



Family Handbook

2026-2027

Precious Gems Academy

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Precious Gems Academy is a proud Grow NJ Kids star-rated Program.

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

We welcome you to Precious Gems Academy. We are delighted that you have chosen our academy to provide for the needs of your child. You and your family are encouraged to visit our center prior to the first day of enrollment to give our teachers, and your child, an opportunity to meet and become better acquainted.

It is the desire of the officers of the Board to operate this academy with a director leading a team of dedicated professionals for the purpose of serving the needs of the children put in our care and their families.

We invite each Precious Gems family to become actively involved in all aspects of our mission. As prospective families, you gained basic familiarity with our philosophy, staff, and programs for children and approach to meeting learning goals. We hope that you have and will continue to utilize our website, connect with us on Facebook, and through the ProCare app for updates and special events.

The purpose of this family handbook is to provide an organized source of detailed information specifically related to the ways that families can partner with the academy to ensure a high-quality experience for all learners at Precious Gems. In addition, interested families can review and/or download supplemental materials, such as developmental goals and objectives, monthly newsletters, and calendars from our website and ProCare.

Please review the handbook and other materials regularly. As your interests and schedule permit, please respond to our varied offers to become involved in Precious Gems.

We look forward to collaborating with you.

Warm Regards,

Karen Colavito
Director

Raquel Gonzalez
Assistant Director

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Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing

INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed childcare center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and programs of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate you bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center. Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint OOL/Information to Parents/May 2019 Page 2 of 2 investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/portal/>.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and

make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review and discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY

users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/dcf/.

Flemington-Raritan School District Preschool Expansion

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) provided a preschool expansion award for Flemington-Raritan's three and four-year-old olds through the preschool expansion award. The funding removed all costs for families and provides the opportunity to increase the preschool program.

Precious Gems Academy has partnered with FRSD to be able to provide preschool services to families for a free, full-day preschool experience. The program seeks to provide a safe and nurturing learning experience in which children can play and learn. Children identified by the Child Study Team as eligible for special education and related services and general education peers are placed together in a whole-child, developmental learning environment.

Children are instructed in the Tools of the Mind curriculum, which is inclusive of a variety of planned activities that promote readiness skills, language, motor, and social/emotional growth. Children learn to play and play to learn. Mature make-believe play is a powerful tool that supports children's development in all areas. Classroom activities are designed to promote social-emotional and self-regulation development.

This preschool experience is available for the children of residents of the community who have a child who is 3-4 years of age before October 1st of the school year. You must be selected from a lottery system that is directed by FRSD to be able to gain a spot for the corresponding school year. For additional information on eligibility and enrollment please visit FRSD website at <https://www.frsd.k12.nj.us/Page/10490>.

Educational Philosophy

The mission of Precious Gems Academy is to educate the whole child to reach his or her potential and support families in that endeavor. We respect parents as their children's first teachers. We are committed to an inclusive approach, offering bias-free, quality care education in an environment characterized by love and acceptance.

Precious Gems educators are committed to the philosophy that children are natural learners who learn best through hands-on play in a flexible and nurturing classroom. Our teachers encourage self-confidence and socialization skills of each student by carefully tracking individual needs and development.

A look inside our classrooms reveals the implementation of HighScope®. The HighScope curriculum is a comprehensive curriculum grounded in current research. The curriculum is designed to support and guide you to build trusting relationships with your youngest learners, so they feel confident to explore and exercise their creative imagination through purposeful play.

We are a value-based academy. Therefore, everything we do encourages and develops your child's self-esteem and confidence. As part of our character development program, we strive to model and teach the values of caring, integrity, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Our families come from a wide background of race, culture, religion, and ability. Precious Gems Academy supports and welcomes all families and strives to create classroom environments where all children are valued for their unique abilities.

We believe diversity enriches the experiences of the entire school community. Our academy celebrates diversity and incorporates anti-bias concepts into our curriculum and activities. We strive to make our programs accessible to all families and through donations and fundraising.

Staff

Precious Gems is staffed by an administrative team and a teaching team that consists of two primary caregivers and an extended day team. All teachers and administrators have many years of experience in education. Student employees often complement each team.

Academy employees are hired and managed according to the Human Resource policies of Precious Gems. They are thoroughly oriented, earn a competitive salary and if working full-time, receive full benefits including health care and paid time off. The Academy provides professional development of at least 20 hours per year for teaching and administrative staff. The Academy also supports everyone's goals for growth via additional seminars, publications, and professional experiences.

Staff Responsibility

Staff members are responsible for maintaining a healthy environment. We begin with our own health by submitting health physicals upon hire. All staff members submit criminal records and child abuse clearances as part of the employment process. We participate in a pediatric first aid / CPR class every three years. Each

classroom has a well-equipped first aid kit. Each teacher carries a pack with basic first aid and emergency information that is used for all field trips, as well as a backpack with additional supplies for emergency situations. We practice a variety of drills as specified in our Emergency Action Plan in a serious but non-dramatic fashion with the children at a rate of one per month.

Any Precious Gems member who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being subjected to abuse or neglect is required by N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10 to report such allegations to the State Registry Hotline (1-800-NJABUSE) immediately. The NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency is the agency that has a legal mandate to investigate allegations of abuse. The Prosecutor's Office also has a legal mandate to investigate. As part of the investigation, a child may be removed from the school and taken to the Prosecutor's office.

Staff members are responsible for daily checks of their classrooms and shared spaces for hazards such as missing safety covers on outlets and removal of items in disrepair. Precious Gems is a smoke-free environment with a safe water supply from Raritan Township and heating, ventilation, and cooling systems maintained in accordance with national standards. We diligently monitor the status of our safety equipment and use an integrated pest management program.

