



# 2023-2024

## Parent Handbook

v 6.0

1405 Rockbridge Rd. SW  
Stone Mountain, GA 30087  
470-395-6035

[www.mountainparkumc.org/mppreschool](http://www.mountainparkumc.org/mppreschool)  
[preschool@mountainparkumc.org](mailto:preschool@mountainparkumc.org)

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**Mary Darr, Assistant Director of MPUMC Preschool**  
*Mountain Park UMC Preschool holds an exemption with  
Bright From the Start and is not licensed, nor is required to be licensed,  
by the state.*

## Version Control

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1.0	July 2020	Amy Stephens	Initial Handbook
2.0	5/11/21	Amy Stephens	Updates/Corrections for 2021-2022 School Year
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5.0	6/29/2022	Brittany Yeo	Handbook Updates
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Dear Families,

Welcome to Mountain Park United Methodist Church Preschool! We are so glad that you have chosen our school as a part of your child's early learning years. Here at MPUMC Preschool we are committed to partnering with you as we seek to educate the whole child in a safe and loving, Christian environment. Each child's development is uniquely his/her own and will be treated as such. We will encourage our students to explore, experiment and discover. We provide an opportunity for each child to learn through play with a balance of self-discovery and teacher directed activities.

Our preschool is a ministry of Mountain Park United Methodist Church and has been a part of the Mountain Park area for over forty (40) years. We are proud of our reputation in the surrounding community and regularly receive positive feedback from the elementary schools as our students continue to excel in their programs. We have a wonderful legacy of service and enjoy it when we see our alumni at family events and are even prouder to be serving our second-generation students at our preschool!

We hope this handbook will help you understand our approach to early childhood education and appreciate the significant role that you play in supporting your child's learning. The reading of this handbook will help us all to ensure a quality preschool. It is our joy and privilege to watch your child grow and reach their full potential. We pray that you will find our school to be a blessing in the life of your child and family. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the school office. The school phone number is 470-395-6035 and our email is [preschool@mountainparkumc.org](mailto:preschool@mountainparkumc.org). We are looking forward to a fantastic school year!

In His Service,

*Beth McWilliams*

Beth McWilliams, Director &  
The MPUMC Preschool Staff

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## Mission Statement

*It is our mission to provide a safe, loving, Christian environment in which each child is given opportunities to explore and experience activities, at his or her own pace, to enhance cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and physical development.*

## Admissions

### Nondiscriminatory Policy

MPUMC Preschool, a ministry of Mountain Park United Methodist Church, admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational or admissions policies.

### Enrollment

Parents with children ages one to four are eligible to apply for enrollment in MPUMC Preschool. Admission requirements are as follows:

- Children must be the age of the class that is being requested as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year.
- Parents will select class days and pay a registration and activity fee in advance to secure and guarantee a place in the school for the desired days.
- MPUMC Preschool will make no guarantees for teacher selection or for keeping classes together. Classes will be determined based on ensuring a good balance of boys/girls with a reasonable age spread. Teacher recommendations, as well as the director's discretion, is used in determining the best overall class make-up with attention to the well-being of the children being the most important factor.
- Children must be fully potty trained to enter the three or four year program.
- Children under the age of 24 months are only allowed to attend class a maximum of eight hours per week.

### Registration

Priority Registration for the following school year will open on the first day of the second semester for currently enrolled students, alumni (within the past three years) and Mountain Park United Methodist Church members. To register, any current or previous families must be current on all fees and tuition. Priority registration ends on January 31. Open Registration begins on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Preschool classes are filled as openings are available.

- Registration fee is *not* a part of the tuition and is *non-refundable*. This fee covers materials used by students and teachers, as well as other required costs the school may incur. This fee is due with the submission of registration paperwork at the time of enrollment.
- Activity fee is *not* a part of the tuition or the registration fee. This fee is due at the time of registration and is *non-refundable*. This fee is used to help defray the cost of special events for our school and family engagement programs such as Farm Day, V.I.P. Day, Thanksgiving Feasts, etc.

