



*6751 Ulmerton Rd
Largo, FL 33771*

*2686 Bayshore Blvd
Dunedin, FL 34698*

Parent Handbook

Welcome to Sweet Peas Preschool. We know that your time here will be full of fun, love and learning. We hope that this will be the beginning of a rewarding and trusting relationship between your family and ours. This Parent Handbook is provided to you so any questions you may have in regards to policy and procedure implemented within our school can be explained. Please feel free to ask us any questions at any time.

Philosophy

Sweet Peas Preschool is a family owned and operated school. Our mission here at Sweet Peas Preschool is to develop in your children; self-confidence, independence, and a foundation for a life time of learning by promoting their cognitive growth, social-emotional development, and physical well-being in a positive, child-centered environment.

Sweet Peas Preschool offers a 12-month program with regular sessions from August through May and a summer program during the months of June and July. While we focus on academics we also emphasize learning through “enriched play” and exploration. When it comes to teaching, every child learns at his/her own pace, thus we encourage each child to explore and learn through hands on self-discovery. Our classroom has developmentally appropriate learning centers with enrichment activities that focus on the individual learning levels needed to build a solid foundation.

- Language Development
- Reading & Pre-writing
- Number Concepts & Math
- Science & Discovery
- Social Studies
- Art, Music & Dramatic Play
- Physical & Social Development
- Health & Nutrition

Sweet Peas Preschool’s most important goal is to help children become enthusiastic learners. It is our desire to teach children to be independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners by promoting good habits and positive attitudes, which will make a difference throughout their lives.

Enrollment

Sweet Peas Preschool serves children from 2 months to 12 years old. Enrollment at Sweet Peas Preschool is open to all families. All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child can attend. Incomplete forms are not accepted and will delay enrollment. All personal information is kept confidential. Parents are required to update all contact and emergency information on an as needed basis. Current immunization records and physical must be presented prior to child's first day of attendance. Parents/guardians are required to comply with all state regulations as well as our center rules as set forth in this handbook. We will provide new forms to all families at the beginning of each year for you to renew. Please take that opportunity to update any needed information.

Hours

Largo Campus: Our school opens at 6:30 AM and closes at 5:30 PM, Monday-Friday.

Dunedin Campus: Our school opens at 6:30 AM and closes at 6:00 PM, Monday-Friday.

Each child should be picked up promptly and no later than close of school. If children are not picked up by closing time, a late charge of \$1.00 per minute for each child, \$5.00 per minute after 10 minutes will be required when arriving late to pick up.

Drop- Off Policy

When dropping off your child you are required to come inside and walk your child to class for safety reasons. This applies to all ages. If your child has an appointment and it will require them to arrive after their regular drop off time, please notify the office as soon as possible.

Release of a Child

Your child will be released only to authorized persons (must be at least 18 years old with a photo ID) listed on the enrollment form unless the office is notified in writing or by phone. Anyone unknown to the school staff who is picking up a child will be required to show a picture I.D. in order to confirm his/her identity. There is no exception to this rule. If legal custody is in question, documents verifying custody will be requested.

Our Staff

At Sweet Peas Preschool we strive to provide nurturing, quality care in a highly interactive learning environment. We believe that a school's excellence is ultimately measured by the quality of its staff. All teachers are required to participate in diverse workshops, seminars and continued education courses annually. Every employee at Sweet Peas Preschool is held to the highest standards and must complete a pre-employment screening process.

- Detailed orientation to the center, including state and facility policies and procedures.
- A Criminal History Background check
- FBI Fingerprint check
- CPR/First Aid Certification
- 40 hours the first year and 10+ hours of childcare related training each year thereafter.

All of our staff members are required to have emergency response training. Fire, severe weather and evacuation drills are practiced regularly. The staff will maintain constant supervision

through sight and sound of the children in their care. You can be sure your child is always in the best hands while at Sweet Peas Preschool.

