



KEY WEST PRESCHOOL COOPERATIVE

MEMBER HANDBOOK & NON-PROFIT BYLAWS

1. FOUNDATION

- **Mission Statement**

The mission is to provide a safe, supportive, nurturing, and high-quality early learning environment rooted in developmentally appropriate practice, fostering the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of every child through meaningful play, intentional instruction, and responsive relationships. As a cooperative, families are essential partners who contribute to the school's strength, culture, and success through active participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility. The goal is to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning by honoring childhood, supporting families, and cultivating a community where children thrive.

- **Introduction**

Key West Preschool Cooperative (KWPC) was founded in 1988 by six families to create a program blending high-quality early childhood education with meaningful family involvement. It is the only nonprofit preschool in Key West, Florida, located at Peace Covenant Presbyterian Church. The cooperative structure enables families, staff, and leadership to work together, as family involvement is firmly believed to connect directly to children's academic success, social development, emotional security, and positive introduction to group learning.

- **State Licensing**

KWPC operates in compliance with all applicable licensing requirements, health and safety regulations, and standards established by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). The Florida DCF License Number is C16MO0026.

- **Contact Information**

- **School Name:** Key West Preschool Cooperative
- **Address:** 2610 Flagler Ave, Key West, FL 33040
- **Office Phone:** 305-296-4749
- **Primary Email:** keywestpreschool@gmail.com
- **Website:** keywestpreschool.com
- **Administrative Leadership:** Director O'brieka Allen, Board President Sara Squire, Board Vice President Lauren Steele, Board Treasurer Jessica Kerr, and

Board Secretary Irena Kalvel.

2. ENROLLMENT & PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **Hours of Operation**

Key West Preschool Cooperative is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- **Students Served**

The school serves children from infancy through age six. Enrollment is open to families from Big Pine Key to Key West, subject to classroom availability and program eligibility. KWPC is committed to an inclusive environment and does not exclude any child based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.

- **Admission Requirements**

Only a parent or legal guardian may enroll a child. Enrollment is complete upon submission of all paperwork and fees, including a completed packet, child's birth certificate, current Florida immunization form or approved exemption/waiver, current school physical form, payment of the registration fee (waived for VPK with voucher), the annual membership fee, and the supply donation. Children in the 3-Year-Old and VPK programs must be fully potty trained unless approved by administration.

- **Waitlist Policy**

When a classroom reaches capacity, applicants are placed on a waitlist and contacted in order when an opening becomes available. Placement is based on classroom availability, age eligibility, developmental appropriateness, and other considerations determined by the school.

- **Program Options**

The core program groupings offered are: Infant Program, 1-Year-Old Program, 2-Year-Old Program, 3-Year-Old Program (must be fully potty trained), and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program for eligible 4-year-olds.

- **VPK Program Information**

The VPK instructional program is from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and is free for families with a valid Florida VPK voucher. Families using a VPK voucher must utilize the extended-day (aftercare) program to ensure full-day coverage (12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.), for which additional fees apply. The VPK Age Cutoff Date is September 1.

3. TUITION & FEES

- **Tuition Policy**

Tuition is billed monthly, due regardless of attendance, absences, holidays, or school closures, and is subject to revision with appropriate notice. Tuition rates, extended care fees, and costs are determined annually by the Director and Executive Board and are provided in the official KWPC Tuition & Fee Schedule.

- **Additional Fees**

Applicable fees include a Registration Fee (per student; waived for VPK with voucher), Annual Membership Fee (per family), and Recommended Supply Donation (per student). Volunteer Opt-Out Fees also apply.

- **Discounts**

Approved tuition discounts may be offered, such as sibling discounts. Specific discounts include 20% for Executive Board members in good standing, 20% for first-year staff, 50% for second-year staff, 15% for each additional enrolled sibling, and 15% for approved frontline workers. Only one discount may be applied per family.

- **Payment Policy**

Tuition and fees are due on the 1st of each month, with a grace period through the 7th. Payments can be made via cash, check (payable to KWPC), approved electronic payment methods, or a secure QuickBooks link. A \$50 returned check fee applies for non-sufficient funds (NSF).