With the help of cleaning staff, we follow a daily duties checklist for cleaning and sanitation throughout the school, including toys and water play areas. All staff members follow standard precautions to minimize the spread of infectious disease and store hazardous materials in locked cabinets. We follow parent and/or health professional recommendations regarding children who have allergies, and we limit classroom pets to birds, fish, amphibians, worms, insects, and mammals with semi-annual vet checks. We use a weather watch chart to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play, as well as subscribing to an air quality alert system that provides notices of hazards in our area. During the summer, when children are outside for a longer time and wearing bathing suits, we will apply sunblock with a minimum UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 if it is authorized in writing and provided by the family. At this time, our area is not designated by health authorities as high-risk of insect-borne disease; but if that changes, we will use daily application of repellent containing DEET when parents provide written authorization and appropriate repellent. Because hand washing is the #1 preventive measure to avoid the spread of disease, we explicitly teach, scaffold, and monitor hand-washing procedures that involve the use of liquid soap and running water, with vigorous and thorough rubbing for 10 seconds (the length of the alphabet song), followed by paper towel drying.

Teaching staff and the children wash our hands upon entry, before snacks and meals, before and after food preparation, after toileting and diapering, after contact with bodily fluids, after play in the water table or with infants and toddlers, and after re-entry from the outdoor play, as well as after any messy activities or contact with pets. Adults also wash their hands after assisting with toileting, handling garbage or cleaning, and before and after feeding a child or administering medication.

Interaction Guidelines

Staff members follow the ethical practices of Precious Gems Academy and the National Association for the Education of Young Children and Grow NJ Kids. We share the following core values as guides for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents, etc.

We strive to respect each individual and work to create a positive emotional climate for all learners, with sensitivity to differences in age, ability, background, language, culture, religion, and family structure.

We use direct eye contact, smiles, warm tones of voice, positive touch, social conversations, and laughter to support the development of effective working relationships.

Our partnership in learning is supported by regular, reciprocal communication, affirming recognition of effort and accomplishment, developmentally responsiveness to initiative, emotion and concerns and proactive conflict resolution.

We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity and ability and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities. Our program accepts children with special needs if a safe supportive environment can be provided for the child consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Parents as Partners

The Academy offers family members and other caregivers a variety of ways to become involved in the child's school community, to participate in family activities and to confer with the staff to build a strong bond between home and school. Regular communication is encouraged among families, caregivers, and the school staff so that multiple perspectives on the child's development and interests can be used to enhance the child's school experience. In addition to the detailed family handbook, easily navigable website, and the ProCare app, we offer scheduled parent meetings and conferences, communication with the staff via email, monthly newsletters, monthly activities calendar and frequent spontaneous interaction.

To keep constant open communication between the staff and our families, each family has a profile set up through our ProCare app. This portal gives our staff the ability to upload pictures of the child's activities throughout the day, daily logs, feeding logs, potty and diapering logs. Through our ProCare parent app, every parent has the flexibility to communicate with their child's caregivers. Important updates and information are constantly posted for the families to view through this portal.

A family bulletin board in each classroom provides information, extra copies of forms, flyers about local family events and parent resources.

If any parents would benefit from translation services, we will work to find a translator who is fluent in the relevant language.

Families are provided with health and safety workshops and/or resources annually in topics that include preventive health care, mental/behavioral health issues, nutrition and obesity, medication administration policies and procedures, oral health practices, communicable disease prevention. Also, Family Education workshops are provided at least two (2) times per year on topics such as: early literacy, adult/family literacy, positive parent-child interactions, cultural awareness, development issues, and/or other topics that address the identified needs and interests of enrolled parent/ families.

Adult family members are welcome in the academy at any time to observe their child in a program.

Popular family events, including Christmas Concert, Trunk or Treat and classroom holiday parties and the summer finale cookout offer the whole family a chance to participate in the child's school.

If you have questions or have experienced a problem at home or school, please approach the child's primary teacher or one of the administrators directly. Recent potty-training efforts, changes in care-giving arrangements, the death of a pet, an extended absence of a parent, etc. can all cause change in a child's demeanor and behavior at school, so timely communication helps the staff respond most effectively to the child. We make every effort to dialogue with children and families in a positive manner to plan strategies, resolve issues and provide assistance

in a timely and effective manner. Please also feel free to suggest ways that we can strengthen our partnership with you as together we seek to provide a high-quality learning environment for everyone in our school community.

All adult family members are invited to participate in the Academy's annual program evaluation via a survey conducted in May. Evaluation results, plans and opportunities are highlighted in our family newsletters and at our open house in the fall.

Developmental Objectives

- **Self-Esteem & Independence** - encouraging each child's pride in individual characteristics, families, experiences, and accomplishments and each child's responsibility for personal care, actions, and words.
- **Interaction & Cooperation** - promoting children's social skills for diverse adult and peer relations, including listening, turn-taking, following directions, rules and routines, group participation, care for shared materials, and conflict resolution.
- **Communication** - facilitating comprehension and expression skills beginning with oral and progressing to written language.
- **Discovery & Exploration** - fostering a positive attitude toward learning through questioning, observing, and experimenting with varied materials related to diverse themes.
- **Physical Capabilities / Health & Safety** - giving children opportunities to use their growing bodies in safe ways to develop small and large motor skills, coordination, and healthy living habits.
- **Artistic Expression and Appreciation** - cultivating each child's ability to express ideas and emotions through art, music, movement, and drama.

Developmental Screening (ASQ) and Referrals

Upon enrollment a family is asked to complete an ASQ-3 (Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition). Evidence shows that the earlier development is assessed, the greater the chance a child must reach their full potential. Our academy uses this developmental screening tool to ensure that the needs of each child in our care are met. This tool looks at the developmental progress of children between the ages of one month to 5 years. As a parent, you are the expert on your child. The ASQ-3 understands the importance of parent participation in the developmental screening process and therefore parents are asked to complete this screening tool.

The ASQ-3 will be scored by your child's lead teacher and discussed at an initial family meeting within 45 days of enrollment. This report will serve as a baseline screening. A copy will be given to the parents, and another copy will be placed in the individual child's file. Three annual screenings are offered to the parents of all enrolled children in conjunction with parent-teacher conference for the child's teacher to score and discuss the results at these conferences. Teachers will continue to monitor any child identified with potential development concerns or learning difficulties. If concerns are identified, an additional ASQ-3 will be completed within 4-6 months, as recommended by the tool, as a follow up. The results will be discussed by the teacher and parents.