Weekly Tuition/Payment/Absence Policy

Tuition is charged to each account on Monday morning. We accept payments with cash, check, credit card or money order. All payments are due in advance of tuition period. A late fee of \$15.00 is automatically charged to all accounts that have any unpaid balance on Tuesday at 6:00 PM. Tuition must be paid in full, without deductions for absences of any duration or any cause. There is no reduction in tuition for holidays. This is necessary due to staffing and operational costs that are incurred on the basis of fixed levels of enrollment. If your child is absent from Sweet Peas Preschool for two consecutive weeks without notification or prior approval, your child will be considered withdrawn from our school. If you choose to re-enroll your child, depending on space availability, you will be charged the registration fee.

Enrollment Fees and Tuition Rates

There is a registration fee of \$75.00 per child due at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment and then annually in August each year. This applies to all children. Tuition rates will be provided in a written contract completed at enrollment.

Sibling discount

10% on sibling tuition

Withdrawal from Center

Two weeks written advance notification is required if you decide to withdraw your child. You are responsible for tuition until written notice is received and fulfilled.

School Readiness Authorization and Policies

Sweet Peas Preschool is authorized to receive payments from The Florida School Readiness Program. All School Readiness clients are required to pay the weekly parent fee (co-pay) as well as any tuition the scholarship does not cover.

All School Readiness families are required to have their child (ren) in attendance for the majority of the care hours for the days provided in your paperwork. We are required to report any absences, due to illness or otherwise to School Readiness.

Tax Receipts

Receipts for tax purposes, flex spending, etc. may be printed for you by request. You must have a \$0 balance on your account before we can print a statement.

Center Holidays (closings)

Our school will be **CLOSED** New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, MLK Jr Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4th, Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day. We will be closed on these holidays (or on the day the holiday is observed, if it falls on a weekend) so that our employees may spend time with their families. There is no reduction in tuition.

Severe Weather Days

If the Pinellas County School District is closed due to unsafe weather conditions, Sweet Peas Preschool will also be closed. Public school closings are announced on local TV and radio

channels. In the case of a severe mid-day storm, we will notify parents via the Procure Parent Connect App to pick up early.

Rate Changes and Policy Updates

If there are any changes in our rates or in these policies, you will be notified via email and the changes will be posted on the Procure Parent Connect App.

Before / After-School Care

Sweet Peas Preschool provides Before and After-School care for children enrolled in selected public elementary schools. We transport to and from several local Elementary Schools. We also offer full-day care on public school holidays (except the days we are closed) with special activities. They will follow a regular, well-supervised schedule that will include indoor activities, outdoor play and homework time. There will be time for socializing, playing games and sports, doing arts and craft projects, dramatic play, and other age-appropriate activities.

Food & Nutrition

Sweet Peas Preschool provides meals and snacks for our students at no cost to our families. Our Food Program is monitored by the Local Health Department. We are passionate about serving healthy, fresh food in our schools. We use fresh produce and whole foods that are prepared daily to provide a healthy diet. We ask if families choose to send food from home that it consists of healthy options. No candy or sweets please!

In the natural science portion of our curriculum at Sweet Peas Preschool we teach children how food grows, where food comes from and how it fuels our bodies. At Sweet Peas we love gardening and watching things grow!

We are a Nut Free Facility! Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents must not be served to children under 4 years of age; such as, but not limited to, whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese sticks/ cubes and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe. Food for infants must be cut into pieces ¼ inch or smaller, food for toddlers must be cut into pieces ½ inch or smaller to prevent choking. This applies to all food, even food provided by parents/guardians.

Field Trips

Field trips are not only fun, but also educational for your child. Field trips are planned in advance and posted on the parent information board. In order for children to attend a field trip, field trip permission forms must be filled out and kept in your child's file. Parents are not permitted to drop off or pick up a child for a field trip already in progress.

Parent Communication and Visits

As a parent with a child in our school, you are welcome in our building at any time. In fact, we encourage you to take an interest in the daily activities and special events of the school. Your child's teacher is responsible for a group of children and is not able to speak at length with parents during the morning drop off and pick up since attention must be given to all children in the classroom, we encourage parent-teacher communication and a conference can be scheduled by parent request at any time if you have more than just a quick question. Parent communication is a vital part of the day to day operation. Our teacher will fill out a daily report

that goes home each day for children in our preschool. We encourage you to read these reports and ask any questions you may have. If you have any concerns, call or stop by the office. We will address them immediately. We communicate with our families primarily through email. We also have a “Parent Information Board” where we will post classroom activities, field trips and other information for parents.

