

Franklin Park Co-op Preschool Parent Handbook

Philosophy Of Franklin Park Preschool

Franklin Park Co-op Preschool can best be described as a developmentally appropriate ‘play school’, where the children learn to play and play to learn. In early childhood, children learn social and academic skills through play. The curriculum is established by our professional teachers in partnership with the parents, who play an essential role in their children’s learning by working in the classroom. Together they work to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere in which the child feels a sense of order and stability. Keeping the individual child’s needs in mind, we provide a learning environment where both child-initiated play and adult guided experiences are incorporated within developmental learning centers. Through this hands-on, integrated learning process, we support the child’s growth in social-emotional development, language and literacy development, science and math exploration, physical and health growth and the visual and performing arts.

What is a co-op?

A Co-op (or cooperative) is created by people who have a specific need and who are willing to work together to operate and organize some type of entity that will meet that need. In our case, it is a preschool/parent education center. When you place your child with Franklin Park Co-op Preschool, you become an active member of our co-op membership. We have a Board of Directors, elected by the parent membership, who are responsible for the decisions regarding hiring, budget, program, fundraising, etc. They are also responsible to uphold the By-laws of our non-profit status and take any disciplinary actions if necessary. Each member is expected to “pull their weight” of membership by fulfilling the requirements and following the standing rules of the Franklin Park Co-op Preschool.

Mission Statement

Our mission at Franklin Park Preschool is to provide a positive atmosphere of discovery, joy, and creativity - a place where children can feel safe and learn about the world around them through social interaction and hands on learning.

History Of Franklin Park Preschool

Franklin Park Preschool had its beginning in 1954. Four neighborhood mothers, each with a three-year-old saw the need for a supervised outlet for their active and creative children. The center, which started with four children in 1954, met once a week in the Franklin Park Clubhouse for two hours, from 10 A.M. until noon. This group grew in two years to an amazing organization of 16 preschool children and their families. There was no question in anyone’s mind as to the advantages derived from supervised play and creative activities.

By the beginning of the third year, it was decided to form a parent’s club, which would meet once a month to talk over the vital interests of the preschool. It was during these meetings that the idea of scheduled mothers to assist in the center was started. Prior to this decision mothers took turns in volunteering their help. Now,

however the school was running on a program of four mornings a week and the need for consistent scheduling was apparent. Materials and equipment were purchased from the dues, which started in the first year at the rate of 25 cents a morning for each child.

For five years the school was at the Franklin Park Clubhouse from 10 A.M. until noon with the groups divided according to age. Mothers took turns serving hot soup and crackers to the children so that they might learn the pleasure of eating and socializing together.

These first “graduates” thrived and went on to kindergarten with a minimum of problems, and the parents were pleased knowing their children’s first experience in school had been successful.

From the first five years of experimentation came the organization such as in the present school, with its elected officers and regular business meetings. A permanent director-teacher was employed.

As the enrollment grew the need for a permanent building also grew. Donated time and materials made the present building possible with both family and friends of the center contributing. These people definitely believed that young children needed a school of their own to freely learn to use their natural talents and to mingle with other children before entering the formal school program. The new building was completed in 1959 and the school opened with a five-morning schedule and an enrollment of 35 children divided into age groups. The purpose of establishing the school remained the same; a supervised preschool, giving children an opportunity to express themselves as individuals. Tuition was set at \$4 per month for the older class, and \$3 for the younger class. The afternoon session was added in 1996 to provide twice as many children the opportunity to attend and enjoy the school.

The original school grew out of the neighborhood families, almost a “walk in”. Now we are from all sections of Santa Rosa, and that which started with four outward looking mothers is now almost a legend. Many thanks to our first Director/Teacher, Elizabeth McPherson, Director 1958-1973 and the wonderful Teachers and Directors who have followed.

STANDING RULES

Members of Franklin Park Cooperative Preschool agree to abide by all of the following standing rules as part of the terms of their membership. Parents and guardians must adhere to the following requirements. Read this section carefully and thoroughly.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Work Days

Working parents are scheduled in each class per class session. Each participating parent is required to work once every other week. If a holiday fall on your work day, it still counts as a day you would come in to keep the schedule consistent. Class hours are 8:30 to 12:30.

Working parents must arrive by 8:20 AM in order to help set up the classroom for the children and become acquainted with the projects of the day.

Working parents must stay 30 – 45 minutes after school to finish clean-up and debrief. Please refer to your work duty card.