## **Tuition**

The ministry of MPUMC Preschool is self-supporting and non-profit. Tuition is an annual amount divided into ten equal payments (August-May) for your convenience. ***We cannot make any deductions for absences, vacations, or holidays.*** Monthly tuition is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and is considered late after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Payment may be made through Procure using a credit card, which will incur a processing fee. Your invoices will be posted to your Procure account, and you will be reminded by email 5 – 10 days in advance that payment is due. You can set up your payments to be made automatically. A nominal fee is charged for an ACH withdrawal. Payments may also be made by cash or check utilizing the envelope sent home in your child's folder.

## **Delinquent Payment**

If your monthly payment is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month, you will be charged a late fee of \$20. If not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, there will be an additional \$5 late fee for each day payment is late. If your child's tuition is not received after 30 days, your child may be withdrawn from the school and his or her spot may be given to someone else on our waiting list. If you have any concerns about the due date, please get in touch with the director to make arrangements for your payment.

## **Withdrawal**

If you must withdraw your child from school, parents are required to give 30 days written notice prior to the date of the withdrawal. Parents are responsible for all tuition payments up to and through the 30-day notification period.

## **Returned Check Policy**

There will be a \$35 fee charged for any returned check, and you will be expected to pay any fees incurred.

## **Required Forms**

We will require a *Certificate of Immunization* (Form #3231) from your child's doctor or the County Health Department. Children cannot be admitted to preschool if this form is not on file. This form is required to be up to date and must be replaced once the expiration date has passed. In addition, we will need complete information on file through Procure regarding emergency medical information, authorization for pick-up and photo and video release for each child. *Authorization for pick-up:* It is important to keep this information current at all times. Please inform the persons authorized to pick up your child that we will ask for a picture ID the first time that they arrive to pick up your child. In addition, your child will not be released to someone who is not listed on the authorization for pick up.

# General Operations

## School Schedule

MPUMC Preschool is open Monday-Friday from 9:30a.m. -1:30 p.m. *With the exception of the start and end dates, and Good Friday (the Friday before Easter), MPUMC Preschool follows Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) calendar, closing during the school breaks and teacher workdays. We will be open on most digital learning days and any exception will be indicated on our school calendar included with this handbook. A Gwinnett County school calendar will be provided in your take home packet at Open House. Also, parents will be provided with a monthly calendar of events and a monthly newsletter with important dates provided.*

## Inclement Weather

MPUMC Preschool follows Gwinnett County Public Schools for all delayed starts or closings due to inclement weather. Please listen to AM750 WSB or a local television station. If Gwinnett County announces an early closing, MPUMC Preschool will close immediately to allow adequate time for parents to arrive for pick up and for preschool staff members to leave to pick up their own children. If Gwinnett County has a delayed opening time, MPUMC Preschool will be closed for the day. All changes in operating hours due to inclement weather will be communicated to parents with as much advance notice as is possible through the parent portal, e-mail, and/or social media. We also reserve the right to open or close the school at the discretion of the staff if necessary, based on location specific needs and those decisions will be communicated, as well.

## Arrival Procedures

*Morning drop-off/carpool begins at 9:30a.m. and ends at 9:45a.m. We will clear all parents from the hallway promptly at 9:45am so that teachers can begin their morning classroom routines.*

**Walk-In Drop Off**- Doors will open promptly at 9:30am. If you wish to walk your child to class, you will park in the upper parking lot and enter through the doors closest to the playground. A teacher will greet all students at the classroom door to assist with check-in, but we do ask that parents give love at the door and let their child enter the classroom independently. The more confident that you are about this process the more confident your child will be about this process. Please remember that we are growing independence, even in our youngest students, every day.

**Carpool Drop Off** - Staff will be outside to collect your child from the car at 9:30am. For your child's safety, please do not allow your children to be out of their car seat while in the carpool line. Parents should remain alert and off cell phones.

## Departure Procedures - Only Carpool Available

*Afternoon carpool begins at 1:30p.m. and ends at 1:45p.m. All children **MUST** be picked up by 1:45p.m. A late fee will be assessed for routine tardiness. If you find that you will be late in picking up your child, please contact the preschool office: 470-395-6035.*

All MPUMC Preschool families will be given two copies of their carpool number. This number **MUST** be displayed on your rear-view mirror with the number facing out. This

will enable us to run carpool in an efficient manner. If you would like to purchase an additional set (2) of numbers, you may do so for the cost of \$2. Please contact the school office via email: [preschool@mountainparkumc.org](mailto:preschool@mountainparkumc.org)

For safety reasons, MPUMC Preschool staff will not release your child to any added authorized person without them showing photo ID and they must have a proper car seat for your child.

