

PALMETTO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

**A Ministry of
Palmetto Presbyterian Church**

**Student/Parent Handbook
2012-2013**

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Philosophy of Education

Our philosophy of education at Palmetto Christian School and Palmetto Preschool begins with the knowledge that God is the source of all truth (Luke 11:52; Proverbs 1:7). Since God is in all and for all, He is at the heart of our curriculum. God is our frame of reference as we learn of our surrounding world. Therefore, the Bible itself holds a position of priority in our school's philosophy of education. Its resolve is to inspire and encourage the student of the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Its aim is to cultivate, reprove, and inspire the student to live a life that is dedicated, full of service, and dependent on God in every area (Ephesians 4:1-6). As Scripture clearly states in Deuteronomy 6:9-12 and Proverbs 22:6, it is the sole responsibility and privilege of parents' to stimulate the joy of learning for their children. Hence, it is the purpose and objective of Palmetto Christian School and Palmetto Preschool to partner with parents in providing a grounded Christian education.

School's Mission

Palmetto Christian School is a private non-profit school, whose mission is to provide a quality Christian education to all students. Palmetto Christian School strives for academic excellence as we seek to develop students who are well equipped to engage their community, nation, and world.

GENERAL INFORMATION

On behalf of the Board of Palmetto Presbyterian Church and its faculty and staff, we would like to welcome you and your child to our school!

Since the mid-1990's, we have given preschool parents an opportunity to send their children to a private school which offers smaller classes, traditional learning styles, and most importantly, God-centered teaching. Beginning August of 2012, we are striving to further serve our community by offering an affordable, private school education beginning with Kindergarten. Palmetto Christian School is operated by members of the Palmetto Presbyterian Church and is governed by a board of directors. P.C.S. is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and has pending membership with Florida League of Christian Schools (FLOCS). P.C.S. is incorporated as a 501C3 non-profit organization by the State of Florida.

Palmetto Christian School is dedicated to providing excellence in education within a safe and nurturing Christian environment. We desire our ministry to extend into your home as we care, support, and encourage your child. We encourage your partnership with us in this wonderful educational process.

This handbook is designed to introduce you to our policies, procedures, the school year and schedule here at P.C.S. In this manual you will have access to all the procedures, standards and academic expectations necessary for your child to excel in our institution.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's education. Let us know if you have any concerns we can help with. Your suggestions and input are important to us. Together with the Lord's help, we can achieve success.

Reverend Edwin Collado

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Curriculum: Palmetto Christian School utilizes the ABeka curriculum. ABeka's educational approach is founded on Biblical principles that address the nature of the learner and learning the nature of truth and authority. The curriculum includes intensive application and mastering of phonics and math. It has been recognized for setting the standard of excellence in the publishing of materials for Christian schools.

Before School Care Program: Palmetto Christian School offers Before School Care from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. for the convenience of our parents who must leave for work before 7:45 a.m. The cost for the Before School Care is FREE.

After School Care Program: Students should not remain on school grounds after 3:15 p.m. except for pre-arranged activities or after school care, regardless of age. The After School care program runs from 3:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. SHARP. The cost for the After School Care Program is \$1.00 per child, per ½ hour. A monthly rate of \$50.00 will be given to parents of students who use the After School Care Program. Charges after school closing time (6:30 p.m.) will result in a late pick-up penalty. This fee is \$1.00 per every minute past (or part thereof) closing time.

When a child has not been picked up by closing time, staff will try to reach all contacts listed on the Emergency Card by telephone prior to the end of the day. If we are still unable to locate a responsible party to pick up the child, we shall have no other choice but to contact the Department of Children and Family Services to take responsibility for the child.

Meals and Nutrition: Palmetto Christian School does not currently offer hot lunches. Students are asked to pack a lunch. *Please do not send microwave lunches.*

Chapel: Chapel is a time that students, faculty, and staff can commune with God. We expect chapel to be entered into respectfully and reverently, creating an atmosphere conducive to worship. While there will be appropriate time for laughter and commentary, disruptive behavior will result in disciplinary action.