- **Delinquent Payments**

A \$50 late fee is charged for accounts unpaid after the 7th of the month. Delinquent families must bring their account current before the end of the following grace period, or they may face cancellation of membership, suspension of attendance, and loss of the child's space.

- **Refunds**

KWPC does not issue refunds for tuition, fees, or membership obligations unless required by law or explicitly approved. Overpayments may be applied as a credit to a future balance.

- **Late Pick-Up Fee**

Students picked up more than 15 minutes after dismissal may be charged the current aftercare drop-in rate of \$30.

4. MEMBERSHIP & CO-OP STRUCTURE

- **Co-Op Member Expectations**

KWPC is built on the understanding that families are essential partners who contribute to the school's success. Families are expected to contribute through volunteer service, fundraising, and other cooperative responsibilities, unless they elect an approved opt-out option.

- **Member Responsibilities**

Member families are expected to uphold responsibilities including, but not limited to: reading the handbook/bylaws, complying with procedures, paying fees on time, fulfilling volunteer obligations, participating in fundraising, monitoring school communications, maintaining respectful communication, keeping emergency records current, completing the yearly climate survey, and assisting with storm preparation when possible. Failure to meet obligations may result in fines, suspension of privileges, or cancellation of membership.

- **Parental Involvement**

KWPC maintains an Open-Door Policy, welcoming parents and legal guardians to access the center during operating hours, provided their presence does not disrupt routine or compromise safety. Classroom volunteer opportunities are generally available for approved adults who meet DCF requirements, typically from 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., but are not permitted in the Infant or 1-Year-Old classrooms.

- **Membership Options**

Membership obligations are assigned per family.

- **Traditional Membership:** Families participate in all responsibilities and obligations.
- **Individual Opt-Out Membership:** Families can opt out of selected individual obligations by paying related fees, with arrangements finalized by September 1.
- **Minimal Co-Op Membership:** Families can opt out of all membership obligations through a single, one-time payment or by dividing this payment into 10 monthly installments, with arrangements finalized by September 1 (tuition is not included).
- **Opt-Out Fee Table**

Families can choose to opt out of specific obligations by paying a fee (refer to the current Tuition & Fee Schedule) or choosing an alternative. Obligations include: Year-Long Job or Classroom Volunteer Requirement, Bake Sale Contribution, Poinsettia Sales Requirement, KWPC / Director's Choice Fundraiser, and Two Additional Fundraising Volunteer Shifts of choice.
- **Membership Obligation Descriptions**
 - **Year-Long Jobs:** Begin in September and include Elected Executive Board Positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary) and Non-Elected Year-Long Jobs (e.g., Sunshine Parent, Fundraising Coordinator, Maintenance Crew).

5. FUNDRAISING

- **Fundraising Activities**

Fundraising is necessary to sustain programs and resources, and families are expected to participate unless an opt-out option is selected. Annual fundraising participation may include bake sale contributions, Poinsettia sales, one school-designated fundraiser, and two additional fundraisers or fundraising volunteer opportunities. Failure to notify administration before an event a parent committed to may result in a fee or fine.

6. DAILY OPERATIONS

- **Drop-Off & Pick-Up**

Only authorized adults listed on the child's pick-up permission documentation may drop off or pick up a child.

 - **Drop-Off Procedures:** Adults must accompany children into the school area, and children must be signed in. Staff must check for signs of illness or communicable conditions upon arrival.
 - **Pick-Up Procedures:** Children must be signed out by an authorized adult and picked up promptly at the end of the enrolled program time.
- **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend daily, and tuition is due regardless of attendance, absences, vacations, or missed days. Excused absences (illness, death in family, religious observance, etc.) may require documentation for VPK students absent five or more days. Families must provide at least two weeks' notice before withdrawal or requesting a change to their enrollment contract, or they may be charged an additional

month of tuition.

- **School Closures**

KWPC generally looks to Monroe County School District decisions for guidance on weather-related closures, but the Director may close the school if deemed unsafe. Regular tuition remains due during closures unless otherwise announced.

- **Custodial Arrangements**

Families with custody arrangements must notify the school in writing and may be required to provide legal documentation. Written clarification is also required regarding which parent is responsible for tuition, membership obligations, communication, and authorized decision-making.

