2026 - 2027

PARENT HANDBOOK

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.
- Benjamin Franklin

1711 Whiskey Rd., Aiken SC 29803 · (803) 648-9895

Updated August 2024

Welcome to South Aiken Presbyterian Kindergarten!

On behalf of SAPC, the SAPK School Board, and SAPK Staff, we are delighted that your family has chosen to become part of the SAPK community. We truly believe that it takes a village to nurture a child, and we are committed to partnering with you to ensure your child enjoys a positive social, spiritual, and educational experience in a caring, supportive environment.

At SAPK, we teach the whole child by offering activities that encourage growth in mind, body and spirit. Our goal is for every child to experience success each day. When children feel confident and valued, they connect more easily with others, learn more readily and flourish to their fullest potential.

This handbook is designed to help you become familiar with SAPK and to answer many of your questions. Inside, you will find important information about our school policies, procedures, and daily operations.

We hope that your time with use at SAPK is joyful, enriching, and supportive of your child's continued growth. Let's make it a wonderful year together.

Blessings,

Dawn Thurston
Director, South Aiken Presbyterian Kindergarten

SAPK School Rules

I am safe!

We protect our own and each other's bodies and feelings
by being gentle, calm, and careful

I am kind!

We seek to use words and actions that demonstrate
kindness and caring for one another

I control my body!

Each person in the school monitors and controls
his or her own body and language

I use materials the right way!

Supplies are used for their intended purpose,
or in creative ways that don't damage them

I take care of my school!

Each person cleans up after themselves
and contributes to keeping the school clean and safe

General Information

Standard Hours of Operation

Nursery – 4K	8:15am-12:00pm, M-F
5K	8:15am-2:00pm, M-F

Before and After School Extended Care Programs offered by SAPC

Morning Glory (N-5K)	7:30am-8:15am
Bible Friends (N-4K)	12:00pm-2:00pm

How
*If your child (N-4K) is not picked up by 12:15pm, they will be transitioned to Bible Friends and you will be charged for Bible Friends and for a school provided lunch, if applicable.
*If your child (N-5K) is not picked up by 2:10pm, you will be charged a Late Pick-Up Fee of $10.00.

Enrollment Requirements

Nursery	3 months old
1K	One year old by September 1
2K	Two years old by September 1
3K	Three years old by September 1
4K	Four years old by September 1
5K	Five years old by September 1

*__Children must be potty-trained before entering 3K__

SAPK admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students at the school.

SOUTH AIKEN PRESBYTERIAN KINDERGARTEN
1711 WHISKEY ROAD, AIKEN, SC 29803
803-648-9895

Carline Procedures

Arrival

Nursery and 1K students will be walked in through the Nursery door on the Security Federal Bank side of the building.

All 2K through 5K students will be required to use carline for drop-off and pick-up. Please enter carline from Silver Bluff Rd near Security Federal Bank. Cars will form a circle all the way around the building and pull up to the steps past the overhang on the Kindergarten Office side of the building. Cars will exit onto Silver Bluff Rd near the fire station. **Do not enter or exit on Whiskey Rd.** Have your child ready to exit the car when it is your turn. We will unload two cars at a time.

Dismissal

Nursery and 1K students will be dismissed at the Nursery door on the Security Federal Bank side of the building.

Cars will line up for pick-up the same way as for drop-off. The first carline will begin promptly at 12:00pm for 2K, 3K, and 4K students. The second carline will begin at 2:00pm for 5K students and students being dismissed from Bible Friends. We ask that you remain in your car while a member of staff puts your child(ren) in the vehicle. After your child is in the car, please pull over to the breezeway behind the staff cars to buckle up car seats and boosters. This will help us keep the carline moving.

You will be given a name tag to hold up on the visor of your car during carline pick-up. Please also make or request name tags for all carpool riders. SAPK must have written approval to release a child into the care of anyone other than the parent or guardian. We may request to check IDs at any time.

All students must be in an appropriate car seat or booster.

