Parent Handbook

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Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool

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# ABOUT SUMC PRESCHOOL

## *Introduction*

Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool’s fundamental philosophy is to make sure we partner with our students’ most valuable asset--their parent(s)/guardian(s), to ensure the best learning and operating environment. Clarifying and understanding the expectations of one another paves the way for the most effective learning experience for your child.

## *Purpose*

The SUMCP Handbook is designed to provide understanding and guidance to both our teachers and our parents as each embarks on educating and developing our students throughout the school year. SUMCP teachers and parents/guardians should become fully familiar with the Handbook, taking a few minutes to read and understand its contents. It outlines both operational and educational policies intended to guide our teachers and students to achieve a productive and safe learning experience. We would appreciate your cooperation in understanding and meeting the expectations of the Handbook, and if you have any questions, contact the Director for clarification.

## *Mission Statement of Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool*

The SUMCP was born out of care and concern for ministry to local children (our future!), their parents/guardians, and to the community. The need was determined and through prayers, dedication and commitment, the goal of beginning the children’s ministry was realized. We want to teach the children about God and how to live the Christian life, as well as learning obedience, social and language skills, and respect.

## *Teacher Expectations*

There are several goals for our teachers. First and foremost, SUMCP teachers should provide a Christian environment for all children. For instance, teachers are expected to provide Christian learning opportunities and guidance to each student, teaching them about God’s word and teachings. Teachers are expected to encourage lasting Christian relationships among all students and to nurture those relationships throughout the school year. They are expected to communicate God’s love for one another.

The SUMCP and its teachers are also expected to provide a quality learning environment where activities meet the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of the children. Our staff is required to take at least two continuing education classes a year to keep updated on the latest trends and expectations in teaching young children. Finally, they are expected to understand the spiritual, emotional, and educational influence they have as the first teacher in the lives of their students and communicate student progress with parents/guardians.

## *Parent/Guardian Expectations*

The spiritual and educational needs of our children are met not only by teachers, but also by their parents/guardians. Through this ministry to families of the community, parents are able to rejuvenate and have time to themselves in these hectic times. We ask that you take some of that time to reflect on the values of your family and children and support SUMCP teachers as necessary in their development efforts of your child. Communicate with your child’s teacher as necessary and support their efforts to teach your child God’s word and Christian values.

## *Staff Qualifications*

The staff at Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool is hired based on a combination of education and/or childcare related experience. Each employee has their references validated, undergoes a criminal background check and an annual health physical prior to working directly with children.

All of our staff have at minimum qualifications, life experience with children within the last five years through other preschools, public schools, church and childcare centers. We also require all staff to be trained in CPR/First Aid. There will be ongoing professional development training throughout the year.

Staff members have also been trained in Safe Sanctuary practices as Sunrise Church is a safe sanctuary church.

## *Program Ratios*

All of the 2’s and 3’s classes have 2 teachers to 8 students. the MWF 4’s class has 2 teachers to 8 students, the M-Th 4’s has 2 teachers to 10 students and the M-F 4’s has 2 teachers to 12 students.

# Preschool Program

## *2 - 4 years old*

We offer preschool classes for ages 2, 3, and 4. Children that turn 2-4 by August 31st are eligible to enroll in preschool. We loosely follow Wake County Public School Systems traditional calendar. This program is designed to prepare our preschoolers to enter into kindergarten.

\*All 3- and 4-year-old preschool children **MUST** be fully potty trained prior to the start of the school year.

## *Curriculum*:

The preschool years are widely recognized as providing the foundation for lifelong learning. Children develop significantly in their physical, social emotional and cognitive areas during preschool years. The adults in their lives and environment influence all of these areas. Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool is a play based curriculum revolving around Christian teachings, theme based activities, kindergarten readiness skills, imagination through play and creativity through arts and crafts, physical exercise, speaking and listening.

SUMCP is designed to be a Christian-developing Preschool; however the goal is not to be an academic Preschool, but to offer experiences that are prerequisites to academic learning. Learning/Exploring Time is designed for children to utilize their abilities by **learning through PLAY** and to grow their imaginations through the various activities listed above, all of which promote positive peer interaction and language development.