Fundraising: From time to time throughout the school year, we hold certain fundraisers. Participation in these fundraisers is not mandatory, but is very welcomed. Palmetto Christian School strives to keep our tuition prices as low as possible, but in doing so, we sometimes have to go without some of the extras that make for a better school. Fundraisers are a way to make up the difference and allow us to purchase some of the extra equipment that makes our school more enjoyable for the students without having to raise our tuition prices. Please try to help with the fundraising whenever possible. *It will help keep your tuition costs down.*

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admission Policy: Palmetto Christian School seeks to enroll students who are interested in a Christian Education. It is imperative that perspective students understand that admission to P.C.S is a privilege and that if, at any time, student conduct or cooperation with school authorities is not in keeping with the school's requirements, the administration reserves the right to terminate any student's enrollment at its discretion.

Following is the criteria needed for admission:

I. Behavioral Standards:

- a. Student must display a desire to attend P.C.S.
- b. Students and parents must demonstrate a willingness to support the goals and objectives of the school.
- c. Previous schools should be able to verify that the student is of good character.
- d. Student should have acceptable scores on standardized tests.
- e. Perspective students and parents will be interviewed by the administration.
- f. Fulfilling these criteria does not guarantee admission. Final decision for admitting a student into the school rests with the administration.

II. The Office Must have the following on File for each Student:

- a. Admission application
- b. Financial policies form
- c. Emergency contact card
- d. Birth certificate
- e. Social Security Card
- f. Immunization records
- g. Physical examination form
- h. Records from previous school

Enrollment: Families with children five years of age (kindergarten) are eligible to apply for enrollment. Enrollment is granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardians' race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, or disability.

Parents are encouraged to visit the P.C.S well in advance of the start of the school year or in need of care, since waiting lists may preclude immediate enrollment. Visiting parents are asked to call the school office in advance of visit to schedule an appointment. Palmetto Christian School has an open door policy for all enrolled families.

Palmetto Christian School reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time without cause.

Continued enrollment at P.C.S is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact persons', and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of the school as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify the P.C.S immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter changes. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being dis-enrolled from the program.

Hours of Operation:

Palmetto Christian School is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The long hours of operation of the school give parents more options for hours of enrollment to fit their family and career demands. Parents state the hours of care upon child enrollment.

When staff sign a child “in” or “out”, they also initial the time that they signed your child “in” or “out.” Accuracy and immediacy are important. Parents and teachers must acknowledge each other with every arrival and departure of a child.

Holidays:

Palmetto Christian School observes the following holidays and will be closed:

Labor Day, Independence Day, Columbus Day, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day

Tuition:

The parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Parent Agreement form prior to enrollment of their child in Palmetto Christian School. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

School tuition may be paid in full or broken up into installment payments. All tuition payments are due on the first of the month and are subject to a 10% late charge if they are paid after the 10th of the month. This policy is strictly enforced. We are aware that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances. If this is the case, please contact the office and let us know when we might expect payment. We will be glad to work with you.

Please be aware that once tuition payments are over 30 days past due, parents may be asked to withdraw their child(ren) from P.C.S.

Enrollment in the middle of the month will be pro-rated. Occasionally, daily fees may be applicable.

Check or cash may pay tuition. Receipts will be given for tuition payments made by cash. All cash payments must be handed directly to the Director. Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt for payments made by check. There will be a \$25.00 fee charged for tuition checks

returned by the bank. Returned tuition checks will not be re-deposited. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing a second check. If at any future time the bank returns a parent's check, all future tuition payments must be made by certified check, money order, or cash.

Parents with two children in the school receive a discount of 10% for the older child. No financial disclosure information form is necessary to receive this discount. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late as per the late tuition policy stated.

Tuition does not include fees for field trips and extra-curricular activities.

There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

In the event that all accounts are not paid up at the end of the school year (tuition, lunch, after-care, books, etc.), final report cards and transcripts will be held until all payments are made.

Withdrawal: If for any reason it is necessary to withdraw a child from school, the school office must be notified at least three days in advance. This is necessary to complete report cards and any transfer papers for your child's new school. All accounts must be paid in full before any paperwork is released.

Emergency Contact: Emergency contact cards, H.R.S. (health) records, and student records need to be on file in the office. If you move or if your telephone number is changed, NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY. School records must be kept up to date so that you can be reached in an emergency. In the event that neither the parent nor the emergency contact can be reached in a medical emergency, the Dade County Emergency Rescue Squad or the doctor named on the emergency contact card will be called.

