



THE ROCK PRESCHOOL

A Foundation for Flourishing

2025-2026 HANDBOOK

Revised July 2025

**The vision of The Rock School is
to make disciples of Jesus
who possess the
knowledge, skills, and attitudes
to courageously cooperate with God
in the work of redeeming the world.**

Arica Heise, Head of School
Jennifer Colón, Preschool Director

OVERVIEW

ACCREDITATION

The Rock Preschool is accredited by the Florida League of Christian Schools.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE ROCK PRESCHOOL

Our educational philosophy recognizes that children up to the age of six years learn primarily through involvement in sensory experiences. Our specific educational goals include four key areas:

- **Spiritual Growth:** Each child is loved and is special to God and to us. As we observe their special talents and apply Godly principles in nurturing and teaching them God's love, we will see them grow in their ability to love, understand, accept, and forgive themselves and others.
- **Emotional Growth:** Children are created in the image of God. We want them to know that their worth and value are ordained by God, their creator. We at The Rock Preschool will promote a Godly esteem in all children.
- **Social Growth:** As our children interact with other children and are taught Godly principles through example and word, they will learn to be kind, considerate, helpful, and cooperative.
- **Intellectual Growth:** We will use a specialized curriculum to promote academic learning. Our teaching expertise, along with this curriculum, will incorporate pre-reading readiness, math concepts, science, health, music, art, safety, and manners. This plan promotes a balanced approach to learning.

PRESCHOOL STAFF

All of our lead preschool teachers have experience in the preschool teaching field. Most have their CDA and 40 hour certification through DCF or are pursuing it. Most importantly, our teachers are Christians with a heart for Christian education and a genuine love and concern for boys and girls.

The Rock Preschool teachers are dedicated to Christian education and unselfishly give of themselves to the teaching ministry. We consider our faculty one of the greatest assets to our total education program.

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

The Rock School, a ministry of The Rock of Gainesville, admits students of any race, sex, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, financial aid programs, athletic or other school-administered programs.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

1. Submit an application.
2. Receive an invitation to a tour and consultation with the Preschool Director, once there is a projected opening in that class.
3. Submit the enrollment packet.
4. Submit the following forms online or to the Preschool Director:
 - a. Birth Certificate
 - b. Immunization Certificate (DH680) OR Religious Exemption from Immunization (DH681)
 - c. Physical Form (DH 3040)

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS & POTTY TRAINING POLICY

All children are admitted conditionally. The director reserves the right to refuse admission or dismiss any child whose behavior is disruptive or harmful to other children.

Children entering the three-year-old (Pre-K3) class are expected to be potty trained as there are no changing facilities in this class. To be considered "potty trained" a child has minimal accidents, can communicate their needs to use the restroom, can undress, and can wipe and wash hands with minimal assistance. If a child has more than 2 accidents a week over a 2 week period they will be asked to stay home for a week or until they are classified as potty trained.

AGE REQUIREMENT

Preschool class assignments are based on a child's age on September 1st.

RE-ENROLLMENT

The Rock School uses continuous enrollment for preschool grades Nursery through Pre-K4. Once a student has enrolled, they are automatically re-enrolled each following year unless a withdrawal form is submitted or the student graduates from The Rock Preschool.

Full enrollment and withdrawal terms are listed on the enrollment contract signed during initial enrollment.

Re-enrollment is not guaranteed. Requests for re-enrollment will be approved at the sole discretion of the school.

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

The Rock School provides a priority enrollment window for current Pre-K4 families to enroll in our kindergarten classes before the remaining seats are made available to the general public. A new continuous enrollment contract is needed to join the K-12 program.

Kindergarten enrollment is not guaranteed. Requests for enrollment will be approved at the sole discretion of the school.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

A private school is extremely expensive to operate and requires the prompt payment by every parent if it is to maintain a strong fiscal foundation. These policies will be kindly but carefully enforced.

ENROLLMENT CONTRACTS & TUITION

Preschool families must complete an enrollment contract prior to a child's acceptance into the preschool. As part of the contract, families must set up a payment account online at factsmgt.com. Tuition payments must be made in a timely manner or the child will not be permitted to return to preschool until all payments are current.

WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal from The Rock Preschool must be made through the Preschool Director. The Rock Preschool reserves the right, for any reason, to ask a student to withdraw, provided a notice of five (5) school days is given.