## *Chapel/Daily Prayer:*

We hold a weekly children’s chapel lesson for all students. This will give each child the opportunity to praise God, learn about being a part of a community through bible stories, and become aware of God’s presence in his/her daily life. There will also be opportunities for prayer throughout the school day for all children. Our hope is that the children in our care become aware that God is always there to guide and listen to them.

## *Daily Schedule*:

Each individual teacher has the ability to create a schedule for their classroom. The schedule will have a balance of quiet and active periods, outdoor play, whole group learning, snack, and individual playtime. If you have any questions regarding your child’s schedule, please feel free to contact their teacher or the director.

An example of a Preschool class daily schedule is:

1. Circle Time - A group activity of listening and communicating with one another, reading, sharing, and discussing the calendar and weather, focus for the day, etc.
2. Learning/Exploring Time - Center-based activities including a home area, blocks and other manipulatives, books, art activities and field trips.
3. Playground
4. Snacks
5. Music Time - Once a week with a music teacher.

6. Bible Time – Once a week with the chapel teacher.

## *Snack*:

Sunrise Preschool provides our students with a daily snack which includes typical items like goldfish, graham crackers, etc paired with fruit, cheese stick, yogurt or apple sauce.

Students with certain dietary restrictions are welcome to bring in their own snack from home.

Students celebrating their birthday at Sunrise Preschool are welcome to bring in store bought treats for a snack on their birthday.

We ask that you send your child to school with a water bottle so that your child has access to water all day long.

## *School Supplies*:

Sunrise provides school supplies for their students. Teachers will have a “wish listed” posted at meet the teacher or may periodically request certain items from their parents.

## *Preschool Parent Communication*:

Parents will receive a weekly email from their teachers, reminding about the upcoming week and activities planned. They will also send home a monthly calendar, detailing plans for the month.

Our teachers are always available through email or through Class Dojo, our in house communication tool.

Our 4 year olds will have a parent teacher conference in January to discuss their child’s progress as we know that Kindergarten registration is happening around that time. A final conference is offered in May.

## *Arrival/Dismissal Procedures*:

Arrival is the most important part of a child’s day. We ask that your child arrive on time daily for both drop off and pick up. Our program begins and ends at the following times:

2’s – front door drop off at 9 am and pickup at 12:30 pm

3’s – carpool drop off at 9:10 am and pickup at 12:40 pm

4’s – carpool drop off at 9:00 am and pickup at 12:30 pm

\*We understand things come up and emergencies happen. If you have an emergency and will not be able to pick your child up on time, please message your child’s teacher immediately on class dojo.

## *Tuition*:

Tuition is based on a yearly cost per student. We have split tuition into 9 equal payments due on the first of each month. The first payment is due September 1st, and the last payment is due May 1st.

## *School Holidays/Snow Days*:

Except for the opening closing dates and teacher workdays, the SUMCP will operate on a similar schedule as the WCPSS traditional calendar, including holidays. We will be open on teacher workdays. All families will receive a year calendar at Meet The Teacher.

SUMC Preschool will close for snow days when the WCPSS are closed for snow days. When the public schools open one hour late due to weather conditions, SUMCP will begin at 10 am. If WCPSS opens on a 2 or 3 hour day, SUMC Preschool will be closed. Schedule changes will be announced for Wake County delays on WRAL and WPTF Radio. Closing and delay information for the preschool will be sent out on Class Dojo from both your child’s teacher and the preschool director. The preschool’s Facebook and Instagram page will also be updated.

**The preschool will be unable to make up snow days.**

# General Center Guidelines

## *Attire*:

For the safety of all children, children **must** have appropriate clothing and footwear. Shoes with cleats, sandals, crocs, jellies, and shoes with holes are **not** permitted at the center.

In the event of an accident, we ask that you provide a full change of seasonally appropriate clothes. This must include a shirt, pants/shorts, underwear and socks. Please put these clothes in a Ziploc bag labeled with the child’s name. Any soiled clothing needs to be changed out with a new change of clothes.