For both drop-off and pick-up, please form one line of cars entering from the Family Life Center (FLC) direction. When driving up to the covered area, pull forward to the orange cone. This will allow us to accommodate three cars at a time. Once each child is safely in the car, you may move forward to the upper parking lot to buckle your child, since children must be buckled by a parent. Please be patient and remember *every* child's safety is our number one priority.

Please be sure that you are in compliance with The Child Passenger Safety Law in Georgia by visiting the following website:  
<http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/campaigns/child-passenger-safety/>

In addition, MPUMC Preschool staff will not release a child to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Our staff will contact the proper authorities and contact an alternate pick up person for the child.

## Carpool Safety

For the safety and security of our students during carpool, we ask you to abide by the following policies:

- No cell phone use in the carpool line.
- No one will be allowed to enter the school on foot through the carpool entrance during morning drop-off, or afternoon pick-up.
- No conferences can take place during carpool.
- Children **MUST** be in the backseat.
- Children are required to be properly restrained in an appropriate child passenger safety seat or booster seat.





## Late Policy

In the event that you must bring your child to school later than 9:45am, please ring the bell at carpool entrance to be allowed in the building. A staff member will meet you at the door and your child will be accompanied by a staff member to his or her classroom. This is to minimize disruption to the class that is already in session and to minimize the number of people in the building for health and safety.

**Children not picked up by 1:45pm will be kept in their classroom to wait for their parents and a late fee of \$1/per minute, per child, in cash will be collected after 1:50pm.**

We do understand that sometimes emergencies arise. If this should happen to you, please call the preschool office as soon as possible or send a message through our parent portal to your child's teacher. The message can then be passed on, and your child will be comforted to know that you are on your way.

## Designated Adults

No child will be released to anyone other than his/her parent or designated adult, without prior written or verbal notice. Individuals allowed to pick up a child/children from school MUST be listed on the emergency contact form via email to Preschool Director or parent can add via the parent portal. We **will not** and **cannot** accept verbal messages from children. We cannot allow a child to leave school with anyone without the permission of the parent. Please send a dated, written note to the preschool with your child in the morning if someone other than the parent is picking up the child that day. Identification must be presented by the new pick-up person prior to the child/children being released. If necessary, the Preschool should be made aware of any individuals, including their name and photo, that are NOT allowed to pick up a child/children. This will be placed on the child's records.

## Parent Communication

Your child will be issued a folder that will be used for communication between the classroom/school and home. Please check the folder daily and send back any required forms as needed promptly. **Please make sure your child brings their folder to school daily.** Parents of children in our one and two-year-old classes will receive daily communication about their child's day. Children in our three and four-year-old classes will receive weekly communication about their child's week.

You are also encouraged to take advantage of our parent portal. This is offered through our preschool software program and allows you to manage information for your family, keep up with updates regarding your child, view statements, and even make payments.

Our teachers want to partner with parents to provide the best care possible for your child. We recognize that you may need to communicate with your child's teacher and ask that you do so in one of the following ways:

- (1) Send a note in your child's folder asking the teacher to respond
- (2) Email your child's teacher

(3) Set-up an appointment with a phone call to the preschool office at 470-395-6035. Teachers will not be available for communication via text message. Please only use the forms of communication stated above.

### *Parent-Teacher Conferences*

\*Parents will have the opportunity for Parent-Teacher conferences twice a year. If you feel you need a conference in addition to these scheduled times, please communicate that with your child's teacher and we will make every effort to accommodate your request. **In order to ensure everyone's safety, please do not use carpool or the doorway as a time to arrange meetings or discuss your child's progress.**

## **Classroom and Curriculum**

### **MPUMC Preschool Staff**

We are proud to have a skilled staff who truly love children and strive to create the best possible learning environment for their students. Our staff is committed to delivering a preschool experience that establishes a life-long love of learning for your child within a safe and loving Christian environment. Our staff is actively involved in ongoing professional development including workshops, seminars, and in-service training classes throughout the year. All of our staff have current background checks and those are regularly updated. Each of our classes have a teacher certified in CPR/First Aid/AED.