During inclement weather, cars will be loaded and unloaded under the overhang. Please pull as far forward as possible allowing us to unload two cars at a time.

For late arrivals and early dismissals, students must be checked in or out with the Director, Assistant Director, or other approved member of staff. For early dismissals, please pick up your child at least 15 minutes before the carline begins.

Snacks and Lunches

All classes have snack time during the day. For 2K-5K students, we offer goldfish, pretzels, and/or butter cookies. Teachers may also offer seasonal snacks to their classes. You may send in food for your child's snack, but we ask that it is kept similar to what the other children are eating. This food is meant to tide children over from breakfast to lunch and is not a meal. We also offer water or milk to drink at snack time, unless otherwise noted due to allergies. All 3K, 4K, and 5K students will practice drinking out of 5-ounce plastic cups. We do not use sippy cups during snack time. Please practice this important skill at home during mealtimes. **Each child should come to school with a labeled water bottle for use during recess and Bible Friends.**

Students in 5K will eat lunch in the Fellowship Hall along with students staying for Bible Friends. Lunch boxes should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Lunches cannot be refrigerated, use ice packs to keep food from spoiling. Please send lunches that don't need to be heated. Simple finger sandwiches, cheese and crackers, pepperoni, fruit, muffins, etc work best. Be mindful of choking hazards for different age groups. We do not recommend popcorn, whole grapes/cherry tomatoes, chunks of cheese, hard candies, etc.

Parties and Birthdays

Teachers will contact the party parents in advance with instructions regarding party foods.

Parents are welcome to send in treats to celebrate a birthday. Please let your teacher know a few days in advance. Please keep treats simple…mini cupcakes, cookies, donut holes, etc are good age-appropriate treats for school.

For safety reasons, do not send hard candies, balloons, popcorn, or gum to school or include in goody bags.

Field Trips

Our 4K, 4K+, and 5K classes will participate in field trips throughout the year. Teachers will contact families with details as the field trips dates get closer. Any parent chaperones must fill out a Chaperone Driver Form and have a background check. Students, Teachers, and

chaperones are required to wear a SAPK t-shirt during the field trip. T-shirts may be purchased in the Kindergarten Office.

Communication

Brightwheel

SAPK uses Brightwheel as our primary means of communication for general information, attendance, and tracking behavior. We ask that parents/guardians download the Brightwheel App on their phones. This app provides real-time communication between teachers and families.

General Information – Your child's teacher and/or the school office will send information about changes to our schedule, upcoming events, etc. This messaging works similarly to texting on your phone.

Attendance – Teachers and/or staff will check your child in and out of school each day. We will also use this to track absences.

Behavior Management – The behavior management system we use is based on the choices your child makes each day. This strategy is used to monitor each child's behavior, encourage them to make good choices, and allows students to take responsibility for their decisions. It also opens a dialogue between you, your child, and your child's teacher.

Each day your child's teacher will enter a smiley, straight, or frowny face on the "Kudos" tab in your child's activity feed on the Brightwheel app. The frowny face lets you know we had to speak to your child about their behavior. The teacher will include a short description as to what warranted the frowny face. Keep in mind our students are still very young and they are still learning appropriate classroom behavior. It is our belief that every day is a new day and a new chance to make good decisions.

If the behavior is not improving over time or a serious infraction has occurred, we will refer to our Discipline Policy located in the Health and Safety section of this Handbook.

Folders

Teachers and SAPK office will regularly send papers home in your child's folder. This may include schoolwork, forms to be completed, newsletters, etc. Please check your child's folder daily.

Photos

Throughout the year, teachers and staff will share photos/videos of events, activities, and triumphs with families. These photos and videos may be posted on Brightwheel, Facebook, Instagram, and media used by SAPK and SAPC.

We understand that each family has different comfort levels regarding the sharing of their child's image. Please take time to fill out our Photo Permissions Form that will be emailed to you through Brightwheel. There are options for various levels of photo sharing.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's privacy, please feel free to reach out to our Communications Specialist at media@southaiken.org.