TUITION REFUND POLICY

Tuition is based on an annual enrollment contract. No refunds will be issued and families are obligated for the full balance of the year's tuition even if withdrawing early.

TERMINATION POLICY

In the event that The Rock Preschool has to close for unforeseen circumstances, we will transfer all appropriate records to the School Board of Alachua County at that time.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday
Preschool Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Attendance at The Rock Preschool is an opportunity granted by the administration of the school; it is not a right. Any student's privilege may be forfeited if he or she does not conform to the standards and regulations of The Rock Preschool. Believing that rebellion breeds rebellion, the school reserves constituted authority. We believe that teaching children to be responsible and positive in their attitudes toward educational authority reinforces their positive responses to the authority of God and government.

In order for your child to receive the full program of academic and social skills, please have your child in class by 8:30 am.

The Rock Preschool is based on a structured daily academic schedule. Children may be dropped off anytime between 7:00 and 8:30 a.m. In order to allow adequate transition time between home and school, maintain consistency of the daily schedule, and minimize disruptions in the classrooms, late arrivals will not be admitted after 9:00 a.m.

Notification of doctor's appointments or other pre-scheduled absences that would result in late arrival to school should be directed to the child's teacher and preschool director via email. Any unplanned tardies or absences should be communicated to the Preschool phone @ (352) 519-1047.

If a child does not arrive to the preschool, and there was no prior communication of the child's absence, staff will attempt to communicate with the custodial parent/legal guardian within one hour of the child's scheduled arrival. If staff is unable to reach the child's parent/guardian, emergency contacts will be notified.

The director maintains the right to refuse admission or dismiss any child in which the parent(s)/guardian(s) repeatedly violate the attendance policies of The Rock Preschool. Contracts will not be voided in the event your child is dismissed from the preschool, and the parent will be required to pay the balance of tuition.

Closing time for the school is 6 p.m. It is extremely important for you to pick up your child by this time. There is an additional charge of one dollar per minute for staying after 6 p.m. This policy will be strictly enforced.

If it is felt that a child cannot adjust to the school's program, the school will give an advance notice before expecting the child to be withdrawn. However, if a child becomes a danger to himself/herself, the staff, the property, or other children, immediate withdrawal will be required.

The Rock Preschool is open year-round. During the traditional school year, we follow The Rock School's schedule of holidays. A school calendar will be provided to parents at registration.

School closing and re-opening decisions due to inclement weather (hurricanes, etc.) will be made independently of the local public schools and will be announced through official communication channels (email, text alert).

PICK UP PROCEDURES

Make sure your authorization list for pick up is complete and up to date. The first time a person from your authorization list picks up your child, please ask them to bring a photo ID with them. It is also helpful if you notify the Preschool Director and your child's teacher that a different person will be picking up your child.

REST TIME / NAPS

All children will take naps. Cots will be provided and used at nap time for children ages one through five. Please label pillows and blankets or cot mats. A stuffed animal is permitted, but needs to remain at school during the week. All nap items to be taken home weekly for washing.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

RULES

The student's behavior must not be disruptive. A student whose past behavior indicates a pattern which disrupts the class and/or one who is disrespectful toward authority, or one who is antagonistic or abusive toward other students, may be dismissed.

Children are not to bring toys or electronic devices, such as tablets, cell phones, mp3 players or gaming devices without permission from the teacher or Preschool Director.

Parents will be required to pay for repair or replacement costs for school or personal property damaged or destroyed by their child.

Disrespect or insolence toward a teacher or other responsible adult will not be tolerated. Courtesy and respect toward teachers, other school officials, and fellow classmates will be required.

Children who begin exhibiting a pattern of biting behaviors will be observed closely and a bite log will be kept by the child's teacher. Using data from the biting log, an effort will be made to determine why the child is biting in order to significantly lessen or eliminate future biting occurrences. If a child bites more than once on the same day, the parent will be called to come and pick the child up from school. After ten documented biting incidents the child can be dismissed from the preschool.

DISCIPLINE

The Bible teaches respect for authority (Colossians 3:20, Romans 13:1, Hebrews 13:17), and it requires discipline for children (Proverbs 6:23, 13:24, 29:15-17).

We utilize five steps toward effective discipline:

- **Instruction:** Train why the student's behavior was inappropriate.
- **Reinforcement:** Does the student understand why the behavior was inappropriate?
- **Correction:** Ultimate goal of discipline – taking responsibility for actions.
- **Restitution:** "Right" the wrong if possible.
- **Reassurance:** Expression of love and concern for the disciplined student.