If needed based on the screening results, referrals to community resources will be given to the family. Children under the age of 3 will be referred to Early Intervention and children 3 years and up will be referred to their home school district unless the parent prefers to pursue a private evaluation. Parents will also be encouraged to follow up with their child's pediatrician. A referral list will be provided by the director. The director will document any referrals to outside services in the children's file. If the family chooses to pursue outside services, the director will follow up with them within 2 weeks to ensure that they have been able to successfully access community resources. Based on results of the developmental screening, teacher implemented in lesson planning by the teacher.

Curriculum and Assessment

The teaching team follows development and learning based on the HighScope curriculum. The HighScope curriculum is a comprehensive curriculum grounded in current research. The curriculum is designed to support and guide you to build trusting relationships with your youngest learners, so they feel confident to explore and exercise their creative imagination through purposeful play.

ECERS

ECERS is a classroom assessment tool designed to measure the quality of group programs for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) by collecting data through classroom observations and a staff interview. The assessment is a 43-item rating scale organized into seven environmental subscales. The items in the first six subscales are referred to as child-related, and the items in the last subscales are referred to as parent-/staff-related.

ITERS

ITERS is a classroom assessment tool designed to measure the quality of group programs for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) by collecting data through classroom observations and a staff interview. The assessment is a 39-item rating scale organized into seven environmental subscales. The items in the first six subscales are referred to as child-related, and the items in the last subscale are referred to as parent-/staff-related.

Study Approach to Curriculum

The teachers prepare an engaging learning environment for exploring a theme, such as building, light & color, or oceans. Children choose a rich range of materials, including diverse technologies, to entice each of the children to engage in thematic study. They use a group meeting time each day to set the stage for the investigation and introduce relevant concepts. Then the children pursue a variety of activities that reinforce their learning goals. They avoid commercial characters and prescribed products in favor of open-ended explorations that promote creativity and imagination. They also limit screen time to short periods of activity that is not otherwise possible in the classroom, such as videos that extend to a particular area of study.

Assessment Plan

Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of every day as ongoing teacher observation of group patterns and individual development is used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. Teaching teams consider the group's current interests and needs and then plan accordingly for the next week's explorations. At times, these reflections indicate the need for altering the classroom environment, shifting the unit focus, trying new teaching strategies, etc. If concerns about individual children's development arise and are not readily remedied via classroom adaptations, teachers will initiate a dialogue with colleagues and parents to plan approaches to try both at home and school.

Two through three times a year, the teachers combine these formal assessment techniques with more systematic assessment of each child relative to the curriculum's developmental objectives for the purpose of describing each child's developmental progress. Teaching teams work together to conduct these systematic assessments, though the child's primary teacher takes the lead in summarizing the findings. The process is typically collaborative, with the primary teacher drafting the report and then getting input from the teaching team as appropriate. Assessment is an ongoing technique that reports will be shared with the parents during parent teacher conferences.

Classroom Observations

To ensure that developmentally appropriate learning experience is provided to the children in our care, we observe each teacher in assigned classrooms at least four times annually. Each head teacher is to observe their corresponding classroom teachers while using the observation tool “Record of consulting Head teacher visit” provided to us by the Dept. of Licensing of NJ. To help teachers grow their teaching skills, observation notes are shared with the teacher after each visit and goals for enhancing teaching practices are agreed upon. These observations are also shared with supervisors and are incorporated into performance appraisals. At times, we may ask a peer or teaching partner to participate in the observations may be scheduled when a teacher requires additional support or coaching. Classrooms may also be observed by external assessors from agencies that regulate childcare services.

Home Visits Policy

Conducting a home visit involves educators going to a student’s home to get to know her/his family. Although “home visits” are generally conducted in students’ homes, the visit can take place anywhere that is convenient for everyone involved.

Home visiting programs promote positive practices parenting that help parents better prepare their children for school. Parents enrolled in home visiting programs are more likely to have a safe play environment at home, provide age-appropriate books, and engage children in structured teaching activities.

Home Language Policy

Given the steady increase in the number of families and children whose home language is one other than English, is responsive to serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations. We are supportive of other languages through labeling of items throughout the care space and by providing access to materials in the home language. We also provide pictures, where necessary, around the classroom and encourage the promotion of language.

Indoor/ Outdoor Play Policy

ACTIVE play and movement are important for every child’s growth, health, development, and learning. Providing an early care and education environment that supports appropriate physical activity for infants helps them with developing movement skills, such as sitting up, rolling over and crawling. During the first six years of life, children will develop gross motor skills (like kicking and throwing) and learn healthy habits by participating in physical activity. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the recommended amount of physical activity they need. Habits are learned early in life, so being active while in early care and education center can create lifelong physical activity habits. Because the hours spent in an early care and education setting are such a large part of the child’s waking hours, it is essential that early care and education curriculum include as much of the total time and type of physical activity children need daily as possible.

Children attending Precious Gems Academy shall engage in active play according to the following recommendations:

- Staff will promote developmentally appropriate physical activity to help children (and themselves) prevent overweight/obesity and practice lifetime healthful habits.
- Teachers shall lead teacher-directed activities or games that promote moderate to vigorous physical activity over the course of the day, indoors or outdoors.

- Staff will participate in active play or stand near the children during active playtime, instead of sitting on the sidelines.
- Active play will not be withheld from children as a punishment.
- Children will play outdoors except when weather or air quality poses a significant health risk.
- Children will have access to water during outdoor play.
- Staff and parents will be provided with education and professional development regarding physical activity at least twice per year.
- Children need to be dressed appropriately for the current weather conditions to play outdoors: Snow: heavy coat, waterproof boots, hat, and mittens/gloves. Rain: raincoat and waterproof boots. Different temperature throughout the day: layers of clothing. Sunny days: lightweight clothing that is sun protective, including long-sleeved shirts and hats.
- Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. **Examples of appropriate footwear** include sneakers, gym shoes, and other shoes with rubber soles that enclose the feet and will not come off easily.