We ask that the parents working in the classroom direct all of their attention to the children. It is easy to want to socialize and the priority is working with the children.

Extra children should not be brought to school on workdays.

At the end of class, working parents will be designated to stay with the children on the circle rug until all the children are picked up. The children may not get up from the circle area until they see their parent or guardian come in the school to pick them up.

If a working parent hasn't arrived by 8:30 AM, a late fee of \$10 will be added to the next months' tuition. Chronic lateness will be brought to the Board of Directors attention and may be subject to higher fees and/or dismissal.

Substitutes For Your Work Day

If unable to attend on your scheduled workday, it is your responsibility to find a substitute before your workday. You may arrange to trade a workday with another parent or pay them \$10.

If you have another member of your family fill in for you, they must have a current TB test and required immunizations on file with the school before they can participate.

If it is the morning of your scheduled work day, please call everyone on your class list to try to find a substitute.

If these arrangements are not made and miss your workday there will be a \$25 fee.

** Do not call the teacher to arrange substitutes. This is a parent responsibility to ensure there is proper coverage so we have a legal ratio of adult to child.

Monthly Meetings

On the first Monday of the month a Parent/Positive Discipline meeting is held at the preschool from 6:30 PM to 7:45 PM. Attendance is required and parents are to remain for the duration of the meeting.

A family may miss 1 meeting per year. If an additional meeting is missed there is a \$25 fee, if a third meeting is missed there is a \$50 fee. Continued absence from meetings will be brought before the Board.

Parents are responsible to obtain any missed information presented at the monthly meetings.

Work Party Day Clean Up

During August, a weekend work party day will be scheduled to prepare the classroom and school grounds. All parents are expected to attend. Should there be an unavoidable conflict, parents must contact the Director who will schedule an alternate weekend clean-up date to make up for the missed work party. Late enrollment families will be scheduled for the alternate clean-up weekends.

While strongly encouraged, if a family is unable to participate in the clean-up work days, they can choose a “buy out” option for \$150.

Fundraisers

Each family is asked to participate in fundraising activities. Information will be delivered throughout the year.

Each family is required to purchase 1 ticket to the main fundraiser for each year and provide at least one item for the silent auction.

Arrival And Departure

All children must be signed in and out by the parent for each day they attend school.

Please be prompt with arrival and departure. It can be very disruptive to the classroom to have late arrivals.

School starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 12:30.

All children and the adults who will be staying to work must wash their hands upon entry to the school.

If you will not be the person picking up your child, please inform the teacher ahead of time AND ensure they are on the authorized pick-up list. The authorized person will need to show Identification before we are allowed to release the child to them.

If you have not picked up your child by 12:40 P.M., there is a late fee of \$10 dollars to be paid to the teacher upon arrival. We highly encourage parents to be on time as it can be very scary for the children to be picked up late.

Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled to coincide with class times. We do not provide transportation.

Parents are required to bring their children to the fieldtrip and pick them up at the appropriate time. All parents are encouraged to attend the fieldtrip with the class however if the parent is unable, they must arrange for transportation and inform the teacher ahead of time who will be transporting the child.

Working parents for the day must stay at the fieldtrip and with the children at all times.

Please ensure that the proper state laws for car seats are followed by your driver.

Field trips are for enrolled students only.

Leave Of Absence

Maternity leave – A parent with a new baby may have six weeks leave. They should contact the Class Representatives and the Director with the due date of the child as far in advance as possible. We strongly encourage the parent to have another family member come in for the class time with the child. * Remember they must have a current TB test and required immunizations on file with the school before they can participate.

If you are unable to have another family member fill in for your workdays, the class rep will make arrangements for the work days with the other classroom parents.

The parent will not be required to work or attend the monthly meeting during the leave.

Grievance Policy

The following procedure shall be followed if a parent or teacher has a concern or question:

1. Parent(s) and/or teacher should first try to respectfully deal directly with one another.
2. Parent(s) should speak to teacher about concerns.
3. If a satisfactory resolution has not been reached, a conference will be held with Director to review the concern or question.
4. If a resolution has still not been reached, A Board action will be taken in the best interest of the school.

School Closure Emergencies

If unforeseen emergencies arise (earthquake, power outage, fires, interrupted phone service, etc.), in order to comply with State regulations (Title 22), school may need to be cancelled. You will be notified as soon as possible. Tuition refunds will not be given for these days.

Should the emergency closure last longer than two weeks, tuition will be paused until the school can reopen.