### **Curriculum**

Children learn through active play as well as by observing what happens when they interact with materials and other people. We use thematic, play-based learning to foster intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical growth in each child. Themes enable children to acquire information and concepts through meaningful activities that take place in each of the centers in the classroom. Our curriculum includes creative development through a mixture of teacher guided activities in both large and small groups, learning centers, free play, music, outdoor play, and art. Weekly lesson plans are developed to target the various age-appropriate developmental domains for each classroom. With all ages we use the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) as a framework for learning, which can be found at [www.gelds.decal.ga.gov](http://www.gelds.decal.ga.gov). Daily schedules and weekly lesson plans are developed by classroom teachers. Parents will receive a copy of their child's daily schedule at the beginning of the school year and weekly themes and learning objectives will be communicated as the year progresses.

All ages 2 - PreK receive a weekly bible verse and lesson with our pastoral staff as part of chapel. Students will have a weekly letter and monthly number, color and shape. We have weekly enrichment in music, movement, science and globetrotting, as well.

The Pre-K (4+ years) is designed to allow your child to smoothly transition into the public school with readiness in reading, math, writing and science. We utilize the "Handwriting Without Tears" program to develop phonological awareness, elementary

handwriting skills and grow as emerging readers. Teachers will have access to develop math and science lessons from Tara West's Little Minds at Work. Teachers will also pull from a variety of available curriculum books to meet the needs of the students in their class.

Kindergarten readiness is the ultimate goal for every child who enters the Mountain Park UMC Preschool program. Each teacher is familiar with kindergarten readiness skills and begins moving toward that goal, starting in the two-year classes. Again, activities are based on developmental appropriateness and are introduced in a logical order and according to Bright from the Start's Georgia Early Learning Development Standards.

### **Child-to-Teacher Ratios**

At MPUMC Preschool, our classroom teacher-to-student ratios stay well below Georgia State requirements. Every classroom has two teachers.

12 - 24 months	8 children (ratio 4:1)
24 - 36 months	8 children (ratio 4:1)
3's	10 children (ratio 5:1)
PreK (4s & 5s)	12 children (ratio 6:1)

### **Discipline**

The MPUMC Preschool staff work hard to offer a warm, loving, safe and enjoyable learning environment for every child. If behavior problems arise, the staff member will handle the situation as positively as possible and make the consequence appropriate for each age-level and each personality.

Several forms of age-appropriate Classroom Management are used to control classroom behaviors:

- Redirection/Distraction offers alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior.
- Verbal Intervention allows the teacher the opportunity to explain to the child the inappropriate behavior and show him/her the appropriate way to handle the situation.
- Logical Consequences allows the teacher to help the child understand the logical consequence of his/her action by removing an object, activity, etc. that is causing the problem.
- 'Take a Break' happens after continuous misbehavior. The child is separated from the group in order to allow him/her to relax and/or calm down. This might mean a short walk with the teacher, leaving the classroom and sitting in a quiet place or a visit to the Director's office. This enables the child to 're-group' and return to the classroom ready to participate.

If the misbehavior continues, or becomes serious, the teacher may:

- Call the parents to discuss the problem.
- Request a conference with the parents at school.
- Request a conference with the parents and the director.

## **Aggressive Behavior**

Occasionally, preschoolers engage in inappropriate behaviors such as biting, scratching, hitting, etc. These types of aggressive behaviors are often a result of miscommunication, peer conflicts, and frustration. MPUMC Preschool believes that moments in which these types of behaviors occur are teachable moments. Preschoolers are learning how to make sense of and handle their emotions. Therefore, when these aggressive behaviors occur, we will talk about positive coping skills and learn how to offer and accept apologies. If it is in the best interest of the children, staff may separate the children involved and seek support from the preschool administration.