Social Media

Please consider joining our Facebook and/or Instagram pages. We regularly post pictures of our exciting activities and give updates of school events.

Facebook: @South Aiken Presbyterian Kindergarten
Instagram: @SAPKpreschool

Conferences

We welcome an opportunity to have a personal conference with parents and will be glad to make an appointment after school hours. Please do not plan to talk to the teacher in the mornings before class. Arrival is your child's most important time of the school day and teachers need the morning time to set up the room. You may call the school office at 803-648-9895 or contact us through Brightwheel to schedule a conference with a teacher or director.

Health and Safety

Your child's health and safety are of paramount importance to us. All teachers and staff are required to have Infant/Child CPR, AED, First Aid, and Bloodborne Pathogen Training as well as SAPC's Kids First Training.

No Strings Policy

SAPK has a strict "No Strings" Policy and ask that you remove all strings from clothing before your child comes to school. This includes but is not limited to strings on sweaters, coats, hats, sashes on dresses, and necklaces. These are a serious playground safety hazard and will be removed if left on clothing.

In addition to necklaces being a choking hazard, other jewelry can be a distraction and get lost easily. If jewelry needs to be removed, it will be placed in a zip top bag and put into your child's folder. SAPK will not be held responsible for lost jewelry.

Backpacks

We require that each child have a backpack with shoulder straps. Please make sure that is big enough to fit a 9x12 inch folder and has a spot for their water bottle. Make sure the straps are tightened properly, and extra strap length is tied up. Label all items brought to school

Clothing

Please dress your child in clothing they can easily manage themselves. We are encouraging independence in your children and clothing with an elastic waist helps them with independent bathroom skills. We discourage long dresses, overalls, and belts.

We request that you send your child to school in sneakers. We have sand and woodchips on our playground and closed-toed shoes are more comfortable for your child! Unless your child is proficient in tying their laces, please send them to school in slip-on or Velcro sneakers or replace traditional laces with elastic "no tie" shoelaces. We discourage flip flops, cowboy boots, crocs, and rainboots.

Outside Play

Each class has a period of outside play every day, weather permitting. Please dress your child suitably for the weather and send hoodies, jackets, or coats to school during cold weather. We will have indoor recess if the temperature is under 40°F or over 90°F, it is raining, or it is too windy to play outside safely.

Inclement Weather

SAPK strives to follow the Aiken County Public School District procedures for inclement weather. A closing advisory message will be sent directly to you through Brightwheel.

If ACPSD issues a One-Hour Delay, our car line will begin at 8:45am.

If a Two-Hour Delay is issued, our car line will begin at 9:45am.

Immunizations

South Carolina law requires a certificate of immunization or approved immunization exemption for all students. This must be on the South Carolina Department of Public Health form. Failure to provide immunization records or notarized exemption will result in dismissal of your child.

Illnesses

Cooperation of parents in helping to prevent the spread of communicable diseases is of great importance. Please notify the school if your child contracts a contagious illness. Following an illness, a child should be able to participate in all activities before returning to school. We do not have provisions for keeping a child inside during scheduled recess time.

Children need to be free from fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

Medication

Please inform the office if your child has allergies, asthma, or other conditions that may require medical action by members of staff. We require a Medical Action Plan from your child's pediatrician to be filled out for all children that need medicine to be administered. All medications will be stored in the Assistant Director's office.

No medication will be given to children while at the school without parental permission.

Biting Policy

We understand that biting can be a part of a preschool setting. We strive to work with families to identify the cause of any biting incident and resolve these issues. Occasionally, we are unable to identify or resolve the matter and we rely on our policy to protect the children. For purposes of this policy, a significant bite is defined as a bite in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken, bruised or the bite leaves a considerable mark.

If a biting incident occurs, the parent of the biter and the parent of the bitten will be notified via Brightwheel and/or a phone call from the office. We will not share names of any children involved with other parents.