Health and Immunization Records

State licensing standards require specific medical and immunization information to be on file for each child upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year thereafter, with the exception of children enrolled in public school. The Pinellas County Childcare Licensing audits our records regularly. Your child must be excluded from attendance at Sweet Peas Preschool if this information has not been submitted, is not current or is incomplete. Please note some children in care may not have current immunizations.

REMEMBER: Each time your child receives an immunization, it is very important that you give us a copy of documentation from your child’s health care provider in order to keep your child’s records up-to-date.

Parent- Caregiver Partnership

The goal of Sweet Peas Preschool is to develop a partnership between parents and caregivers by keeping an open line of communication between home and school. Mutual support and good communication are recognized as essential elements in establishing a positive relationship between the two. Should any difficulties or differences arise, parents are encouraged to request a meeting with the Director. In addition, you will be given a formal survey at the end of each school year so that you may offer ideas about our program’s policies and procedures.

Health and Safety

At Sweet Peas Preschool we follow the highest standards for health and safety. This includes proper hand washing procedures as well as frequent sanitation of toys and equipment. In an effort to provide a healthy environment and limit the spread of infections, we require parents to follow the state licensing policy regarding the attendance of ill children. Parentally placed private school student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.

Illness

Your child’s health and the health of every child are important to us. If your child becomes ill at school, we will isolate them and notify you immediately to pick up your child. Your child must be picked up within one hour after being called.

- A child that has been excused from the center due to a contagious illness may not return for 24 hours unless returning with a doctor’s note releasing them for a non-contagious reason. Out of consideration for your child and the other children in care, please do not bring in your child with the knowledge of a fever or other contagious condition. Children with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater will be sent home and the child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

- A child that has 1 or more vomiting episodes will be excused from care at the center until they are 24 hours free of vomiting, children with uncontained diarrhea will be sent home immediately, children with 2 or more diarrhea episodes will be sent home. Children must be diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

Other signs and/or symptoms of illness that will cause exclusion from care include: Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, Strep Throat, Pink Eye, Hand Foot & Mouth, and Head Lice.

To reduce the spread of infections, children and staff wash their hands, using anti-bacterial soap, many times during the day, but especially after toileting and before eating. We do not allow children to share cups, utensils, etc. In addition, toys, doorknobs, and all other items that are handled or contacted on a regular basis by children are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a true medical emergency we will notify the paramedics (911) then notify the parent immediately. Please make sure all emergency contact numbers are up-to-date.

Minor Accidents/Incidents

Safety is a top priority. Unfortunately, there are times when a child will have an accident/incident. If the accident/incident requires more than just "TLC", the teacher must first evaluate the situation to determine if emergency medical treatment is needed or if the injury can be handled with basic first aid procedures. When basic first aid is all that is needed, teachers must first put on gloves, then clean the area, apply a band aid. A first Aid kit is always kept in the school. The teacher will fill out an accident/incident report and notify the director. The report will contain details of the situation but we are not at liberty to name any other children involved. Reports will be provided to the parent for signature at pick up time; courtesy phone calls will be placed to parents if the injury involves the head.

Emergency & Evacuation Procedures

The safety and protection of the children in our care is of the utmost importance. We have emergency evacuation and relocation plans in effect and we practice emergency evacuation procedures on a monthly basis. The classroom has emergency contact sheets for each child in the class, a copy of the evacuation plan layout and the attendance roll sheets. If you would like to review or obtain a complete copy of the center's emergency and evacuation plans, you can pick up a copy from your center Director.

Medication

Prescribed medication in the original container can be administered if brought from home when the parent signs the *Medication Authorization Form* in the office. Medication cannot be administered more than twice a day without a doctor's note. All medication is kept in a "Locked Cabinet"; not in the classroom or children's backpacks. Medication must be in the original container with current doctor prescription, if necessary; labeled with the child's full name and the date brought to school. Medication must be administered according to label directions. Any medication that is out dated (or expired) will be discarded.