Examples of inappropriate clothing and footwear include Footwear that can come off while running, or that does not provide support for climbing (examples: flip-flops and clogs). Clothing that can catch on playground equipment (examples: clothes with drawstrings or loops). Clothing that does not protect children from the current weather conditions.

Infants (birth to 12 months)

Babies who are not yet crawling spend 3 to 5 minutes (and more as the infant enjoys the activity) on their tummies interacting with their teachers/caregivers each half day while awake.

Infants are not placed in restricted equipment for more than 15 minutes at a time, except during meals and napping.

All infants play outdoors 2 times daily. Riding in a carriage or stroller may account for no more than 1 of the outdoor play periods for infants when the weather permits.

Toddlers (12 months to 3 years old) and Preschoolers (3 to 6 years old)

Toddlers shall participate in 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Preschoolers shall participate in 90-120 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity when enrolled in the wraparound program and 60 minutes without wraparound.

Children have *outdoor play* for 30 minutes per day except in adverse weather conditions that require shorter periods outdoors.

Diapers & Toilet Training

Parents supply all diapers at Precious Gems Academy. Wipes will be provided by the Academy unless the parent makes alternate arrangements.

Our teachers are experienced in training young children in how to use the bathroom. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful. We will support your efforts as the parent to help your child become potty trained. Staff will encourage and assist your child in his/her attempts at independence and will offer praise when your child tries or is successful. All this can be accomplished with the full cooperation of the family.

We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage-- especially in a hurry! While toilet training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, outer clothing, and pullups.

ProCare App

Your child's records are located at a secure site on myprocare.com. The best way to access this link is from the home page of our website (mypreciousgems.org). Parents are encouraged to check their child's site frequently to view tuition status. It is the parents' responsibility to check MyProcare.com for their current tuition amount. Contact the office if you need assistance on login in. We can also download the ProCare app on your phone.

ProCare app is the way parents have direct access to their child's classroom. You can see daily reports, pictures, videos, and messages from your child's teacher through the app. ProCare app is also used to sign your child in/out of school every day. If you need assistance on how to use the app, let the administration know.

Communication

Proper communication between our parents and the teachers and staff of Precious Gems is extremely important. Teachers will be sending home information on a regular basis. Infant and toddler parents will receive daily reports through the ProCare App. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher--even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the director. Each child is provided with a mailbox and/or cubby. Families with two households will be provided with two mailboxes. Please check these daily for notes, newsletters, and daily reports.

Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. We must be informed, in writing, of any changes in the person picking up your child. You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick up your child on the ProCare app. Our main office must be informed of any of the following changes:

- address and/or phone numbers, or e-mail address
- parent/guardian employment,
- health/immunizations updates, or;
- other pertinent information related to your child.

In addition, if you are a family that uses English as a second language, we will make an effort to communicate to you in your chosen language if requested.

It is prohibited for staff members to use personal devices to get in contact with families that are currently enrolled at Precious Gems Academy. Staff members that use personal phones or devices to communicate with families regarding the services that are being provided by the academy will be subject to termination of employment. Families that are involved in such matters will be subject to termination of services at Precious Gems Academy.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, publicity materials and/or educational training. Your permission for photographs of your child to be used without compensation is part of this agreement.

Confidentiality

Because the staff at the Academy work as a team, each adult knows and interacts at times with every child. Therefore, all observations and other assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Student workers, volunteers, and other adults working within the school are only informed of such sensitive issues when they are a part of keeping the child safe or supporting the child's inclusion. All adults working in Precious Gems signed the following confidentiality agreement.

“As an individual working, observing, and/or regularly volunteering at Precious Gems, I may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. It is of the utmost importance that I realize that all such information is strictly personal and confidential and can only be shared within the confines of the Academy. I will discuss children's behavior out of the hearing distance of the children, and I will discuss the families, children, and staff for professional purposes only. When I encounter families, children, or staff outside the school, I will be courteous but use discretion. I understand that written authorization is required before disclosing any information regarding a child to an outside agency or individual. I know that confidentiality is an ethical obligation and that it is a requirement for my continued involvement at the Center. By signing this statement, I agree to understand and practice Precious Gems Academy confidentiality policy at all times.”

In addition, we require that families respect the privacy, not only of their child(ren), but of all other children and families. We encourage open, honest, informal, and frequent communication among staff and parents. However convenient, hallways, classrooms, or the playground are not appropriate places for conversations about sensitive matters. A child's teacher or the Director may suggest a phone call or meeting to discuss concerns raised initially in regular conversation that would be more appropriately addressed privately.

In accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines, official written records for each child are kept in files in a locked office and released only to the individuals working with a child, as described above, or those for whom parents sign a written release. These files include enrollment forms, final conference reports, health assessments provided by physicians, results of health screenings, reports of diagnostic assessments released to the school by parents, individual education plans, etc. Staff documentation on children's behavior and development, including specialized records for children whose special circumstances require extra classroom documentation are kept in classroom locations accessible to teachers but out of the reach of children and out of sight of classroom visitors.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Teachers are trained in what to watch for and how to properly report it.

Center Hours

The Academy operates year-round Monday – Friday 6:30am – 6:00 pm.
The Academy will be closed to observe the following holidays:

Thanksgiving
Christmas
New Years
Martin Luther King
Presidents Day
Good Friday
Spring Break (week after Easter Sunday)
Memorial Day
July 4 Th
Labor Day
In Service Days (Before the first day of school)

The Center will be closed for one-week winter break and one-week spring break in order for annual maintenance to be performed. During in-service periods, teaching staff are required to report on professional development.