If aggressive behaviors (including but not limited to hitting, biting, scratching, pushing, pinching) become persistent, MPUMC Preschool staff may request a conference with the child's parent. In this conference, we will work together to explore possible causes for the continuation of these behaviors. If needed, we will also work to create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) so that we can focus on helping the child to grow and develop to reach their full potential. If these aggressive behaviors do not improve within the specific time constraint identified in the BIP, MPUMC Preschool reserves the right to require the child to take a break from preschool for a specific amount of time, or to discontinue service to a family if necessary. MPUMC Preschool also reserves the right to discontinue service to a family if it becomes apparent that the program is not equipped to meet the developmental or psychological needs of the child/student. Every effort will be made to resolve any problems prior to termination.

## **Dismissal**

We reserve the right to dismiss a child from the program when a child exhibits behavior which disrupts the class and/or is detrimental to other children. Dismissal can also occur if the director determines a child has not satisfactorily adjusted to the program or if our program is unable to meet the needs of a child.

## **Students with Special Needs**

The identification of special needs at the earliest possible age is the best tool in providing a child with the highest prospect of success. If we see any signs that a child may have special needs, the director will ask for a meeting with the parents to discuss the issues. A plan will be developed that will lead to professional assistance and an evaluation if it is deemed necessary. While our staff is composed of dedicated, caring professionals, we are not staffed by teachers who are trained to work with children with special needs (learning or behavioral). Our utmost desire is to serve the best interest of the child. If the parents have any evidence or suspicions of special needs, including speech, it is their responsibility to advise the director of their concerns as soon as possible. We have developed a wonderful working relationship with the Gwinnett County Special Education Department over the years and can reach out for consultation if needed. If your child's needs cannot be adequately met in our school and it is determined that it is necessary to remove the child from our program, we will make every effort to help you find public or private special services so that the needs of your child can be met.

# Health and Safety Policies

## Health

We take your child's health and safety very seriously here at MPUMC Preschool. We make every effort to maintain a healthy and safe environment for your child through routine cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms, toys, and learning materials.

### Allergies:

Please advise us of any allergies your child may have. Send written instructions if special attention is required.

### Emergency Situations:

In case of an emergency, we will attempt to reach a parent. If immediate medical attention is required, we will call 911 and follow the appropriate CPR/First Aid protocol. **Please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician.** We will keep your child's emergency information on file in our office.

### Injuries

In the case of any injury that results in a bump or trauma to the head, concussion protocol will be administered by the school and the parents will immediately be called and asked to pick up their child out of an abundance of caution.



## I Need to Stay Home if...



I have a <b>Fever</b>	I am <b>Vomiting</b>	I have <b>Diarrhea</b>	I have a <b>Rash</b>	I have <b>Head Lice</b>	I have an <b>Eye Infection</b>	I have been in the <b>Hospital</b>
						
Temperature of 100°F or higher	Within the past 24 hours	Within the past 24 hours	Body rash with itching or fever	Itchy head, active head lice	Redness, itching, and/or "crusty" discharge from eyes	Hospital stay and/or ER visit

## I am Ready to Go Back to School When I am...

Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.	Free from vomiting for at least 2 solid meals without the use of medications.	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours without the use of medications.	Free from rash itching or fever and evaluated by doctor if needed.	Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home and proof is provided to nurse.	Eye has returned to normal or have a note from doctor to return to school.	Released by my medical provider to return to school.
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## **Illness**

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until they can be picked up. If you are called to pick up your child for this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. Parents should pick up their child from the school within one hour from the time they are contacted.

When a contagious illness is reported to the preschool, we will notify parents of affected children (those in the same classroom as the sick child) through written notification. We will maintain the confidentiality of all children. Please direct any questions relating to health and illness to the preschool director by calling the school office or email: [preschool@mountainparkumc.org](mailto:preschool@mountainparkumc.org)

## **Cleaning Protocols**

*Cleaning of the classrooms:* Each morning when the staff arrive, they will wipe down/disinfect all hard/high touch areas (tables/chairs/doorknobs/light switches/counters/large plastic toys). All cleaning products used will be EPA approved. This will also be done before and after mealtimes and at the end of each day. All toys that are put in a child's mouth will go in a separate bucket to be wiped down at the end of the day.

*Cleaning of the building:* All classrooms and bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned nightly. This includes disinfecting all hard surfaces, sinks, toilets, changing tables, floors.