Please make sure to send your child in clothing they can independently take on and off while using the restroom. Belts, overalls, and jumpsuits are often difficult for young children to remove.

As the seasons change, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately. Jackets, hats and mittens for the fall/winter months and sunhats, shorts and cool shirts for the spring/summer months are recommended.

## *Items from Home*:

Children are **not** **permitted** to bring personal items from home, toys or electronics. Some teachers may do a show and tell but please make sure you have coordinated this with your child’s teacher.

## *Toileting*:

**Two Year Old Students** – Do not have to be toilet trained. If a parent/guardian is in the process of training their child, they should send them to school in pull up training diapers and provide a change of clothes in their bags/backpacks each day.

**Three and Four Year Old Students** - All children must be toilet trained and must be able to use the restroom facilities with minimal assistance from the staff. This means they must be able to independently get on and off the toilet and dress themselves with minimal assistance.

## *Birthday Celebrations*:

Birthdays are important to a child and we would like to share those special days. If you would like to bring in a treat for your child’s birthday, the items **must** be store bought. Please check with your child’s teacher prior to buying any treats to ensure there are no food allergies in the class. Please let the teacher know ahead of time if you are planning to bring treats. If you would like to send out birthday party invitations, please make sure you have an invitation for every child in the class to avoid any issues.

## *Outdoor Time*:

Outdoor play is a critical part of a young child’s experience and aids in all aspects of development. Each child will have fun, active and engaging activities for outside play time. We do ask that families ensure children are dressed appropriately.

We pay close attention to weather when making decisions regarding outdoor activities. We will reduce or eliminate strenuous outdoor activities due to extreme heat or extreme cold. Teachers will monitor the weather to determine if it is safe to go outside.

## *Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures*:

Safety of our children is of utmost importance. All children must be picked up by a parent or authorized individual. A picture ID will be required to verify the authorized person picking up a child. Anyone that is not on the authorized pick-up list will need prior **written permission** from the parent or guardian to pick up the child. If they do not have an ID, the director must assist with the check out process. Children will **not** be released to anyone under the age of 16.

Please let us know if there are any special circumstances with custody that we may need to be aware of. We will not be able to prevent the release of a child to his/her custodial parent as listed on the registration form without having court documentation on file.

For those new to our carpool system, when you come in the entrance to the church there are two parking lots. **Carpool takes place only in the back lot of the preschool. See carpool map.**

Please follow these guidelines:

* Carpool will begin in the morning at 9:00 am for the 4’s and at 9:10 for the 3’s.
* The 2’s parents will walk their child to the front door of the church
* **Parents are to unbuckle and buckle their child in**.
* Wait until a teacher is **at** your car to assist your child in getting out.
* Each teacher will only take **2 children at a time** into the building
* Please begin talking to your child about parking lot safety!!
* Carpool will end at 9:20 and 12:50.
* Children arriving after 9:20 will need to be walked to the front of the church, ring the bell, and wait to be let in.
* Parents arriving after 12:50 will pay a **$1.00 per minute late fee** when they pick up their child.
* Please display your child’s carpool tag on the windshield or dashboard.

## *Preschool Closings*:

Emergency school closings happen on occasion. The center will close due to extreme inclement weather or extended power failure. In these cases, an announcement will be made through the “One Call” system as well as an email sent to all parents notifying them of the closure.

## *Cancellation of Programs*:

We do not wish to cancel any programs at any time; however, each program must meet the minimum enrollment requirements. If the program is canceled, registrants will be contacted, and all fees will be refunded.

# Behavior Guidelines

It is our goal to promote each child’s physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being and growth. Staff will interact with children and each other to provide help, comfort, and support to each other. They will do this through a method called Conscious Discipline:

* Respecting personal privacy
* Respecting cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds
* Encouraging decision-making abilities
* Promoting ways of respecting one another
* Encouraging independence and self-direction
* Consistency in applying expectations

Behavior guidelines will be constructive in nature, age and stage appropriate and is intended to redirect children toward appropriate behavior and conflict resolution. We will **not** at any point use corporal punishment or use verbally abusive remarks such as belittling or threats.