Enrollment and Tuition

Children between the ages 6 weeks and twelve years are eligible for enrollment at Precious Gems Academy. Documents to be completed and returned before enrollment are:

- *Child enrollment application*
- *Copy of birth certificate*
- *Health Physical*
- *Immunization Record*
- *Intake form*
- *CACFP food form*
- *Schedule form*

Tuition payments are due on the first of every month (if the 1st falls on a weekend day, then it is due the Friday before). **Tuition will not be prorated or discounted because of absences or school closings.** A \$25 late fee will be assessed for payments received after the 5th of the month. If payment is not received by the last day of the month, the enrolled child will be excluded until the balance is paid in full. Perpetual lateness will result in expulsion. Any family experiencing financial hardship should consult with the Director. Every attempt will be made to assist you.

A 10% discount is offered to families with more than one child enrolled. The discount is applied to the other sibling(s). Precious Gems appreciates the hard work of our first responders and educators. As a token of our appreciation, we offer a 10% discount to our first responders and educators. Discounts are only applied on FULL-TIME rates.

A registration fee of \$100 is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a one-time non-refundable charge.

A two-week deposit is also due upon enrollment. If you decide for any reason to withdraw your child from the Academy, a 30-day written notice is required in order to receive your initial deposit. This notice must be submitted to the Administration. If you decide to withdraw your child without a 30-day notice or don't complete your promised 30-days, you automatically forfeit your deposit, and any tuition paid.

Families are required to advise the Director at least 30 days in advance of an extended absence. If the child does not return after four weeks, the security deposit will be applied, and the child will be no longer enrolled at the academy. NJCK families will be charged the State fee for vacation time.

We do not trade a scheduled day for another day. We do not offer alternating schedules.

Parents may request an added day or extended hours to a day at an extra fee. We will check our schedule and will let you know if an opening is available.

Expulsion Policy

A 30-days' notice is required before withdrawing a child from our academy. Accounts must be paid in full before withdrawing-including your child's tuition for that 30-day period. Any account past due at time of disenrollment will through our electronic withdrawal option

Unfortunately, there are situations where we must expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. Every effort will be made to work with the family of the child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

The following are reasons why a child may have to be terminated or suspended from the Academy:

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION:

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up a child.
- Physical or verbal abuse of staff or program members

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION:

- Failure to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse of staff or other children
- Excessive biting (three times in a thirty-day period)

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT WILL BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION:

- Staff will try to redirect children from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess the classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise positive behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- A brief cool-down time will be given so the child can regain control.
- Child may lose certain privileges (i.e., if child throws a block, he/she may temporarily lose his/her privilege of using the block center)
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The Director/ Associate Director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent/ guardian will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION:

- If the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the Academy.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required for the child/parent to return to the Academy.
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent an adequate amount of time to seek alternate care (approximately 1-2 weeks' notice depending on the risk to other children's/staff's welfare and safety).

- Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of this plan may result in permanent expulsion from the Academy.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED:

- If a child's parent/guardian made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the Academy's alleged violations of the licensing requirements (1-877-667-9845)
- If a child's parent/guardian reported abuse or neglect occurring at the Academy (1-877-652-2873).
- If a child's parent/guardian questioned the Academy regarding policies and procedures

If Academy does not provide the parent/guardian with an adequate amount of time to make other childcare arrangements depending on the risk to other children's welfare and safety

Solicitation

Precious Gems has a "No Solicitation Policy." Participants are not permitted to solicit sales of non-Precious Gems sponsored goods of any sort while at the Academy.

Routines and Transitions

Sample Daily Schedule (Full-Day Preschool)

Arrival: Teachers greet each child as he or she enters the classroom.

Choice Play: After following the arrival routine, children choose from a variety of activity centers and play areas in their classrooms.

Breakfast: Children are offered a nutritious breakfast provided by the Academy. Breakfast is typically prepared in the classroom unless a cooking activity is planned for the children. The Breakfast menu is posted in each classroom and on the parent bulletin board, as well as being on our web site that is updated monthly.

Circle Time: Children meet as a classroom community with their teacher to discuss the school day and learn about key concepts related to the theme.

Activity Time: Children choose from a range of independent and/or teacher-directed activities from a variety of areas such as arts, blocks, computers, cooking, dramatic play, games, writing center, puzzles and other manipulatives, and sensory tables.

Group Time: Children meet with their teachers for bathroom, snack, and story time. Each teacher also plans music, movement, and other skill building activities to target specific developmental needs of the group.

Outdoor Time: Children go outside every day except in extreme cold and rainy weather. Children choose from a wide variety of activities including sand play, tricycle riding, dramatic play, nature exploration, climbing, sliding, and other large motor games.

Lunch Time: The children are provided with a nutritious lunch that is approved by the Department of Agriculture's food program.

Nap Time: Children rest quietly on covered cots. The classroom environment is dimmed, and soothing music is played at a low volume.

Snack Time: Children are offered a nutritious snack provided by the Academy.

Activity Time: Children move among activity centers, work on extended projects related to the theme, and play in the block area, housekeeping area, or sand table.

Outdoor Time: Children go outside every day except in extreme cold and rainy weather. Children choose from a wide variety of activities including sand play, tricycle riding, dramatic play, nature exploration, climbing, sliding, and other large motor games.

Dismissal: Children are signed out from the Academy by an authorized adult. Binders containing attendance sheets are in the child's classroom.

NOTE: Teachers will provide specific schedules via a Welcome Letter that will be provided on the first day of the new school year.

When a child is ready to transition to the next age group, we will always contact the parent/guardian first. We will have the child visit the new classroom several times in a two-week period to get him or her adjusted to their new environment. All assessments and evaluation paperwork will be moved up along with the child to the next classroom.

Drop off and Pick up Policies (Release of children Policy)

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the academy. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however, will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. Simply notify the classroom teacher when you are ready to leave, and the teacher will assist.

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent to take the child from the Academy and assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent cannot be reached. It is the parent's responsibility to sign their child in and out. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by court order, the Academy needs documentation to that effect which will remain at the Academy and will comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up at the time of the Academy's closing, the Academy will ensure that:

The child is supervised at all times.

Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s).

An hour after closing and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to an authorized person has failed, the staff member shall call the Divisions 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent can be reached.