If the biting continues, we will apply the following steps:

1. If the child inflicts 2 significant bites in a one-week period, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 2 bites in a one-week period, the child will be asked to take a one-week break from the school.
3. If the child again inflicts 2 bites in a one-week period, the parents will be asked to leave our program.

If a child has been through steps 1 and 2 and then goes three weeks without any biting incidents, we will go back to step 1.

If a child bites twice in a one-hour period, they will be removed from the class, and we will call the parents to form other childcare arrangements for the remainder of the day.

TUITION, FEES, & FINANCIAL POLICIES

To ensure we can maintain our excellent staffing ratios, purchase programming materials, and manage our daily operations responsibly, we ask all families to partner with us by adhering to the following financial guidelines.

I. Simple & Secure Payment Methods

To make tuition management easy and secure for both families and our administration, SAPK offers two convenient payment channels:

- **The Brightwheel App (Primary Method):** All families are required to set up a billing profile inside the Brightwheel app. You can log in to make manual payments each month or enroll in Autopay for automatic drafts.
    - **Bank Transfers (ACH):** Electronic bank transfers are highly recommended and are entirely free of administrative transaction fees.
    - **Credit/Debit Cards:** Major cards are gladly accepted directly through the app. Please note that standard processing fees charged by the platform will be added to your transaction total.
- **Secure Office Drop Box (Secondary Method):** If you prefer to pay by check, cash, or money order, you may use the secure, dual-locked drop box located directly outside the kindergarten Director's o ice.
    - The Envelope Rule: For your security and accurate accounting, all physical payments must be sealed inside an envelope clearly labeled with your child's full name and classroom. Loose or unlabeled payments cannot be processed.

II. Monthly Billing Schedule & Deadlines

We use a structured monthly timeline to keep our school running smoothly. Please keep these dates in mind to avoid unexpected late fees:

[20th of Month] ➔ Statement sent via Brightwheel
[1st of Month] ➔ Tuition & fees are due
[2nd – 9th] ➔ Open grace period (No penalties)
[10th of Month] ➔ Account flagged & $35 Late Fee applied

- **Statement Release:** Brightwheel will automatically generate and email your upcoming monthly statement on the 20th day of the preceding month.
- **Tuition Due Date:** All tuition, extended care, and school fees are due on the 1st day of the calendar month.
- **9-Day Grace Period:** We understand life gets busy! Payments successfully processed between the 2nd and the 9th day of the month fall within a penalty-free grace window.
- **Late Fees:** Any account holding an outstanding balance on the 10th day of the month will be automatically flagged by the system and assessed a flat $35 late fee.

III. Annual Pre-Payment Incentive

- **Upfront Tuition Discount:** Families who choose to pay their entire annual tuition balance in full before the first day of the school year receive a 3% discount on their total tuition.
- **Early Withdrawal Adjustment:** If you need to withdraw your child from the program during the school year, this upfront 3% discount is set aside.
- **Refund Calculations:** Any prorated tuition refund owed to your family will be calculated using our standard, non-discounted monthly tuition rates. The final balance will be paid out to you after your mandatory 30-day notice period has concluded.

IV. Understanding the Care Continuity Timeline

Because SAPK operates at full capacity and maintains an active waiting list, keeping your account current ensures your child's spot in our program is protected. Unresolved balances will unfortunately result in a transition out of the program.

[10th] ➔ $35 Late Fee applied
[15th] ➔ Director Support Call
[30th] ➔ Disenrollment & Loss of Spot
↳ *Denied Waivers: 15-Day Extension

- **Day 10:** Brightwheel applies the $35 fee and sends an automated reminder.
- **Day 15 (Support & Resolution Check-In):** Our Kindergarten Director will connect with your family directly via phone and Brightwheel to discuss your

account, offer support, and help arrange for an immediate payment to bring your ledger current.