## **Mandated Reporters**

All MPUMC Preschool staff are mandated reporters in the state of Georgia. Staff are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in the state of Georgia. Preschool Staff will follow the procedures set forth in the United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

## **Medications**

We do NOT dispense medication of any kind. The only exception is in the event of a life-threatening allergic reaction in which case we will administer a child's prescription EpiPen and Benadryl or prescribed Inhaler. Proper documentation from the child's parent and physician must be on file in the Preschool Office.

## **Emergency Preparedness and Response**

In the event of a non-medical emergency, including but not limited to fire, tornado, severe weather, and/or lock downs, MPUMC Preschool staff will follow the policies and procedures as outlined in our Emergency Action Plan. We will conduct drills for these emergency situations as mandated by the proper authorities. Should an actual emergency occur, parents will be contacted by a MPUMC Preschool staff member as soon as all children and staff are accounted for and in a safe place. Should we need to

relocate due to a gas leak, all preschoolers will be escorted to The Village Vets. In the event of a significant loss of utilities or building malfunction, parents will be notified to come and pick up their child/children. Extended interruptions could lead to school closure until service is restored/repaired.

### **Safe Sanctuary**

MPUMC Preschool operates under the United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children. A copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Implementation Manual is available from the Preschool Director.

### **Secure Building**

For the safety and security of our students and staff, preschool doors will be locked from 9:45a.m. until dismissal begins at 1:30p.m. Doorbells are present at both entrances, should you need to come to the preschool during the school day.

Visitors are asked to sign in at the preschool office upon their arrival before proceeding to a classroom. Upon leaving, all visitors should sign out at the preschool office. Visitors will be asked to wear a sticker or a ID badge during their school visit. Exceptions to sign in procedures may be made for larger special events.

## **Items Needed From Home**

### **Dress Code**

Children should come to school dressed for active play. It is important to remember that your child will paint and play with messy materials. While we try to keep messes to a minimum, always dress your child in something that you don't mind if it gets messy or stained. *Please label your child's coat, hat, bookbag, etc... with first and last name.*

Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable and easily managed by your child. We go outside whenever possible, so please dress your child accordingly. In the colder months, please make sure your child has a coat with them. Send your child to school in rubber soled shoes that are closed toe and closed healed. Sandals, cowboy boots, rain boots, dress shoes, crocs and shoes which slip off easily inhibit activity and create a safety hazard: therefore, these types of footwear are not permitted. **Only children wearing shoes that are both rubber-soled and closed-toed and closed-healed will be allowed to participate in daily playground or gym activities. The parent will be called and asked to bring appropriate shoes.**

### **Change of Clothing**

Preschool is messy! Sometimes art projects get messy, and even preschoolers who are potty trained can have accidents! Please supply a complete change of clothing including shirt, shorts/pants, underwear, socks, and shoes that can remain at school all year.

Label the clothes with your child's first and last name. If a child has an accident during the school day, soiled clothes will be placed in a bag and put out of reach of children. A staff member will give the bag to the parent at pick up. Any clothes heavily soiled with

feces will be discarded. If clothes are used, please send replacement items the very next school day! If your child is potty training, please make sure you have multiple sets of clothing at school for your child. Please make sure your child's change of clothes are seasonally appropriate.

### **Diapers and Potty Training**

In an effort to maintain a sanitary classroom environment, MPUMC Preschool only uses disposable diapers and wipes. Parents are required to supply those items for their children.

Children that are 12 - 36 months old will need the following items each day they attend - disposable diapers, training pants or underwear and a change of clothing including socks. Please clearly mark your child's belongings with their first and last name.

Children 3 and older must be fully potty trained prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school. Each child must be wearing underwear. **Fully Potty trained is defined as: the child recognizes the need to go to the restroom, enters the restroom on his/her own and manipulates clothing on/off with little or no assistance, and can take care of all toileting issues and washes hands before rejoining class.**

### **Snacks and Lunch**

Parents are required to send in their child's lunch AND snack daily. We are unable to heat up lunch and/or snack items, so please make sure you plan accordingly. Please pack a well-balanced and nutritious lunch and snack for your child that includes a healthy drink. Please make sure that any perishable food items are properly stored with an ice pack in your child's lunch box. We are sensitive to students with nut, dairy, and/or other allergies. Please communicate this directly to your child's teacher as well as note it on their Emergency Student Information Sheet. We will allow nut products in the classrooms depending on the severity of the allergies present within that classroom.