Behavior reports will be given if the behavior poses a safety risk either to the individual child or others. Parents will be notified and be required to sign the behavior report. If the child continues to struggle behaviorally, staff and parents or guardians will have a formal conference to create a behavior plan to help the child become more successful.

In the unlikely event that the behaviors cannot be resolved the child may be disenrolled at the director and the preschool board’s discretion.

## *Code of Conduct*:

* Parental/guardian involvement is vital.
* Staff will maintain written behavioral reports when necessary.
* Measures to correct the behavior will depend upon the nature of the behavior, the frequency, and the willingness of the child to correct the behavior. The use of these measures is intended to encourage positive behavior.

## *Discipline Problems*:

1. Discipline problems are defined, but are not limited, to the following: Aggressive behaviors such as biting, hitting, spitting, pushing, scratching, and pinching in which behavior modification does not stop the behaviors.
2. **First occurrence – the parent will be called and notified about the behavior. The parent may be asked to pick up the child from school immediately.**
3. **Second occurrence – the parent will be called to pick up the child immediately. The parent will be asked to keep the child at home for a day if they are in the 4 day or 5 day program.**
4. **Third occurrence – the child may be dismissed from the preschool.**
5. Techniques we employ to redirect and modify behaviors are as follows:
   1. Giving positive verbal rewards encourages acceptable behavior. This reinforces a child’s good feeling about their behavior and serves as an example to the other children to act in such a way as to receive this praise. Asking a child to stop and think about their unpleasant behavior enables that child to work at self-control.
   2. For a child not cooperating in a group listening situation, the child is seated by a teacher and reminded of acceptable behavior.
   3. Removal from the group for a period of “time-out” is the next tactic used for a child who continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. This time-out is not punishment, but rather a time when the child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for, and decide for themselves when they are ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior.

If behavior problems persist, the parents are asked to a conference to discuss what may be helpful in motivating their child to behave in an acceptable way. It may be suggested that the child be involved in a behavior modification program from outside assistance such as “Project Enlightenment”, with the parents being involved in the process.

If a child is unmanageable, shows excessive aggressive behavior and a constant disruption to the class, the preschool has the right to dismiss the child from the program.

## *Special Needs*:

A child with special needs is a child who, because of his/her unique medical or developmental difficulties, has needs in addition to those of his or her peers. Sunrise UMC Preschool is not a special needs preschool. Our teachers are not trained to provide specific assistance to children who have special needs.

1. If known, children who have been evaluated and diagnosed with a specific disorder will be observed by the Preschool Director and age appropriate teacher to decide if the Preschool could provide for the child’s needs without diminishing the care/time teaching to all children in the class. **This will be done before the child enters the Preschool**.
2. If a child (not diagnosed) enrolled in the preschool exhibits developmental/behavioral difficulties which negatively affect the class, parents will be notified and a plan to help the child in the classroom will be implemented. If a change is not seen within 2 weeks, the Director will get the parent’s signed permission to have the child observed by an outside source (i.e. Project Enlightenment) to determine the best source of learning for the child, if any therapeutic intervention is necessary, and if placement at another Preschool is indicated.
3. If our Preschool believes it cannot provide for a child’s needs, we will ask that the child be removed from our preschool, and tuition will be refunded.

# Financial Policies

## *Preschool*:

* Preschool tuition is based on the annual school year calendar, which is September - May. It is divided into 9 equal monthly payments. There is no tuition reduction for school vacations, inclement weather days, holidays, or absent days.
* Preschool tuition is due on the 1st of every month.
* A late fee of $20 will be assessed after 5 late days. Persistent tardiness in paying tuition may result in escalation of this charge.
* There will be a $10 fee for all returned checks. After 2 returned checks during one school year, we reserve the right to no longer accept checks as a form of payment.
* A non-refundable registration fee must be collected at the time of enrollment to hold your child’s place in the program.
* If the account is delinquent for more than 10 days, your child will not be accepted back into the program until the account is paid in full.
* We accept payment by cash, check or ACH draft.