- **Items From Home**

The school may restrict certain items brought from home to maintain safety, reduce distractions, and preserve classroom order. Personal toys and valuables should not be brought to school unless requested by the teacher.

- **Lunches and Snacks**

- **Infants and Ones:** Families must provide all food, bottles, milk, formula, breast milk, and age-appropriate snacks, all clearly labeled. Open or previously used jars of baby food cannot be served.
- **Twos Through VPK:** Families must provide a healthy daily lunch and snack in a labeled insulated lunchbox with cold packs, along with necessary utensils. Families must comply with communicated classroom allergies and food restrictions.

- **Water Bottles**

Each child must bring a clearly labeled, spill-proof water bottle filled only with water.

- **Clothing**

Children should be dressed for active play, and families must keep an extra set of labeled clothing at school.

- **Diapers**

Families of non-toilet-trained children must provide diapers, wipes, and diaper ointment, all clearly labeled.

- **Breastfeeding Policy**

KWPC supports breastfeeding and pumping parents and will make reasonable efforts to provide accommodations, offering the infant classroom or another private area for nursing or pumping.

- **Toilet Training**

Students in the 3-Year-Old and VPK programs must be toilet trained unless approved by administration.

7. HEALTH & SAFETY

- **Health and Illness Policy**

A child who is vomiting, has diarrhea, has a fever of 100°F or higher, or shows symptoms of a communicable illness may not remain in the center. If a child becomes ill, an authorized contact must pick up the child within one hour of notification. The school may require a doctor's note before a child may return. Children must be symptom-free

for at least 24 hours without the use of medication before returning to school. Please refer to the School Illness Policy for a more detailed explanation of illness guidelines, including when children must be sent home, when they are too ill to attend school, and the requirements for returning.

- **Medication**

The school does not routinely administer medication except in limited, medically necessary, or life-threatening circumstances. For prescription medication, written parent authorization, the original labeled container, dosing instructions, and dispensing equipment are required, and the medication must be delivered directly to office staff.

- **Incident Reports**

When an accident, injury, or notable interpersonal incident occurs that requires more than minimal comfort or observation, staff will complete an incident report. Families will be informed, asked to sign, and provided a copy.

- **Mandatory Reporting**

KWPC staff are mandatory reporters under Florida law and must immediately report any suspicion of abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline (800-96-ABUSE).

8. SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

- **Curriculum**

KWPC uses **The Creative Curriculum** as its foundation and follows all required **VPK standards**. The approach is rooted in active exploration, play-based learning, guided discovery, meaningful relationships, and age-appropriate routines. The curriculum supports growth across all major developmental domains, including motor development, social-emotional growth, self-help skills, early literacy, mathematics, and science.

- **Daily Schedule**

The daily rhythm includes structured and unstructured opportunities for learning, movement, play, meals, and rest. Typical parts of the day include arrival, activity/center time, group time, outdoor play, snack/lunch, and rest/quiet time.

- **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is viewed as an extension of the classroom, and children are generally given opportunities to play outdoors twice daily, weather permitting.

- **Class Divisions and Size**

Class placements are based on a child's age/developmental level, state-required teacher-to-student ratios, and enrollment/classroom balance.

- **Student-to-Teacher Ratios**

KWPC complies with Florida ratio requirements and strives to exceed minimum standards. Projected maximums include: Infants under 12 months (4:1), Toddlers 12–24 months (6:1), 2-Year-Olds (11:1), 3-Year-Olds (11:1 at target capacity), and 4- to 5-Year-Olds (11:1 at target capacity).

9. GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

- **How We Are Organized**

KWPC is a nonprofit preschool governed by a collaborative structure including a Director, Executive Board, staff, and cooperative membership, ensuring families have a role while qualified staff maintain daily operations.

- **Executive Board**

The Executive Board consists of elected and designated leadership (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Director, Teacher Liaison, and community representatives). Responsibilities include financial oversight, licensing/compliance, hiring/staffing, tuition setting, and handbook revisions.