**Please note that some classrooms may be NUT FREE based on the needs of enrolled children.**

Parents of children enrolled in the One-Year-Old Class should send food and drink items that are developmentally appropriate for their child. We do require that students in ALL classes be able to feed themselves. It would be helpful to repackage or pre-open any hard to remove food/drink items (i.e., peeled oranges, cut up fruit, or string cheese removed from packaging) Here are some helpful tips:

- All drink containers/lunchboxes should be clearly labeled with the child's name.
- No glass containers of any kind.
- Water is always available to children.
- Please refrain from sending sticky/messy items to school for lunch/snack.
- No sugary foods, candy, or dessert may be served for snack.



## **Items from Home**

Please do not allow your child to bring gum, candy, money, or toys to school. Toys will be allowed only on special days designated by your classroom teacher. On these days, please do not send valuable toys, toys that are easily broken or toy weapons. MPUMC Preschool enforces a no-guns-at-school policy.

## **Holidays and Celebrations**

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time in the life of a child. We are happy to recognize this day and celebrate with your child. If you would like to send in a special snack food item for your child's birthday, you may do so. Please communicate this in advance with your child's teacher. We ask that you refrain from sending in goodie bags, balloons, or other potentially hazardous items. Please consult with your child's teacher regarding summer birthday celebrations. Our class time cannot be used for your child's birthday party, only for a special birthday snack. If you have a birthday party outside of school and wish to invite children in the class, we will be happy to distribute invitations in the classroom as long as all the children in the class are included.

### **Holidays**

We will celebrate various holidays throughout the school year. Please watch for communication from your child's teacher for specific details about how your child's class will be celebrating and how you can contribute. For the safety of the children, please do not send items to be sent home with the children without the prior approval of the Director. Items sent without prior consent will not be distributed but will be returned to the parent.

We will celebrate Halloween with trick or treating and a costume parade during the last week of October TBD. In addition, a school-wide Thanksgiving Feast will be held on the Thursday before the Thanksgiving break. Each child will be asked to bring one vegetable to be washed and chopped for the soup that will be prepared for the feast. Families will be invited, and parents will be asked to contribute some items to share for the feast.

MPUMC Preschool celebrates Christmas with a Cookies and Cocoa and a performance from each class in December TBD. Christmas will also be celebrated with many special activities for the children to enjoy prior to the break.

The boys and girls will exchange cards for Valentine's Day and an Easter egg hunt will be held in the week preceding or following Easter. Your teacher will provide details and sign-up sheets for each of these events.

## **Fundraisers**

MPUMC Preschool is a self-supporting mission of the Mountain Park United Methodist Church. We hold a variety of family and community fundraisers to help support this mission to continue to bring the students the best learning experience possible. We will be hosting a variety of fundraisers and encourage all families to support them in whatever ways are possible, which may entail volunteering, supporting financially or encouraging participation from friends/family/community at large. Some of the fundraisers that are planned for the coming year are: Lifetouch School Pictures (Fall and Spring), Spirit Nights at local establishments, Santa Workshop, Little Elf Camp, Honey Baked Ham and Party Like a Preschooler Festival with a Silent Auction(Spring). More information on how you can participate will be sent throughout the year. If any parent is interested in volunteering to help organize these or other fundraisers, please contact the director.

## **Parent Volunteers**

Parents are encouraged to visit the school throughout the year and participate in the parent volunteer opportunities. For the safety of our children, please stop by the office and sign in when visiting the school and receive a sticker or badge.

We have organized an enrichment program that encourages parents to get involved in school wide activities. We have many parents who have special skills and talents that would enrich the educational experience of all of our students. Some of the volunteer opportunities include picture day, enrichment classes, mystery readers, assisting with festivals or Christmas parade or other family activities planned by the preschool. Please return the parent volunteer form during the first week of school. We will contact you and together work out a schedule that works for everyone. We encourage you to participate. Not only is this program beneficial to the children, but it can also be an enjoyable experience for the parent! All volunteers that will be working with more than the children in their own child's classroom or will be volunteering in a longer-term (more than 5 days) capacity will be asked to complete a background check. Thanks for your cooperation!