Cameras and Audio Equipment: For security and disciplinary purposes, P.C.S. utilizes security camera throughout the campus.

Illness: The importance of regular attendance cannot be over emphasized, but children should not be sent to school when they are ill. If your child has a cold, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, etc., please keep him or her at home. When a child becomes ill during the day, and it appears that he/she would be best cared for at home, the parents will be called to come and pick up the child.

Injury: Every student who suffers an injury is sent to the office. The supervising teacher will fill out a report. When necessary, office personnel will administer basic first aid. Parents are notified as to the type of injury and they make the decision whether or not to pick up the child from school. Emergency Rescue will be called for injuries that require the type of care that school personnel cannot offer and the parent or emergency contact will be notified.

Medication: Only school office personnel are allowed to administer medication to students and only if the parent delivers written instructions to the office and signs a permission form provided by the office. State law requires that prescription medicine administered by office personnel be in the original prescription container. **Absolutely no medications, including over-the-counter medications, are to be possessed by students.**

Pediculosis (Head Lice): Unfortunately, outbreaks of head lice are a common occurrence in South Florida schools. The hair on students' heads will be checked periodically for lice. Students will be sent home if school personnel suspect head lice on the hair. The child cannot return to school until treatment is obtained and there is no evidence of lice. To prevent an outbreak, parents are asked to examine their children's hair weekly.

Early Dismissal: If students are being picked up before the end of the school day, the person picking them up must report to the office prior to going to the child's classroom. Each student must be signed out. If someone other than the parent is to pick up a child, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the office. No child will be dismissed to anyone whose name has not been cleared through the office.

Parents and Visitors: Between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., all visitors including parents, must obtain a visitor's pass from the office upon arrival and before visiting the classroom. This ruling is for the safety and protection of our pupils and teachers. If your child forgets his/her lunch or other items, and you feel it necessary to bring them to him/her, please come to the office and the office personnel will see that these items are delivered to your child.

Newsletters: The office sends home a monthly newsletter with each student. Additionally, your child's teacher sends home a weekly "classroom update" to keep you informed of classroom happenings. We ask parents to read the newsletter to stay informed about upcoming events and programs.

Emergency Crisis Plan: Palmetto Christian School has emergency weather alert equipment in the office. All teachers and staff are trained on all possible emergency procedures. In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, students will be brought into the central hallways away from windows and doors. We will be closed for tropical storms or hurricanes.

Concerns: We understand that at times parents may have strong concerns about a matter. Since the school is a ministry in the name of Jesus Christ, we strongly suggest that the following Biblical guidelines be kept in mind as the matter is approached. (Matthew 18:15-17)

1. Keep the matter confidential and schedule a meeting with the staff member involved in the matter. An open and honest discussion among people who are sensitive to Godly principles will most often reach an amicable solution. Once the matter is discussed, be forgiving.
2. If the matter is not resolved, schedule an appointment with the school Administrator. Both parties will discuss their view of the issue with the Administrator. This should be done in a spirit of humility, prayer, and willingness to submit to the Lord's will in the matter.
3. If the matter is still unresolved, a formal letter is to be written to the Board of Directors. They will review all the facts and make a recommendation.

Everything that is done in a Christian school must be done in a Godly way for it is God's will that we live and work in harmony. Jesus said, "...love one another as I have loved you..."

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Attendance: School is in session for approximately 180 days each school year from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. every day except Wednesday when we dismiss at 2:00 p.m. A child must attend regularly is he/she is to succeed academically. Barring unusual circumstances, any student in Kindergarten who accumulates fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences for the year will not be promoted to the next grade. A note must follow every absence from the parent indicating the reason for the absence. **Excused absences include:** death in the family, illness of the student, or a doctor's appointment. Absences from the class for any reasons other than those named above are considered unexcused absences. Family activities which take a child away from school may be excused if arrangements are made with teachers in advance, class work and/or homework is assigned in advance, and work is completed on or before the day the student returns.