Resignation/Withdraw

Any member may withdraw from the school by giving at least two weeks written notice to the Director and payment for those two weeks regardless of attendance. The two weeks notice payment is due with the first month's tuition. All outstanding obligations (financial, fund raising, workdays, etc.) must be met prior to withdrawal. This ensures the school can enroll a new student in that spot and not lose any tuition amount.

If your family must leave before the end of the school year, and the annual tuition has been paid in full, the remaining pro-rated amount, minus the two-week notice will be returned to the family within two weeks.

Termination Procedure

By a majority vote, the Board may terminate the membership of any member for cause. Such cause shall be limited to failure to comply with the Preschool's Standing Rules or Bylaws, and/or conduct detrimental to the stated purposes and goals of the Preschool.

Should the Board of Directors determine that termination of a member or members is called for, the following procedure shall be followed.

1. A letter will be sent to the member by registered mail to the most recent address of the member as shown in the preschool records, setting forth the reasons for termination.
2. The letter shall state the effective date of termination. The Board, at their discretion, shall set this date. A minimum of 10 days' notice will be given to the family.
3. A member being terminated shall be given the opportunity to appeal the termination either orally or in writing before the Board. The appeal will be considered and a second vote will be taken. The member is expected to fulfill all obligations to the Preschool (financial, workdays, etc.) until the effective date of the termination.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

ENROLLMENT

All enrollment forms must be completed by the appropriate person, signed by both parents/guardians and turned in by the due date listed on the enrollment packet.

Children **MUST** have all of their immunizations up to date before attending school.

Franklin Park Preschool offers a Legacy priority enrollment policy for siblings of previous enrollees who were members in good standing. The following is the priority list for both classes.

- Currently enrolled students who are returning either to Early Learners or advancing to Pre-K.
- Legacy families who were in good standing who have turned in a registration form and fee by the required date
- New families who have turned in the registration form and fee

*Legacy refers to children whose siblings attended the school and does not include more distant relatives such as cousins.

Franklin Park Co-op Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or age in its enrollment of students, families, employment practices, educational programs or activities.

Member In Good Standing

The Legacy priority policy for enrollment shall be guaranteed if during the previous membership, all membership obligations were adhered to as stated on the Membership Agreement form. If your previous membership was terminated or you did not adhere to these obligations you may submit an appeal in writing to the Board. Membership priority will be granted at the Board's discretion.

Age Requirement For Children

This shall be based upon current California State age requirements for kindergarten enrollment and our Community Care License. Currently, they are as follows:

- Early Learners class - Child must be 2 years old on or before the first day of school
- Pre-K class - Child must be 4 years old on or before September 1st or, by discussion with the classroom Teacher and Director, is determined to be the developmentally appropriate placement.

Failure To Adjust

Every effort is made to help the children adjust to preschool. Occasionally a child takes a little longer to adjust.

If a child is having difficulty adjusting after one month, or is consistently struggling at a later date during the school year, we will schedule a Parent/Teacher/Director conference to assess the child's progress. After this discussion, a plan may be made to continue or the Director will decide the child is ready not yet ready to be enrolled in our preschool program.

Membership Costs

Registration – All families are required to pay an annual registration fee per enrolled student as determined by the Board of Directors before each school year.

Tuition - There shall be monthly dues, per child, as determined by the Board of Directors before each school year. Tuition is maintained at a low rate because of parent participation. Increases are determined by the Board of Directors.

1st month's tuition and the 2 weeks notice payment are due at Orientation. Thereafter, tuition is due and payable to the class representative at each month's Parent/Positive Discipline meeting. Tuition checks shall be made payable to Franklin Park Preschool. Please ask for a receipt if you pay with cash. If you miss the monthly meeting, payment must be made on the first school day of the month of the missed meeting. Payment can be placed in the grey lockbox located on top of the cubbies.

If a debit/credit card is used to pay tuition or fees, the current merchant fees will also be charged.

Tuition is considered past due if it is not received by the 10th of each month. If tuition becomes past due the following will occur:

1. Written notice will be given to the family stating that the current month's tuition plus the late fee of \$10 will be due by the 20th of the delinquent month.
2. If a 2nd month's tuition is not paid by the due date, the late tuition concern will be brought before the Board and could result in termination of membership.