Personal Belongings

Each child's personal belongings should be marked with the child's first and last name. Any extra clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name. Please understand that we have plenty of toys and materials at our center already. If your child brings an item to school, it may be lost or damaged. The risk is yours and Sweet Peas Preschool cannot be responsible for personal belongings. We do our best to keep track of such items; but if it's precious, it's best left safe and sound at home. We will put all unclaimed, unlabeled items in our "Lost and Found" basket. Items not claimed after one month will be donated to charity.

Dress

Comfortable school and play clothes should be worn according to the season. Clothing should be washable and able to withstand vigorous play and art project materials such as paint, glue, etc. The only allowed shoes are closed-toed athletic shoes with non-skid, non-marking rubber soles to be worn with socks. Please remember, part of your child's day at Sweet Peas Preschool will be spent in active play, such as running and climbing. Dress shoes, sandals, and flip-flops are unsafe and not suitable for physical activities. Shorts, tights or leggings should be worn under dresses or skirts. From time to time, toileting accidents or spills will occur which will require your child, regardless of age, to have a change of clothes. Therefore, please make sure you always have a complete change of clothes, including underwear and socks, in your child's backpack. If your child does not have extra clothes, we will call you to bring some. Please be sure your child's backpack is clearly labeled with your child's name.

Diapering Policy

If your child requires the use of diapers, pull-ups and wipes, these must be provided on a regular as needed basis. We are required by PCLB, which licenses our facility, to change a child with a soiled diaper immediately. We have put into practice a diaper checking/changing policy on the hour to prevent any soiled diapers from being on a child for any inappropriate length of time. Children will be changed immediately as needed.

Toilet Training Policy

We recognize that toilet training is an important step in the early development of all children. From the age of 18 months we will work hand and hand with the parents in order for the child to develop the skills needed for toilet training. Your child will have the greatest success when parents and teacher work together in a consistent team effort. Children that are in the toilet training process will need several changes of clothes on hand every day; accidents do happen.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a special time of the day to release energy and simply enjoy the physical rewards of active play. We actively monitor the weather and temperatures for the day, and keep the children indoors when the weather is hazardous or when it is too hot or too cold. In the hot summer months, we schedule our outdoor playtimes early in the day to take advantage of the cooler morning temperatures. Please make sure your child brings a coat or jacket to wear outside on breezy and chilly days. In addition, sunscreen is a very effective protective measure against the sun's rays. If you would like us to apply sunscreen on your child prior to outdoor play, we will gladly do so year round provided you supply us with your preferred sunscreen brand and sign an authorization form. Please make sure to write your child's name on the

container with a permanent marker and give it to your child's teacher for safe storage. Under no circumstances may sunscreen be left in a child's backpack or bag.

Pet and Animal Policy

According to state licensing standards, all Sweet Peas Preschool parents must be notified 48 hours in advance if animals, whether family pets or those part of a special program such as a visiting petting zoo, will be present on Sweet Peas Preschool premises. Therefore, please do not bring any animal to school without prior approval from the Director. Any animal or pet allowed in the facility must be in a cage or on a leash and immunization records must accompany the pet/animal.

Parties and Special Events

We love to celebrate birthdays! You are welcome to send treats for your child's class on his/her birthday. We must follow the Health Department policies and procedures for any food items being served to the children. Any food served to the children must be store bought with a list of ingredients. Items that are homemade or prepared at home cannot be served to the children. For holiday classroom parties, we will post a sign-up sheet for approved items for parent sign-up and participation. Remember we always opt for healthy choices. No candy please!

Nap Time

Every day, after enjoying our lunch time meal, the children have a naptime. While all children are encouraged to take a nap, they are never forced to sleep and may have a quiet, peaceful rest time instead. Your child may bring a blanket for naptime, but it must be small enough to be stored in their backpack.

Allergies

If your child is allergic to any foods, you must let us know. Written documentation of allergies or dietary restrictions is required for your child's file. We post an "Allergy list" in the classroom and kitchen. If your child has an allergy that can cause a life-threatening reaction such as anaphylactic shock, we require you to work with our Director/ Owner to make sure we have an agreed-upon plan for emergency situations.