Your child's classroom teacher may be available at pick-up time for short questions. For longer discussions or concerns please schedule an appointment.

Absences or late arrivals should be reported by 9:00 am. If a child is absent due to illness, a description of symptoms should be provided. It is strongly suggested that children arrive at the Academy by 9:00 am. Drop off after 9:00am disrupts the routine in the classroom. When this is not possible, parents must inform the Academy administration.

Part-time hours are from 9 am to 3pm, families may drop off as early as 8:50am and pick up no later than 3:10pm. A fee of \$25 will be charged for every fifteen minutes per child, starting at one minute after the part-time program ends (3:10 pm), the Academy closes (6:00pm), or Morning drop off (9:00am). Parents/guardians must sign a late pick-up form and submit a late fee within 24 hours. Habitual lateness will result in dismissal from the program.

Child's Belongings

For your child's safety, dress your child with proper shoes - sturdy, closed-toe, rubber soled shoes (no flip-flops, crocs, or clogs). Sneakers are the preferred footwear. For your convenience, please choose washable clothes. Send an extra change of clothing for your child on the first day of school in case a child's clothes become wet or soiled. Please include shoes, shirt, pants, socks, and underwear and label all clothing with your child's name. Remember to update this extra set as the weather changes and as your child grows! Provide adequate outer clothing for your child and label all items.

We spend time outside every day, except in extreme heat/cold or heavy precipitation. Since weather can be unpredictable, especially in the fall and spring, please provide clothes to layer for warmth. In the winter, send boots, gloves, hats, and snow pants.

Encourage your child to bring only books that are clearly labeled to share with his/her class. We prefer that your child leave toys or things that are breakable at home. These often are mishandled and/or picked up by other children, causing upsets and disagreements that could have been avoided.

Holidays and Birthdays

At Precious Gems, holidays are viewed as educational opportunities that give us the chance to learn about our diverse school community. As part of our emphasis on family identity and respect for diversity, we encourage children to talk about their family traditions, and we share stories related to the meaning of holidays. We plan age-appropriate activities to involve the children in preparing for simple school celebrations and to help them contribute to family events (i.e., basic cooking, making gifts, and so forth). We limit our school celebrations to very brief spans of time to attempt to maintain our regular school routine.

Birthday celebrations for young children at school can be a special time for the child to share with friends at school and, when possible, for families to join the celebration. Please contact your child's teacher when your child's birthday is approaching, to plan the timing of the celebration to best fit your schedule and to review ingredients of special treats that might impact classmates with food allergies. If you plan an additional birthday celebration outside of school time, please mail invitations from home unless the **entire** class is invited. If the entire class is invited, you may distribute the invitations into the children's cubbies.

Field Trips

Parents are required to sign a permission slip for each trip individually and will be asked to contribute toward the cost of admission and transportation. At all times, we maintain a ratio of one adult to four children for off-site trips children. The children are all assigned in advance to specific staff members.

At all times, when transporting children all passengers are required to use approved child safety-restraint devices in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Special trips and events occur throughout the year but most especially during our summer program. All children enrolled during the months of July and August will be expected to participate in all on and off-site activities for which they are present. An additional summer activity fee will be collected in mid-June.

Nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program and will be taken periodically. The center will provide the same adequate responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided children while in attendance at the center. Your permission for your child to participate in walking excursions is part of this agreement.

Health and Safety Guidelines

At all times, health and safety are top priorities at Precious Gems. Everyone's vigilance regarding health and safety issues contributes significantly to our effectiveness. Always assume that you are the only one who notices a problem or potential problem and bring it to the attention of a staff person.

Nutrition/Meals and Allergies

The center provides breakfast, lunch, and pm snacks for children ages 1yr-6yrs. We serve only chicken, turkey, beef, and fish products. No pork and we are a nut free school.

Parents are required to inform the center upon enrollment and make special arrangements for children who require a special diet due to allergies. A food allergy plan, food substitute list, and required reaction medications list must be completed and signed by the doctor for the center to provide the special diet. A separate complete bottle of the prescribed medication the reaction medicine must remain at the center.

Screen Time Policy

At Precious Gems Academy, we care about the health and well-being of the children in our care. We follow the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations on Screen Time:

Children under the age of 2 have no screen time

Children aged 2 and over should watch less than 30 minutes per week of television, DVD, videos at the childcare center and less than 2 hours per day total.

Precious Gems understands that television and other electronic media can get in the way of children exploring, playing, and interaction with others, which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development. Therefore, we will restrict screen time by:

Allowing a maximum of 30 minutes total per week of educational screen time

Having zero screen time (TV, DVD, and computer) for children under the age of 2

And age-appropriate screen time. (Television, DVD, video)

Allowing no more than 15 minutes of educational screen time per day.

Breastfeeding policy

Because breastfeeding has been shown to be the best form of infant nutrition, providing a multitude of health benefits to both the infant and mother, and because breastfeeding employees need ongoing support from childcare providers to provide their milk for their babies.

Precious Gems Academy subscribes to the following policy:

1. Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided with a place to breastfeed or express their milk. Breast-feeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided with a private and sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area will have an electrical outlet, comfortable chairs, and nearby access to running water.

2. A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breastmilk. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.

3. Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. Precious Gems Academy is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.

4. Staff shall be trained in handling human milk. All childcare center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control in ensuring that breastmilk is properly treated to avoid waste.

Special precautions are not required in handling human milk.

Storage Guidelines for Human Milk:

<http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling-breastmilk.htm>

<https://healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Storing-and-Preparing-Expressed-Breast-Milk.aspx>

5. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided with flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided with a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breastmilk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed to other employees for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave may be used, or the employee can come in a little earlier or leave a little late to make up the time.

6. Breastfeeding information will be displayed. The center will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the center.

Ratios and Staffing

Precious Gems maintains required staff: child ratios at all times and better ratios most of the time.