Fee Schedule

Tuition for 2023-2024

2-Day, 2-Year Old Class $230

3 day, 2-Year Old Class $255

2-Day, 3-Year Old Class $260

3-Day, 3-Year Old Class $270

3-Day, 4-Year Old Class $285

4-Day, 4-Year Old Class $330

5-Day, 4-Year Old Class $345

## *Termination or Early Withdrawal*

If a parent/guardian wishes to withdraw their child from Sunrise United Methodist Preschool, we require a **two-week written notice**. Voicemails or verbal communication is not an acceptable means of communication of withdrawal. The account will be charged for two weeks after receiving the notice whether the child attends the program or not. If the child is withdrawn from the preschool program within the last month of school for reasons other than illness or moving, parents/guardians will be responsible for the last month’s tuition.

# Emergency Preparedness Plan

An emergency plan has been developed to help our staff and students be prepared for emergency situations. Emergency actions may include evacuation and internal lockdown. Childcare staff will receive emergency operations training during orientation and annual training with all updated information. Our staff will complete a fire drill and lockdown drill twice a year. It is vital that parents keep their child’s emergency contact information up to date.

# Inclement Weather

Our programs may be forced to close or delay opening due to severe weather conditions. Parents will be notified to pick up their child(ren) within the hour if the need arises due to inclement weather and/or facility closure.

Except for the opening and closing dates, the SUMCP will operate on the same schedule as the Wake County Public School System traditional calendar, including holidays, but we will be open on teacher workdays.

SUMC Preschool will close for snow days when the WCPSS is closed for snow days. When the public schools open one hour late due to weather conditions, SUMCP will begin at 10 am. When the public school system operates on a two to three hour delay, SUMCP will close for the day. Schedule changes will be announced for Wake County delays on WRAL and WPTF Radio. Closing and delay information will be sent out via teachers on Class Dojo, email, and will be updated on the school’s Facebook and Instagram pages.

**The Preschool will be unable to make up snow days.**

# Health and Safety Procedures

## *Illness*:

To ensure the safety of all students and staff, we ask that you do not bring your children to the center when they are sick. Students **must** be illness free without the aid of medication for **24 hours** prior to returning to school.

Please do not bring your child to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

* Constant cough or wheezing
* Severe headache
* Excessive nasal discharge
* Vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Undiagnosed rash
* Discharge from eyes
* Sore throat
* Ear pain
* Any contagious childhood ailment such as strep throat, pink eye, ring worm, impetigo, etc.

A student who becomes ill or has a temperature of **100.4 or higher** will be separated from the other children until a parent or guardian can pick them up.

The Preschool will not be responsible for the administration of any type of medication, whether it is prescription or over the counter.

In the case of a student with severe allergies, food allergies or other allergies, the parent must provide a Food Allergy Action Plan completed by the child’s physician that is updated yearly. The parents must also provide an epi-pen and Benadryl to keep at the pre-school when the Food Allergy Action Plan calls for these medications to be administered by the preschool staff in an emergency.

When children in any of our programs have been exposed to a communicable disease listed in the Department of Health’s current communicable disease chart (https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/), the parents will be notified in writing within 2 hours or the next business day of the program being informed, unless forbidden by law, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported to parents immediately.

## *Student Health Requirements***:**

Public school-required immunizations (appropriate for the child’s age) are also required for SUMCP students prior to admission. A copy of the student’s vaccination records must be completed and updated as necessary. **We do not accept any immunization waivers**.

## *Injuries*:

If your child is injured, basic first aid will be administered. If deemed necessary, a parent or guardian may be contacted. Accidents will be reported to parents upon pickup and the parent will be given a copy of an incident report.

In cases of emergency, 911 will be called and the parent or guardian will be notified immediately.

# *Open Invitation*

Parents and guardians are always welcome at our school. We encourage you to come and observe our programs. In order to maintain a smooth transition from student to staff, we request your observation is scheduled/discussed with the preschool staff prior to arrival and limited to 30 minutes or less.