Discipline and Guidance Policy

We believe the best way to prepare children to live successfully and productively is by helping them develop self-control, resolve conflicts and become increasingly responsible for their own actions and behaviors. Our school's approach to discipline is a positive one and we accomplish this through the use of positive guidance techniques and consistency. Children are recognized and praised for good behavior. Our primary forms of discipline are positive reinforcement and redirection. Creative problem solving though discussion is another effective technique that we use with our older preschoolers and elementary students. This method is effective in teaching our children to find socially appropriate ways of resolving conflicts. It is very important that parents take part in this process by notifying the school of any situation that may arise at home affecting their child's behavior. No child may be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating or frightening. Discipline may never be associated with food, rest or toileting. And there will be no physical punishment or demeaning language. In addition, we require the completion of trainings on Safe Sleep Practices and Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome by all Personnel. Any student that exhibits excessive aggressive physical behavior toward other children or a staff member can be

expelled from the school. We firmly believe children should never be made to feel humiliated or rejected. If we have concerns about a child's behavior, we will inform parents as soon as possible and collaborate on a plan of action for positive change.

Biting Policy

It is our goal to provide a comfortable and safe environment for each and every child. A child may bite when he/she is angry, frustrated or lacks the language skills necessary to express him/herself. When biting occurs at school, it is handled calmly but seriously. Age appropriate language is used to discuss what happened, how it felt and what else the child could have done. Children are encouraged to use words to solve problems. All bites are documented. If a child bites more than once at school, the parent will be contacted by the director to discuss how to further handle the situation. All incidents are handled on an individual basis.

Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this including having a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
- Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization/medical records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child. Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called and correspondence will be sent home indicating what the problem is. Every effort will be made by both the school and the parent to correct the problem. If behavior does not improve, and the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her. If possible, the parent will be given one week's notice to find another center to provide care for this child.

Childcare Licensing Information

Sweet Peas Preschool is licensed through the Pinellas County License Board (PCLB). For additional information about licensed childcare, you may visit their website, www.pclb.org

Child Abuse Reporting

Florida state law requires teachers and administrators to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline or law enforcement. The Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-962-2873. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a crime.

Consumer Product Safety

We regularly check the current product recall lists of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission to ensure there are no unsafe children's products in our school. You may access this recall list at www.cpsc.gov.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about our policies and procedures, please do not hesitate to talk to us about them. We welcome and appreciate any suggestions you may have that will help us serve you and your child better.

Supplemental Information

Sweet Peas Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the admission of children to our programs or in the administration of our policies and procedures. Sweet Peas Preschool reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of children whose behavioral and educational needs cannot be met at Sweet Pease Preschool without fundamental alterations or undue burden to our existing programs, procedures, or practices as deemed by Sweet Peas Preschool, and/or children whose fees and/or tuition payments are in arrears. Parents must never leave a child unattended in a vehicle at Sweet Peas Preschool. Please lock your vehicle when you enter the building to drop-off and pick-up your child. Never leave anything of value visible in your vehicle. Sweet Peas Preschool is not liable for theft or damage to any property. Children under the age of 5 must be in a booster seat or car seat. Please make sure your children are in the proper child safety restraints. It is the law. Sweet Peas Preschool is a tobacco and drug free zone.

Sweet Peas Preschool reserves the right to change, revise, supplement, or delete any of our policies and procedures, including all those covered herein, at any time. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by Sweet Peas Preschool and will be communicated to parents via email.

This Parent Handbook contains general information concerning the policies and procedures of Sweet Peas Preschool. The policies and procedures described herein are not intended to be and should not be interpreted as a contract between Sweet Peas Preschool and any other person. This information does not constitute a legal document or a contract.



Acknowledgment of Receipt of Parent Handbook

_____ I acknowledge that I have received and read this Parent Handbook.

_____ I have received a copy of the discipline policy which is included in this handbook.

_____ I have been provided access to The Department of Children and Families brochure
"Know Your Child's Children's Center"

_____ I am aware that Sweet Peas Preschool has classroom pets.

I have been afforded a chance to ask any questions regarding the information contained
in the Parent Handbook and understand the policies included within.

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Email of Parent: _____

Date: _____