Infants/Waddlers	0-18 months	1:4
Toddlers	18 month – 2.5 years	1:6
Preschool	2.5 -4 years	1:10
Pre-K	4-5 years	1:12

At any time when children are present in the Academy, there are at least two adults present. Staff members, as a group, supervise preschool children primarily by sight.

Injuries

Staff members greet children at the beginning of the day, being watchful of their appearance as they enter and throughout the day. Children who become sick at school are removed from the group and cared for until parents can be contacted to come for the child. Young children often experience falls or bumps during the course of a day, especially when outdoors or during active play. Usually, they do not result in injury and are handled with simple comfort, a drink of water, or a sympathetic bandage or ice pack. When children sustain a cut, bruise, or other injury, staff members will provide treatment according to procedures specified in our pediatric first aid training. They will report the injury to parents, guardians, or caregivers, recommend treatment by a medical professional if appropriate, and complete an injury report within one day. Copies are kept in a central office file, the child's file, and given to the family. Parents or guardians will be notified immediately in case of a more serious accident and prompt action will be taken by contacting EMS personnel. If necessary, we will accompany the child to the hospital preferred by the family.

Physicals and Immunizations

Prior to the child's first day of school, parents are required to submit a current health assessment of the child, including either proof of the recommended immunizations or a signed statement indicating that the family has objections to immunization. Thereafter, parents must submit an updated form after the yearly well child checkup. Parents of children speaking English as a second language are asked to complete a form detailing the children's level of proficiency and then invited to dialogue with teachers regarding strategies to assist the child's transition as necessary. Parents of children with allergies must complete an additional form giving guidelines appropriate to the child's needs, with detail regarding provision and storage of special foods (labeled with the child's name and date), necessary adaptations of activities or environment, responses staff should take in the event of an allergic reaction, and any necessary staff training. Parents of children with other special needs should contact an administrator for guidance regarding necessary documentation and advance planning with the staff.

Wellness Policy

Precious Gems relies on family members' thoughtful assessment of each child's health before sending him or her to the Academy. Even if your child insists on attending school, please keep him or her at home if any of the following symptoms are evident. Any of these may indicate the beginning of an illness, which might be easily transmitted to other children.

- temperature above 100.4 degrees within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea
- Rash, bump or other out-of-the-ordinary skin conditions
- Flushed face, "watery" or "glossy" eyes
- Excessive running nose
- Deep or dry cough
- Continuous sneezing
- Sore throat
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Unusual irritability, listlessness, fatigue

Please let the main office know if your child has contracted a contagious condition or disease so that we can notify other families and staff members who might be affected.

In most cases in which medication is required, physicians recommend that the child be on medication for a full 24 hours before returning to school. **In addition, please keep your child home until the child is well enough to participate fully in both indoor and outdoor activities because we do not have staff members available to supervise children indoors while the rest of the class is outdoors.** If medication needs to be given while the child is at school, please bring the medication in its original labeled container with written directions from the doctor to the office and complete a medication authorization form. **Do not send medication in the child's lunchbox or backpack.**

Illness Policy

To maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff, the illness policy must be strictly observed. If a child exhibits any of the following signs or symptoms of illness, parents/guardians will be called to pick up the child immediately:

- Vomiting (2 incidents)
- Elevated auxiliary temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Conjunctivitis (Glassy eyes, discharge, redness)
- Evidence of Lice, Scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- Diarrhea (2 incidents)
- Infected, untreated skin patches or rash
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Blood in urine
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Swollen joint.
- Stiff neck
- Extreme lethargy
- Inability to participate in our regular program.

If your child is excluded for any of the above symptoms, you will receive a statement of illness from a **staff member listing the symptoms for which your child is being excluded and the length of time for which they need to be excluded. This statement of illness requires a parent/guardian signature. Children must be removed** from the Center within 30 minutes of notification. Exceptions will **not** be made to the Illness Policy.

Children on antibiotics will need to be kept at home for their first dose before returning to the Center.

A Child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child is no risk to him/herself or others:

Chicken Pox **
German Measles
Hemophilus Influenza *
Measles *
Meningococcus *
Strep Throat

Giardia Lamblia *
Hepatitis A *
Salmonella
Shigella *

Impetigo
Lice
Scabies
Conjunctivitis

Tuberculosis *
Whooping Cough *
COVID_19*
Hand Foot and Mouth**

* Reportable diseases that will be reported to the health department by the Center.

** If your child has chicken pox or HFM, a doctor's note is required stating that the sores have dried and crusted.

Please be responsible and respectful if your child is not feeling well. The health and well-being of the children and childcare staff is important. Isolation is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness. If your child is not well, **please keep him/her home.**

Medications

We strongly encourage you to administer medicine at home. If medicine must be administered at the Academy, the following conditions apply:

Medicine will only be given to a child with the written consent of the child's parent/guardian. Medication Authorization forms are available and must be filled out by you and signed by your child's physician before the staff administers any medicine.

All medicine must be in its original container, which has been labeled with the child's name, the name of the medicine, the date it was **prescribed** and directions for administration.

If your child is sent home sick, they must be home a minimum of 24 to 48 hours symptom free, this does not include the day they are sent home.

Oral Health

Children's teeth will be brushed at least once a day in the classroom. The program will supply an age-appropriate toothbrush (for age 1 and older) and toothpaste. Toothbrushes will be dried sanitarily in a rack. A soft piece of moistened paper towel will be used with the infants.

Emergency Closings

Information regarding closing or a delayed opening will be available by 5:15 am on the main phone line 908-237-0500 (Flemington). An electronic message will be sent regarding closings or delays to all families who provide the Academy with an email address. Closings/delays will also be announced on Precious Gems Facebook page and on the ProCare App.

Child Emergency

A staff member who is trained in CPR and first aid is always on duty. A first aid kit is kept in every classroom. In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If we feel it necessary, we will contact Emergency Medical Service to assist us in first aid procedures or to transport the child to the Hunterdon Medical Center, Flemington. Should a child have to go to the hospital, a staff member will accompany the child. It is especially important to keep your enrollment form updated as this is where we will obtain the emergency information.