If your family is experiencing unusual financial hardship, you may appeal to the Board, in writing, through the Director, by the 10th of the month. If good cause is demonstrated, the Board may vote to extend the due date for the current month's tuition, but not beyond 30 days. The Board may extend a school scholarship to a family in need. These scholarships cover half the tuition for up to three months. Financial matters will be kept confidential. These scholarships are available after three months of good standing with the school.

Overdraft charges – if the bank returns any fees paid to Franklin Park Co-op Preschool, a \$12 charge will be added to the original amount owed to cover the bank charges and must be paid within five days of the return of the check.

Refunds - No refunds are given for vacation, sick times, absences, holiday periods, or days when school is closed due to an emergency. Should an unplanned school emergency closure occur lasting more than two weeks, parents are not responsible to pay tuition for the amount of time past the two weeks until school reopens.

No tuition is paid during school closure in the summer.

Health Policies and Procedures

Children must have all immunizations required by the State before they can attend class.

Participating Parent (including other substituting family members) must have the following before attending work days.

1. Physical examination by a medical doctor.
2. Tuberculosis skin test or x-ray. (Valid for four years.)
3. MMR and Tdap vaccinations
4. Flu shot or signed waiver during flu season

Illness Policy

We value your child's health and in order to reduce the spread of illness in our school and assure your child a healthy environment we ask for your cooperation with the following illness policy.

Your child may not attend school for the following health reasons:

Fever over 100 degrees
Vomiting
Diarrhea
Eye drainage or Pink Eye
Unknown rash
Runny nose from a cold
Lice
Sores in or around the mouth and nose
Persistent abdominal pain
Respiratory distress
Unexplained irritability, lethargy, persistent crying

If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will call you immediately to come and pick them up. They must be symptom free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school or provide a doctor's note explaining the ailment and stating it is not contagious.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Wash hands upon entry to the classroom and frequently through the day
- Splinters may not be removed at school
- Medication may not be given at school.
- Wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for working with children
- If a situation is getting unruly, please call for help.
- Tell the teacher if your child is to leave with a new person. The teacher cannot release the child to someone who is not authorized and does not have a Photo ID for us to check
- Always close and latch the front gate.
- Children must stay on the school grounds until they are picked up
- Children must walk with an adult while in the parking lot
- No Smoking or vaping of any kind, drinking alcohol or ingesting any type of drugs while dropping off, before and during classroom work days, or picking up children from school. These are terms for dismissal of membership.

Emergency Procedures

Report to the teacher any accidents that occur so an “ouch” report can be filled out. Be sure to make a copy of the report for the parents.

When cleaning bodily fluids or attending to a bleeding child, rubber gloves must be worn. They are above the bathroom sinks.

Follow all instructions from the Teacher quickly and quietly

Emergency Equipment

The first aid kit is located in the bathroom on the shelf above the sinks.

The Fire Extinguisher hangs by the kitchen sink.

Basic School Rules

- Be respectful of people and equipment
- Use a quiet voice inside the classroom.
- Walking feet inside the classroom.
- Use only kind words
- Be gentle with other and always ask before touching or hugging others
- Save kisses for family
- Chewing gum may not be used at school
- Toys from home only come on a child's Sharing Day
- Weapons or war toys are always left at home
- Children may only go outside with permission from the teacher and with an adult.
- The Back-office area is for adults only
- Children should wear play clothes that can get dirty and shoes that are safe for climbing etc.
(This would include shoes that do not fasten to the foot, slippery bottoms etc.)

Snack Procedure

Please send a nutritious snack_of a reasonable size. Please do NOT send candy, sugary drinks etc. If candy etc. is packed, we will send it back home in a plastic bag.

If children spill at the snack table, provide paper towels and encourage them to clean up the mess.

Encourage children to save uneaten portions rather than throwing it all away. This provides parents the opportunity to know what their children are and are not eating.

The school supports and encourages recycling efforts.

****** *If there are allergies in the classroom, they will be posted. Do not send food that include those items.***

Diaper/pull-up changing

Only staff members may help children using the bathroom including changing diapers/pull ups. Parents may change their own children only.

When changing a diaper, use gloves and wrap the gloves and diaper in the plastic bags provided. Soiled diapers/pullups then go into the outside garbage. Wet clothing can be placed in a plastic bag and put into the child's backpack.

General Daily Clean Up Procedure For Working Parents

It is the responsibility of the working parents to divide the general clean-up duties. Refer to your work card but be flexible; move where you are needed.

Some basics during class:

- Be responsible for clean-up of own area of supervision.
- Clean paint brushes and easels if needed
- Check for special clean up for that day.
- Be prepared to stay 30 to 45 minutes after school on your workday to finish any clean up and debrief.
- Other cleaning jobs requested by teachers.