***Classes begin on Tuesday, August 15, 2023***

***Meet & Greet/Open House is on Monday, August 14, 2023,  
from 9:30 - 11:30am***

***The last day of classes is Wednesday, May 15, 2024***

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RELEASE FORM**

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy, read and understand the policies and procedures as outlined in the MPUMC Preschool Parent Handbook. My signature further acknowledges and agrees that I will abide by these policies during the duration of my child's/children's enrollment at MPUMC Preschool.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I understand that my child will not be released to any approved pick up person without a proper car seat.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I understand that all communication with MPUMC Preschool teachers and staff will be done through email and Procare Parent Portal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## School Calendar 2023-2024

<b>Sunday, August 6</b>	Back to School Blessing (10:45 or 11:05 Service)
<b>August 7-11</b>	Pre-Planning: Teachers/Staff Only
<b>Monday, August 14</b>	Open House/Classroom Meet & Greet- 9:30am
<b>Tuesday, August 15</b>	First Day of School Classes Begin at 9:30am
<b>Monday, September 4</b>	No School - Labor Day
<b>Thursday-Monday, October 5-9</b>	No School - Fall Break
<b>Wednesday-Thursday, October 11-12</b>	Fall Pictures
<b>Tuesday, November 7</b>	No School - Election Day
<b>Thursday, November 16</b>	Family Thanksgiving Feast
<b>Monday-Friday, November 20-24</b>	No School - Thanksgiving Break
<b>Thursday, December 7</b>	Cookies & Cocoa Christmas Program
<b>Tuesday-Thursday, December 12-14</b>	Santa's Workshop (Fundraiser/Info TBA)
<b>Friday, December 15</b>	Last Day of School- First Semester
<b>December 18- January 3</b>	No School - Christmas Holidays
<b>Thursday, January 4</b>	Back to School - Second Semester
<b>Monday, January 15</b>	No School - MLK Jr. Holiday
<b>Thursday-Monday, February 15-19</b>	No School - Winter Break
<b>Thursday-Friday, March 7-8</b>	Spring Pictures
<b>Friday, March 15</b>	No School - Staff Development Day
<b>Monday-Friday April 1-5</b>	No School - Spring Break
<b>Monday-Friday May 6-10</b>	Teacher Appreciation Week
<b>Monday, May 13</b>	Pre-K Graduation
<b>Wednesday, May 15</b>	Last Day of School - Happy Summer!!
<b>Thursday-Friday, May 16-17</b>	Post Planning/Teacher Work Day

\*The school calendar is subject to change based on need, staffing, and emergency situations that may arise.

## Helpful Tips for A Successful Preschool Year

Preschoolers are amazing! Not only are they growing physically, but they are also growing socially, emotionally, and cognitively. They are constantly taking in the world around them and working to process and make sense of this great BIG world. They are learning how to handle their emotions and how to have appropriate social interactions, and sometimes, it can be overwhelming for them. Here are some tips to implement in your family to help make this a successful year in preschool.

- Maintain a schedule- preschoolers thrive on routine. Work to maintain a family schedule as much as possible so your preschooler knows what to expect.
- Get plenty of rest- children between the ages of 1-3 years old are recommended to get between 12-14 hours of sleep per night and children 3-5 years old are recommended to get between 10-13 hours of sleep! Lack of sleep and rest can mean your preschooler might become more irritable and less in control of their emotions. Help them be at their best by making sure they get enough sleep.
- Wake up early enough each morning to allow plenty of time to get ready for school. Rushing around is stressful for both parent and child.
- Eat a healthy breakfast- preschool is hard work for a child. They need a healthy breakfast to give them the energy they need for the day. Avoid overly sugary foods and drinks.
- Provide choices- preschoolers are constantly growing in their independence but there is a lot that they do not have control over in their lives. Allow them to make simple choices whenever it is possible.
- Model a positive attitude and excitement about school, friends, and teachers.
- Spend time together at home. Activities such as reading stories, playing games, completing puzzles, and cooking together all help support what your child is learning at school.
- Communicate with your child's teacher. We want to partner with you! Have a question? Please do not hesitate to ask. Our teachers have many years of experience and often have great ideas to help you navigate the early childhood years.