Other Emergency Situations

The children's safety is our first concern. Fire drills are conducted monthly to ensure children's familiarity with the procedures. Lockdown drills are conducted twice a year. The Academy is equipped with fire extinguishers and a fire alarm system.

If there is a power failure at the Academy and it is determined that it is necessary to close the Academy, parents/guardians will be notified to plan for early pick up for their child.

If an emergency develops and it is determined that the building or premises are unsafe, the children will be relocated to the grass area in between both buildings. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the area, children will be transported to the church. Parents/Guardians will be notified of this situation and what arrangements may need to be made to pick up their child. All staff have received Emergency Preparedness training which includes evacuation procedures.

Discipline Policy

Positive discipline is used at Precious Gems. Positive discipline respects the rights of the child, the group, and the adult. Precious Gems expects all children in the Academy to show respect for their peers, teachers, and property.

Our first efforts towards preventative discipline:

- Planning the program to meet the needs of the child.
- Having clearly defined rules and limits that are consistent.
- Having a well-planned daily schedule
- Offering problem solving assistance
- Encouraging feelings of self-worth and confidence
- Providing time and space for each child to be alone
- Sharing ownership and responsibility with the children

Positive discipline will be used when intervention is necessary:

- Redirecting the child to a new activity to change focus of behavior.
- Providing individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
- Providing alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Pointing out natural or logical consequences of their behavior
- Removing the child from the area or activity for a few minutes so that he/she may gain self-control.

Parents/guardians will be notified if inappropriate behavior is interfering with the child's learning and a parent conference will be set up to discuss the problem and potential solutions. Should a child exhibit behavior disruptive of the program or become a danger to him/her or others, Precious Gems may ask the child to be suspended or expelled from the program. Payment for the time a child is suspended or expelled **will not** be refunded.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

If a parent appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, physically or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the site director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk or harm if released, police will be called to the Academy to determine further action.

If person(s) authorized to pick up the child appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, physically or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk or harm if released to such an individual, the Academy shall ensure that:

The child may not be released to this individual.

Staff members attempt to contact an alternative person(s) authorized to pick up the child; and if the Academy is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Parking

The parking lot has spaces reserved for staff and parents with children enrolled in the Academy. The academy has **NO LOITERING POLICY**. Participants are not allowed to linger in the parking lot or near the premises without reason.

Always hold the hand of your child when walking in the parking lot.

Building Security

Our security system has two goals: (1) to keep all children safely inside the school and (2) to allow entry only for people who have Academy business.

Both buildings are equipped with cameras facing all exits of the classrooms and buildings. The main building can be accessed by a key fob system. The classrooms in the front building can be entered by ringing the doorbell and a staff member will give you access. If you need a key fob to enter the main building, please contact the administration. Upon enrollment, each family will receive a set of two key fobs. Any additional needed fobs will cost \$25 per fob.

Exchanging key fobs with other families is strictly prohibited. Your assigned key fob is for your use only. Please do not give access to the building to anyone that is waiting outside to get in or if they do not have one.

Use of social media

Precious Gems recognizes the value of online social media tools for connecting with staff, families, donors, and volunteers. Our web presence should project a positive image that is consistent with our mission.

Social media, for the purpose of this policy, should be understood to include any website or forum that allows for open communication on the Internet including but not limited to blogs, wikis, micro-blogging sites, social networking sites, virtual worlds, video and photo sharing websites and content published online by Precious Gems employees.

Precious Gems respects the right of individuals to use these platforms but must adhere to the following guidelines:

Employees are prohibited from posting pictures of any children currently or previously enrolled in Precious Gems on social media at any time.

Parents/Guardians are prohibited from posting photographs or videos (from Precious Gems) of any child other than their own.

Employees may not post on a blog or web page or participate on a social networking platform during work time or anytime with Academy equipment or property.

All rules regarding confidentiality and proprietary business information apply in full to blogs, web pages, and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and similar sites. Any information that cannot be disclosed through a conversation, a note, or an email also cannot be disclosed in a blog, web page or social networking site.

Whether an employee or Parent is posting something on his/her own platform or someone else's, if the employee mentions the Academy and also expresses either a political opinion or an opinion regarding the actions that could pose an actual or potential conflict of interest with Academy, the poster must include a disclaimer. The poster should specifically state that the opinion expressed is his/her opinion is not the Academy's position. This is necessary to preserve the Academy's goodwill in the marketplace. Any conduct that is impermissible under the law if expressed in any other form or forum impermissible if expressed through a blog, web page, or social networking platform. For example, posted material that is discriminatory, obscene, defamatory, libelous, or violent is forbidden. Academy policies apply equally to employee social media usage.

Precious Gems encourages all employees to keep in mind the speed and manner in which information posted on a blog, web page, and/or social networking site is received and often misunderstood by readers. Employees must use their best judgement. Employees or Parents with any questions should review the guidelines and/or consult with their direct supervisor. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in discipline, up to and including discharge, or expulsion of your child from our Academy.

Staff Babysitting Services

Precious Gems allows the practice of staff providing babysitting services to children enrolled in the program. These services are not under the management and direct supervision of Precious Gems Academy. Due to this, staff and parents must sign a liability waiver form stating that Precious Gems is not liable for those services.

Community

We encourage all families to be active members of the community. Furthermore, if you are a member of the regional community club, please let us know and we will happily add it to our list. By clicking on the link, you can find out information as to when and where the meeting takes place.

BOYS SCOUTS OF AMERICA

www.scoutin.org

GIRLS SCOUTS OF AMERICA

www.girlsscouts.org

HUNTERDON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.hunterdon-chamber.org

FLEMINGTON LIBRARY

www.flemingtonlibrary.org

FLEMINGTON RARITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
DEPT

www.frsd.k12.nj.us

RARITAN TOWNSHIP FIRE

www.raritantownshipfire.com



I have read and fully understand Precious Gems Academy policies and procedures regarding my child's participation in the program, and the New Jersey Child Care Licensing Requirements.

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date