Your participation in our programs is encouraged and welcomed for special celebrations and end of the year events. Each teacher will ask for parent volunteers as they need them. We look forward to working with you throughout the year.

# **Guidelines for Release of Students to Separated or Divorced Parents**

## *Release of the Child*

1. If there is no court order or separation agreement concerning custody of the child, either parent or legal guardian) has the same right to see the child at school or have the child released to him or her at the end of the school day.
2. Parents must notify the school director of visitation or custodial limits if the school is to be expected to follow them.
   1. Unless notified otherwise, the school assumes that both parents have equal access to the child.
   2. The custodial parent should provide the school a copy of the cover page, pages specifying applicable provisions, and signature page of the court order or separation agreement. In the absence of official documentation, school officials have no authority to deny either parent access to the child.
   3. Out-of-state court orders should be honored by the school.
3. School officials should carefully read the specifics of the court order or separation agreement.
   1. If a court order or separation agreement awards custody to either parent, the school should follow the wishes of the custodial parent regarding school day visits with the child or release of the child at the end of the school day.
   2. When limited visitation privileges are specified, the school should act in accord with the specified provisions (e.g. custodial rights on certain days which allow for visiting the classroom with the child for school events or picking up the child after school).
   3. Visits with the child during the school day should conform, not only to the court order or separation agreement, but also to the rules and usual procedures of the school.
4. When the school has not been provided a court order or separation agreement and a non-enrolling parent seeks physical custody of the child at the school over the objection of the enrolling parent, the school should notify the enrolling parent before releasing the child.
5. School officials should clarify with the parents that school officials cannot settle parental disputes and can only follow the provisions of a court order or separation agreement.
6. When in the judgment of school officials the health and/or safety of the child is at issue, the school should not release the child to the non-enrolling parent. In such instances, the director or designee should notify the Department of Social Services, the police department, and the enrolling parent to explain the situation.
7. When the custodial parent is incarcerated and two (2) or more parties present themselves to have the child released to them, school officials will make every effort to ascertain the wishes of the incarcerated custodial parent before releasing the child to the presenting persons.
8. If the wishes of the incarcerated custodial parent cannot be ascertained, the director must use her/his best judgment in releasing the child to the non-custodial parent or other relative.

Legal orders regarding custody and visitation are kept on file in the school office

# **Program Information Agreements**

To ensure an understanding and acknowledgement of program information, please review each item below and initial:

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Staff will attempt to notify me whenever my child becomes ill, has behavior issues, or in situations of emergency or inclement weather. I will arrange to have my child picked up within 30 minutes of notification.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ If my child or someone in my household comes down with a reportable communicable disease, I/We will notify staff within 24 hours so they can notify the parents of other students.

\_\_\_\_\_\_I/We have read and understand the behavior guidelines stated in the Parent handbook and understand that a child can be dismissed from the preschool for excessive disruptive behavior and causing a constant disruption to the classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ An emergency operations plan has been developed to help staff and participants be prepared for situations. This is posted in all classrooms and is updated each Fall.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ I/We will provide my child’s immunization record by my child’s first day of attendance.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ I/We understand that the terminations/withdrawal policy of SUMC requires a two-week written notice. If proper notice is not provided, I will be responsible for the tuition fees.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tuition is due prior to attendance. I/We are aware of the specific tuition fees and deadlines for the registered program. Late payments will be assessed and could result in the child being unable to attend programs.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ I/We hereby certify that all information noted above is correct and true and agree to abide by the policies and procedures in the Parent Handbook.

# Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have read the Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool’s Handbook which is available from the Sunrise UMC Preschool office and website:

https://mysunrise.org/preschool-documents-and-forms/

If the website is unavailable, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool’s Handbook at the time I am signing this form. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and be familiar with the policy’s contents and if I have any questions, I will contact the preschool director for any clarification that I may need.

Additionally, I agree to abide by the preschool’s policy and procedures set out in the parent handbook.

Student Name:

Parent/Guardian Name (please print):

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Upon completion of this acknowledgement sheet, please sign and return it to the director as soon as possible.