assume authority.

### **Building and Room Sanitation**

The classrooms and bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis by a custodian. Toys and mouthed items in the young toddler rooms are washed daily with a diluted bleach solution. Washable toys, pillows, etc. are washed on a regular basis. A licensed exterminating company treats the school with pesticides for common household pests on a quarterly basis. The treatment is always done after school hours. Bracken Preschool allows no smoking on the premises.

### **Building Security**

The front entrance to Bracken Preschool will remain locked. Please ring the doorbell and a staff member will let you in if it is locked. All guests must sign in at the office. We have several cameras installed at the entrances for added security. Video will be kept for one week. Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

### **Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, employees and volunteers must report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation directly to the Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline, as required by Texas Family Code §261.10; an employee may not delegate the responsibility to make a report, and you may not require an employee to seek approval to file a report or notify you that a report was made.

Bracken Preschool staff has been trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and participate in annual training sponsored by appropriate community organizations. Parents will be given, at enrollment, information that will increase awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect, prevention techniques and actions that they may take if their child is a victim of abuse or neglect. Bracken Preschool is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect.

There are three kinds of child abuse:

1. **Physical abuse**-inflicting bodily injury on a child (beating, burning, etc.)
2. **Sexual abuse** -using a child in or exposing her/him to sexual activities, with or without the child's consent
3. **Emotional abuse**-demanding that the child do more than he/she is able to do, severely criticizing or humiliating her/him for not living up to a demand, or placing upon the child such unclear requirements that the child cannot understand what he/she is supposed to do

There are at least two kinds of child neglect:

1. **Physical neglect**-failure to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, or medical care; failure to provide adequate education, guidance or supervision
2. **Emotional neglect** -failure to give a child the love and affection he/she needs

If a staff member has been accused of child abuse and/or neglect, the staff person will be placed on leave/work with pay until the Child Protective Services (CPS) representative has completed their investigation and presented their findings. Further action to the employee will be taken in accordance with the findings of CPS.

### **Criminal Background and Finger Print Checks**

We perform criminal background checks on all teachers, staff and volunteers. The confidentiality of background check information is only disclosed to authorized persons.

### **Alcohol, Drugs and Controlled Substances**

The use, sale, transfer, possession or being “under the influence” of alcohol, drugs or controlled substances on school/church property is prohibited. “Under the influence” for the purpose of this policy, is defined as being in a physical or mental condition that creates a risk to the safety and well-being to the children, staff, the public, or school/church property.

### **Smoking**

Smoking and use of tobacco products will not be permitted inside school/church buildings, on the playground, or anywhere on the school/church premises, in transportation vehicles, or during field trips.

### **Firearms**

The possession of guns will not be allowed on school/church property.

### **Parking Lot**

Parents are urged to hold their child’s hand as they walk through the parking lot to ensure safety. Parents are reminded that it is against the law to leave a child under the age of 10 unattended in a parked car. Please drive slowly in the parking lot and be aware of children.

### **Animals at School**

Some of the classrooms may have small animals for the children to observe and learn from. Bracken Preschool meets the guidelines for animals set forth by the Health Department and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to include documentation of vaccination if applicable and a statement of health.

You will be notified in writing when animals are or will be present. We will ensure that animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions; ensure that children do not handle any animal that shows signs of illness; ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming into contact with an animal and items used by an animal, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages.

Children will not have contact with chickens, ducks and reptiles or exotic animals.

### **Campus Walks**

Please be advised that sometimes the teachers will take the children for a walk on campus. This includes walking from the Preschool Building or Kindergarten class to the Sanctuary for Chapel.

### **Water Play**

At times, the children may participate in water table play and sprinkler activities. The enrollment form includes parental permission.

### **COMMUNICATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We believe that direct, effective communications is at the heart of a stimulating, safe, caring program for young children. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns about day-to-day operations, the program, or their child's care with the teachers or the Director.