- **Day 30 (Disenrollment & Loss of Spot):** If an account balance remains unpaid on the final day of the month—and no hardship waiver request is pending or approved—we will have to disenroll your child from the program. The roster spot will be permanently released to the next family on our waitlist, and enrollment cannot be reinstated for that school term.
- **Denied Waiver Safety Net:** If a submitted Hardship Waiver request is reviewed and cannot be approved by the School Board, your child's enrollment remains protected for 15 calendar days from the date of the denial notice, giving you a vital window to bring the account balance current before disenrollment takes effect.

V. Year-End Closeout Policy

- **Final Week Account Clearance:** To ensure a beautiful and seamless end to the school year, all outstanding tuition, late charges, and extended care fees must be completely paid in full prior to the final week of school.
- **Participation Clause:** Students with open account balances on the Monday morning of the final school week will unfortunately not be able to attend classes or participate in year-end celebration ceremonies. VI. Additional Fees & Voluntary Withdrawals
- **Non-Refundable Deposits:** Annual registration, activity, and supply fees are immediately put to work to secure materials and plan our staffing ratios. Because of these commitments, they are non-refundable under all circumstances.
- **Returned Check (NSF) Fee:** If a paper check is returned by the bank for NonSfficient Funds, the exact fee charged to the school by our financial institution will be added directly to your Brightwheel account. If an account receives two or more returned checks, we will require that all future payments be made digitally through Brightwheel.
- **30-Day Withdrawal Notice:** If you choose to leave our program during the school year, please submit a formal, written 30-day notice to the kindergarten office. Families remain responsible for all tuition billed during that 30-day window while we work to transition your child out of the classroom.

VII. Supportive Hardship Waivers

If your family experiences an unexpected financial crisis (such as sudden job loss or a significant medical emergency), please communicate with us right away. We want to support you.

- To protect your child's spot from being released to the waitlist, you can submit a confidential Tuition Hardship Waiver & Temporary Payment Plan Request before the 15th of the month. Reach out to the kindergarten Director directly to get this form.
- Requests are reviewed thoughtfully on a case-by-case basis by the School Board. Approved waivers temporarily pause our standard Day 30 disenrollment timeline and set up a manageable, temporary payment structure for a maximum of 60 days.

Discipline Policy

As noted previously, we involve students and parents in our school's behavior management strategy daily. When this strategy is not effective or if a serious infraction occurs, such as violent behavior toward an individual or group, we will follow a more structured approach.

- A serious infraction will result in a documented warning.
- A second infraction will also result in a documented warning, and a mandatory parent conference at the Director's convenience may be required. A one-week probationary period will be established for the child and explained to the parents. If the parent fails to appear at the conference, the child will be removed from the program immediately.
- If any serious infraction occurs during this probationary period, the child will be removed from the program.

Additional Programs

Morning Glory & Bible Friends

Morning Glory is the before school childcare program offered by SAPC. Students may be dropped off in the Fellowship Hall using the Nursery door on the Security Federal Bank side of the building beginning at 7:30am.

Bible Friends is the after school childcare program offered by SAPC for all students in Nursery through 4K. If your child is staying for Bible Friends, simply send a labeled lunch box to school with them. At 12:00pm Bible Friends students will be dismissed to the Fellowship Hall for lunch. When lunch is finished, they will head to the playground, gym, or classroom for various activities. *Refer to the Snacks and Lunches section of this Handbook for packed lunch guidelines.

For pick-up before 2:00pm, you must park and check out your student with the Bible Friends staff. After 2:00pm, you will pick up your student in car line.

Bible Friends operates from 12:00pm to 2:00pm Monday through Friday.

***You must register for Morning Glory and Bible Friends. Registration forms are available during Parent Orientation and throughout the year in the office.**

Bible Friends is not available the day before Christmas Break and the last day of school.

Please return this signature page indicating you have read and understand the information presented in this student handbook.

I_____ have read and understand the South Aiken Presbyterian Kindergarten Handbook. By signing this form, I agree to abide by all guidelines contained within this Handbook, including all safety requirements.

_____ _____
Students Name Date

_____ _____
Parents Name Parents Signature