If a problem arises, the student will be separated from the situation and put in time-out. If the behavior is rebellious or defiant, the child will be seen by the Preschool Director for discipline. If necessary, the parent will be called to administer appropriate discipline.

The Rock School does **not** employ the use of corporal discipline.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

MEALS

Parents must provide lunch for their preschool student each day. If packing a lunch, we do have a microwave available to warm up food items. However, if your child's food needs

microwaving, we ask that only foods that require warming (less than one minute), not cooking, be sent. Preschool students may also participate in the school's lunch ordering program. Details are available online at therock.school/current-families.

Preschool students must also bring a morning and afternoon snack each day. Examples of appropriate snacks include fruit, veggies, yogurt, crackers, etc.

If your child arrives at school between 7:00-8:00 a.m. they may eat breakfast in the classroom during morning care. Breakfast foods need to be prepared in advance and ready to be eaten upon arrival. Food may not be brought into the classroom after 8:00 a.m. for breakfast.

Lunch containers should be clearly marked on the outside with the student's name. Bottles and sippy-cups in the infant & toddler class must be clearly marked with the child's first and last name. All students are required to have a water bottle daily.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Students' birthdays may be acknowledged by parents sending a special treat for everyone in the class to celebrate. Please make plans with your child's teacher in advance if you will be bringing something.

EXTRA CLOTHING

Each child must have a change of clothing at the school. Place the clothing in a zip lock bag with his/her name on the bag. Diapered children must have 8 extra diapers per day. Wipes are provided. All articles of clothing (jackets, sweaters, etc.) must be labeled with the child's name.

PHOTO RELEASE

A child's photograph or video image may be taken while in the care of our preschool personnel. These images may be posted in the classroom or other places within the facility, used in presentations or promotional materials, printed in the school yearbook, or posted on the private "The Rock Preschool" Facebook group.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

In the event of a complete evacuation from the school property, all students and staff will be moved to Chiles Elementary School (across the street) and will remain under the supervision of school personnel.

FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION

The Rock Preschool does not participate in off-campus field trips and does not transport students.

SUPPLY LIST

PRE-K1 STUDENTS

One small blanket (please label with child's name)

One change of clothes in a plastic bag (please label with child's name)

ALL STUDENTS (PRE-K2, PRE-K3, PRE-K4)

One change of clothes in a plastic bag (please label with child's name)

One small pillow (please label with child's name)(full-time students only)

One small blanket (please label with child's name)(full-time students only)

*Please bring items to the classroom on the first day of school.

HEALTH POLICIES

SICKNESS

When your child exhibits symptoms of an illness, he/she will be isolated from the other children. You will be called to come and pick up your child as quickly as possible. We realize this is an imposition and may disrupt your routine; however, out of consideration for the other children, it is imperative that you pick up your child to minimize the exposure to the other children.

Most Common Reasons A Child Is Sent Home	Reasons To Keep Your Child Home
Diarrhea	Diarrhea within 24 hours
Vomiting	Vomited within 24 hours
Fever over 100.4 degrees	Fever or had a fever within 24 hours

Croupy cough	Croupy cough
Congestion	Green nasal discharge
Impetigo	Pink Eye
Head Lice	Impetigo
Any symptoms of a communicable disease	Lice or Nits
	Pinworm or Ringworm

If your child was sent home from school for one or more of the above symptoms, he/she may not return to school if any of the symptoms persist until we receive a note from the child's doctor stating your child is no longer contagious.

Your Child May Return to School When:

- Free from a fever for 24 hours **without the aid of medication** and exhibits no other symptoms
- Incubation period for any communicable disease has passed
- On the required antibiotics for at least 24 hours
- No nits or lice in hair/scalp are found
- No open sores
- Has not vomited or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- When we receive a note from your child's doctor specifying that your child's continued symptoms are not contagious to others, and the child is also in compliance with the school's sickness policy.

MEDICATIONS

In order for us to administer medication, you must fill out a medication form indicating the medicine to be given, the exact dosage, and time to be given. This form must be signed by the parent/guardian. The medicine must also be in the original container for us to administer it to your child. Teachers keep a copy of this form in their classrooms.

The school will offer basic first aid for external injuries such as cuts, scratches, or bruises, by providing first aid cream and a bandage.