**We ask, however, that you do not message, text or call your child's teacher during classroom hours.** It is against licensing and school policy for them to be on the phone while in their classroom.

#### **Information Sources:**

Please check your child's folder and message board daily, as notes, newsletters and general announcement will be given to you in this way. In addition, you will receive information via the Brightwheel App, email, text, or phone. The message boards are for school use only. Anything sent out by parents through the school must first be cleared with the office. The dry erase boards found outside of each classroom will have a message for you about the day's activities. Additionally, each classroom will have a parent bulletin board with lesson plans, daily schedules, and other pertinent information.

#### **Daily Notes:**

Children enrolled in the Younger Toddler classroom will receive a daily note from the teachers containing information on eating, sleeping, and toileting. All other classrooms will provide information on their dry erase board and Brightwheel App. Please make sure you schedule a time to visit with your child's teacher if there is a problem that needs to be discussed.

#### **Newsletters:**

School news will be sent in the Brightwheel App. We highly encourage parents to read all messages as they contain information pertinent to what is going on in individual classrooms as well as the school. We feel that it is very important for each parent to stay informed. You will also receive reminders or updates periodically.

#### **Parent/Director Communication**

Newsletters and the parent bulletin board outside the office will inform parents of events and general information about BUMP's operations. Please feel free to call, drop in, or make an appointment to speak with the Director about any praises or concerns.

#### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Bracken Preschool will have two scheduled conferences; one in October and again in April. The first phone conference is to discuss your child's adjustment to preschool and assist with your child's educational plan. The spring conference consists of presenting the parent with the formal assessment results, as well as work samples. The teacher will

also discuss the child's transition into Pre-K or Kindergarten. Any learning problems would have been brought to your attention before this conference.

### **Specialist**

Bracken Preschool helps families connect with needed services. However, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to arrange for such services. Bracken Preschool requests that parents/guardians inform the school of any special needs regarding their child. If the child is already receiving intervention services such as speech therapy or counseling, then the parents/guardians need to give the school a copy of their IFSP or IEP to review. If the parent/guardian chooses for the child to receive services at Bracken Preschool, then the parent shall make arrangements at the school office.

Bracken Preschool will provide a child with special care needs with the accommodations recommended by health-care professional or a qualified professional affiliated with the local school district or early childhood intervention program; Utilize, as recommended, any adaptive equipment that has been provided to the center for a child's use; Bracken Preschool will ensure that a child who receives early intervention services or special education services can receive those services from a qualified service provider with parental request and approval. Bracken Preschool will ensure that activities integrate children with and without special care and ensure that caregivers adapt equipment and procedures and vary methods as necessary to ensure that each child is cared for in a natural environment.

Specialists need to verify their credentials as well as that of their program to the school office staff. At that time, the specialist will be introduced to the child's teachers. The specialists, together with the teachers and school, arrange for the follow-up visits.

### **Parent Concerns**

If you have a concern about your child, you may direct that concern to the Lead Teacher before or after school or via a phone call during school hours. Please do not direct your concerns to the teaching assistants. If you are not satisfied after speaking to the teacher, you may contact the Director. We ask that you contact us at the earliest point that you have a concern. Staff will never discuss a child with other parents or non-essential personnel. We ask that you not discuss the behavior of any child with other parents. Please contact the Director if you would have any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the center.

### **Community Resources**

Bracken Preschool has knowledge about the use of other professionals in the community both as a supplement to the program's resources and as a referral source for parents. We maintain a current list of child and family support services such as health, mental health, oral health, nutrition, child welfare, parenting programs, educational and early intervention services. Our Inclusion Specialist is available to assist with linkages to other early education programs, local elementary schools or special education programs to help families communicate and/or prepare for and manage their children's transitions.

### **Parent Organization**

The goals for the Parent Organization are:

1. Social – providing fellowship at meetings and functions.
2. Parent Education and Resources
3. School and staff Support

Having your child enrolled at Bracken Preschool makes you a member! Your involvement benefits both you and your child and helps the school.