- **Board Member Selection and Term Limits**

Members in good standing may be eligible to serve. The standard term is 13 months, beginning May 1 and ending May 31 of the following year. Members may continue to serve in subsequent terms based on eligibility, interest, and any applicable term limits.

- **Voting Procedure**

Each family member gets one vote, and the family representative must be physically present for the vote to count. The members present at a general membership meeting constitute a quorum. Board voting follows governing procedures and Robert's Rules of Order.

- **Director**

The Director position is mandatory, requiring proper qualifications under state licensing law, and carries the ultimate responsibility for the school's daily operation, adherence to compliance standards, and overall supervision. The Director collaborates with the Executive Board and may undergo an annual review.

- **Office Manager**

The Office Manager supports the Director with administrative operations, family communication, recordkeeping, and event coordination.

- **Staff & Teachers**

Staff are qualified, committed to a nurturing environment, and must meet all background screening, training, licensing, CPR/First Aid, and continuing education requirements required by the State of Florida.

- **Members**

A member is a parent or legal guardian of a currently enrolled child at KWPC.

- **Students**

A student is any child enrolled in the school whose required paperwork is complete and whose account is in good standing.

- **Other**

Other individuals on campus include approved **Visitors**, screened **Volunteers**, supervised **Delivery Personnel**, and **Intruders** who refuse to comply with safety procedures and may be reported to authorities.

10. BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

The goal of all discipline at KWPC is to teach, guide, and support appropriate

behavior—not to punish. Discipline practices are designed to support skill-building, emotional regulation, and safe interactions.

- **Behavior Intervention Policy**

The policy applies to student conduct and, when relevant, the conduct of members, staff, and volunteers. Discipline is positive, instructional, respectful, and developmentally appropriate, focusing on guidance, clear expectations, and consistent routines. The school uses a tiered behavior intervention system to address challenging behaviors.

- **Reporting a Complaint**

A complaint is any concern involving a parent, guardian, staff, or board member and should be reported verbally and in writing to the Director and/or Board for mediation.

- **Reporting a Grievance**

A grievance is a formal written complaint alleging a violation of school policy, handbook expectations, or other significant matter, reviewed according to the school's formal grievance procedure.

- **Discipline**

The school uses positive reinforcement, redirection, and age-appropriate intervention.

- **Tier 1: Disruptive Behavior** (e.g., running indoors, throwing toys) may result in redirection, positive reinforcement, or a brief reset.
- **Tier 2: Seriously Disruptive Behavior** (e.g., repeated Tier 1, hitting, biting) may result in an incident report, parent conference, or early pick-up.
- **Tier 3: Dangerous or Offensive Behavior** (e.g., serious aggression, clear safety risk) may result in immediate removal, suspension, or termination of services.

- **Biting Policy**

Biting is taken seriously, even though it is developmentally common in infants and toddlers. Staff will comfort the injured child, redirect the child who bit, observe for triggers, and communicate with families while maintaining confidentiality. The school reserves the right to remove a child if chronic or severe biting persists after interventions fail.

11. FINAL SECTIONS

- **Church Property**

KWPC leases space from Peace Covenant Presbyterian Church, and families must respect the grounds, parking rules, and facility limits. School facilities may not be used when school is not in session unless authorized.

- **Transportation**

KWPC does not provide transportation. Families are responsible for transporting their children to and from school, field trips, and special events.

- **Camps**

Camps may be offered during school breaks (Spring, Thanksgiving, Winter, Summer). Camp tuition is separate from regular school-year tuition, and current KWPC families may receive priority registration.

- **Dissolution**

In the event of dissolution, any remaining assets after obligations are paid shall be transferred to one or more qualifying tax-exempt organizations.

- **Handbook Additions and Changes**

Key West Preschool Cooperative reserves the right to revise, update, or amend the policies in this handbook as needed to reflect changes in law, licensing standards, or operational needs. Members will be notified of significant changes.

POLICY AUTHORITY

The Director and Executive Board reserve the right to interpret, enforce, and make final decisions regarding all policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this handbook.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All families are responsible for reading and understanding this handbook. Enrollment at Key West Preschool Cooperative constitutes an agreement to abide by school policies, procedures, expectations, and cooperative obligations as outlined herein, as well as any subsequent updates formally adopted by the school.