Think of yourselves as “teachers” and not just cleaners. Get the cleaning jobs done quickly allows you to participate in the class with the children.

Play yard rules *Other rules may be posted outside and must also be followed

- Children must always be supervised by an adult
- Yard gate should be unlocked (for fire escape) during school hours, but must remain closed.
- Children may only be lifted down from bars or equipment if they require help. We do not lift children up to bars or equipment including the climbing wall.
- Fences and trees may not be climbed
- Planter boxes are only for plants, not toys or children.
- Tools may only be used when supervised by Teacher or parents.
- Any tables and chairs are for sitting at only, not standing or sitting on top of.
- Balls are the only item that may be thrown

- Be respectful
- Be kind
- Be gentle with others and the equipment

Field Trip Rules

Parents transport their own children to and from the fieldtrips

Parents must ensure children are using the appropriate car seat and placement according to state law

Adults must pay close attention to the children they are supervising.
(Please keep socializing among adults to a minimum)

Children must stay with class group. (No running ahead)

All children must hold hands with an adult or a walking rope the entire time when crossing a street.

*Note: If a particular child is not following the safety rules of a field trip, they may have to hold hands with an adult, be picked up from the fieldtrip and may not be allowed to attend future field trips

Emergency/ Child Safety Procedures

In order to provide as safe an environment as possible, all parents and teachers need to be safety conscious when setting up the play areas. Please be aware of broken toys, unsafe traffic patterns, misuse of large motor equipment, etc. and report to the classroom Teacher. Indoor/outdoor rules should be followed consistently. Always close the front gate and do not let children walk to the parking lot alone. Issues around safety can be reported to the teacher/director or brought up at the monthly meetings.

Fire Drill Plan

Fire drills are conducted on a schedule per licensing requirements. The children need to be prepared to walk outside to a safe area, calmly. We will train them before the fire drills.

Teacher and parents need to know the appropriate exits, take the enrollment sheet, emergency forms and emergency supplies with them outside, and account for all children.

The teacher is responsible for organizing fire drills.

The following four items are provided for your information:

- Use the alarm system by turning the key and pulling safety shield – alarm will go off.
- Instruct children and parents to evacuate.
 - Designate the predetermined safe route.
 - Direct to predetermined “re-assemble” area.
- Take attendance sheet (roll book). Attendance will have to be taken outside in order to account for each student.
- In case of the teacher being injured, a parent will be designated as the emergency person taking charge by doing the following.

Take attendance in a safe “re-assemble” area.

Send another parent to seek help (phone 911).

Fire Drill Record Sheet – Please enter the following information:

Date of drill.

Time it took to evacuate.

Designated safe route that was taken. Name of teacher in charge.

Earthquake Drills And Evacuation Plan

Earthquake drills are scheduled and conducted per licensing requirements. The DROP procedures below will be practiced.

A Disaster alarm signals students and staff to DROP and do the following:

1. Kneel on floor under table and hold onto table leg.
2. Place face on knees.
3. Place one hand on back of head and neck.
4. Hold arms close to head for protection from flying glass coming in from side.

(Teacher or parent should make every attempt to open class door before the duck and cover.)

When the teacher or designee orders evacuation, remind students of reasons to avoid glass, electric wires and heavy suspended objects (such as light fixtures) and proceed along designed exit route.

Teachers will take their attendance sheets (roll book).

Attendance will have to be taken outside in order to account for all students.

Injured students are to be kept quiet, warm and close to the teacher until parent arrives.

Students who are trapped or unable to walk must be attended to, after all the children are evacuated and in a safe place. The teacher can assist the trapped or hurt child and help evacuate from the building. (If possible, she would seek help.)

When students are assembled in a safe area, the teacher takes role indicating:

- Students safe with teacher.
- Students trapped in room.
- Students missing: Absent or who disappeared between classroom and designated area.

Students and teachers will remain together in assembly area. If parents come to school for their children, they will be directed to the assembly area to locate their child. The child and parent must sign out before leaving the school.

If the school area must be evacuated (chemical spill/fire/flood), the teacher will accompany students to the evacuation location assigned as designated on the Disaster Plan.

When the immediate danger has passed, the teacher will take steps to assemble students in a safe area to await the arrival of the parents.

Before any student or staff member leaves the school, they must notify the teacher.

This handbook was updated and revised in May 2024