Tardy Policy: Students cannot learn if they are not in the classroom. Therefore, we have found it necessary to institute the following policies regarding tardiness:

In the morning: Students who are not in their classroom by 8:10 a.m. are considered tardy. Students arriving after 8:10 a.m. **MUST** report to the office. **Parental cooperation in the matter of punctuality and attendance is required.**

Homework: Homework assignments may be given Monday through Friday. The time to complete an assignment may vary from student to student depending upon the child's work habits and degree of difficulty. Homework is an essential part of our instructional program and a means whereby classroom lessons are reinforced and students are helped to develop a sense of responsibility for their learning. **Parental assistance and support are essential.** This is not to say parents should do the work for the student, but it is important for parents to be there for support. **Parents need to demonstrate the importance of homework by checking their child's assignments in the homework planner on a daily basis to make sure the homework is complete.** Should there be any question concerning homework assignments, please contact your child's teacher.

Materials and Supplies: Students must have sufficient supplies available for each class. Borrowing books, paper, pens, pencils, etc. is discouraged.

Grades and Report Cards: P.C.S. issues progress reports and report cards for students. Grades are given for achievement and conduct. It is strongly recommended that you call to make an appointment for a conference with your child's teacher immediately when you have questions or concerns in regards to your child's grades.

Yearly Promotions: Students are promoted to the next grade upon successful completion of all subjects. A student who fails Language Arts or Math must successfully complete summer school in those subjects or an approved equivalent before being promoted to the next grade. P.C.S. reserves the right to retain any student who fails two or more core subjects.

Conferences: Teachers conferences should be arranged only by appointment at the request of the parent, teacher or administration. Please schedule an appointment by completing a “conference request form” or calling the school office. Please schedule conferences after school hours. **Do not try to have a conference when dropping off or picking up your child. During this time, teachers must be permitted to devote their attention to their pupils. No conferences can be held while teachers have direct responsibility for children.**

DRESS CODE

Uniforms are worn daily at P.C.S. Uniform tops can be purchased in the school office.

Please Note: Students who come to school dressed inappropriately will be sent to sit in the office until their parents can bring them the appropriate clothing.

Below are the uniforms to be worn:

GIRLS:

Navy or khaki shorts
Navy or khaki long pants
Navy or khaki skorts
Navy school sweatshirt
Uniform shirt (available in school office)

BOYS:

Navy long pants
Navy or khaki shorts
Navy or khaki long pants
Navy school sweatshirt
Uniform shirt (available in school office)

Dress Down Days: Our dress down uniform will consist of the P.C.S. “Spirit Shirt” and jeans. Jean shorts or long jeans may be worn. The P.C.S. Spirit Shirt is available from the school office.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Palmetto Christian School insists on maintaining an atmosphere where optimum learning takes place. In order to maintain that environment, we must insist that students abide by certain standards of conduct.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students:

All students of P.C.S. have a right and responsibility to:

1. A quality education in a stable, safe environment;
2. Attend class daily and on time;
3. Be prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments;
4. Put maximum effort into their lessons;
5. Be properly dressed in school uniform;
6. Exhibit respect toward others and toward school property;
7. Obey ALL school rules

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents:

Every parent of a P.C.S. student has the right to:

1. Appropriate and timely communication from the school and teachers;
2. Participate in all appropriate school functions;
3. Conferences with the appropriate school personnel in matters relating to their child;
4. A safe and nurturing atmosphere for their child; and
5. Fair and equal treatment of their child.

Every parent of a P.C.S. student has the responsibility to:

1. Support the doctrine, philosophy, and goals of P.C.S.;
2. Actively support the administration with the implementation of the behavioral standards;
3. Keep informed of school policies and academic requirements of school programs;
4. Make every effort to provide for the physical and medical needs of their child;
5. Bring to the attention of school personnel any learning problem or medical condition that may relate to their child's education;
6. Make sure their child attends school regularly and promptly;
7. Be sure their child is appropriately dressed at school and for the school-related activities;
8. Teach their child to pay attention and obey the rules;
9. Encourage and lead their child to develop proper study habits at home;
10. Participate in parent/teacher conferences to discuss their student's school progress and welfare;
11. Sign and return academic and disciplinary communications from the school;

12. Discuss behavior reports, progress reports, report cards, and school assignments with their child;
13. Participate in school-related organizations;
14. Maintain up-to-date home, work, and emergency telephone numbers and other pertinent information at the school.