

Director's Welcome Letter

Welcome to Snellville United Methodist Church Preschool & Kindergarten. We are honored that you and your family are joining us and feel privileged that you have placed your trust in us to care for your child.

As a ministry of the church, our purpose is to provide each child a variety of opportunities to foster a love of learning and a strong educational foundation while experiencing the unconditional love of Jesus. Our talented and dedicated staff will provide experiences that stimulate physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Our main goal is to make learning fun so that your child looks forward to coming to school each day! Our teachers plan and implement lessons which encourage children to be active participants.

We recognize that you are your child's primary teacher, and we look forward to forming a partnership with you to help your son or daughter reach their full potential. Communication is an integral part in the parent/teacher relationship. Our teachers will communicate on a regular basis by email or newsletters that will come home in your child's backpack.

I encourage you to be an active participant in your child's school experience. There will be many opportunities to volunteer in the classroom, attend Parent Teacher Association meetings, help with cooking activities, or chaperone field trips. Your participation is one of the main components that make our preschool and kindergarten outstanding! Please recognize your child's accomplishments when they bring work home, and remember that we celebrate the process of learning rather than the finished products. It is amazing to see the growth your child will achieve throughout the year.

This handbook contains policies, procedures, and other useful information designed to make your time at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten enjoyable. Please feel free to call me or drop by my office at any time with questions or concerns. My door is always open.

All of us at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten are looking forward to a wonderful year getting to know you. We cannot wait to see all that God has in store for our students this year.

Blessings,
Debbie McIntosh, Director

A Warm Welcome from Our Pastor

It is a pleasure to welcome you and your child to SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten. At Snellville United Methodist Church, we believe that children are gifts from God and we are committed to being in ministry with families in the Snellville community and surrounding areas. At SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten, you will find loving and dedicated staff members who place the highest priority on creating a secure and affirming environment in which your child will be nurtured to grow and thrive. We consider you to be a part of our church family and you are very important to us. I want you to know of my personal commitment to you and your family and hope that you will call upon me or any of our clergy if there are opportunities for us to serve you.

It is my hope that you will feel at home and experience the love of Christ each time you come onto our campus. If you do not currently have a church home, please come and join us some Sunday at 8:30, 9:30 or 11:00 a.m. for worship. Additionally, I want you to know that you are invited and welcome to participate in any of our programs, classes, ministries and events throughout the year. I am grateful that you have chosen to entrust your child to our care and I look forward to the chance to meet you. May God Bless and keep you!

Yours in Faith and Service,
Jim Cantrell, Senior Pastor

**Snellville United Methodist Church
Preschool & Kindergarten
Parent Handbook**

Our Mission Statement

SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten exists to provide a quality curriculum founded on academic excellence in a Christ centered learning environment. Our program recognizes that each child is a unique gift from God. Therefore, we attempt to individualize instruction according to the needs and skills of each student.

Our Strategy

Our program nurtures the whole child by facilitating physical, spiritual, and intellectual growth. Our staff serves as Christian role models to guide this growth.

Christian values are taught and modeled in our classrooms. We know that a child's attitude toward learning is established during the first years of school. When these preschool years bring pleasure and satisfaction, children are more likely to enjoy success and build self-confidence. By recognizing each child's potential, we strive to build an atmosphere of love and understanding.

Our children and their families are extremely important to us. We hope to minister to all those who place their trust in us.

Program Goals

1. To provide a nurturing, flexible, and calm atmosphere where self-concept is enhanced, independence is encouraged, and expectations are clear.
2. To provide an atmosphere where the foundation of respect for others is established, along with respect for the equipment and materials.
 - A. To foster security with adults who are not members of the family.
 - B. To encourage neatness in putting items away when the children have finished using them.
3. To develop an active curiosity about the world in which each child lives and encourage an enthusiasm for learning, which stimulates exploratory behavior and creativity.
4. To develop spiritual growth.
 - A. To observe Christian atmosphere, attitudes, and behavior through adult examples.
 - B. To experience a sense of trust by learning that the church is a safe, loving place and to develop a sense of belonging.
 - C. To participate in prayer, recognize the Bible as a special book, hear and enjoy Bible stories, and to sing and talk about God.
5. To promote emotional growth.
 - A. To build self-confidence and a sense of self-worth by allowing choices within limits and to build on successful experiences.
 - B. To provide a warm accepting environment for each child to work and play.
 - C. To encourage curiosity and a sense of wonder with an emphasis on self-motivation.
 - D. To help develop self-discipline in each child.
6. To stimulate social growth.
 - A. To promote and instill a sense of caring and sensitivity toward others.
 - B. To develop recognition of group needs versus individual differences.
 - C. To aid in the development of problem solving skills.
 - D. To help each child learn how to participate in a group.
7. To promote intellectual growth.
 - A. To provide an atmosphere where children discover and explore, teaching independence through learning how and where to find solutions.
 - B. To provide a wide variety of activities within a routine where cooperative play is encouraged. Curriculum areas of art, science, math, cooking, movement, dramatic play, and language provide each child with opportunities to trust their own feelings about what is learned, heard, seen and done, and begin sharing these experiences with others.
8. To promote physical/motor development in which each child uses their body in a variety of active ways by participating in fine and gross motor activities at each child's developmental level.

9. To be supportive of parents and families, encourage involvement, and provide open and honest communication while using tact and discretion.

Certification & Licensing

SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten ("School") has been certified as a Program of Excellence for Young Children by the United Methodist Church Preschool Association of the North Georgia Conference since 1996. The certification process involves the entire school in self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement. We are exempt from licensing by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

A Glimpse Inside What Your Child Is Learning

At our school, we know that the preschool child is ready to acquire many skills. We believe that children learn best when there is a planned curriculum of activities focused on a particular theme or concept. Through the thematic approach, children are stimulated, guided, and encouraged through carefully planned activities that allow them to develop at their own rate and to experience success. Within these themes, academic areas of math, literacy, fine motor, large motor, science, social studies, music, religion, and art are incorporated. Age specific skills are introduced and reinforced throughout the year. As the children are developmentally ready, they will pick up these skills. The atmosphere is always positive, happy, and accepting. The teacher's foremost goal is showing warmth and encouragement to the child. We feel the child's first learning experience must be fun and successful. A good self-image and "I can do it" perspective is a vital attitude to instill in a preschool child.

Below you will find a general overview of the topics your child will have the opportunity to experience this year. Your child's teacher will provide more specific details or additional topics in monthly newsletters.

Toddlers Thematic Units

September: I Am Learning About Me, Jesus Loves Me, My Teachers Love Me
October: I Am Growing & Learning About New Things, Jesus Is Our Friend
November: I Can See & Hear Because God Made Us With Eyes & Ears
December: Christmas Is A Happy Time When We Celebrate Jesus' Birth
January: Winter's All Around Me With Cold and Snow
February: God Gives Us Day and Night With The Sun, Moon, and Stars
March: God Gives Us Animals, Fish, and Birds & We Can Help Care For Them
April: God Gives Us Plants and Flowers & Eyes To See The Beauty
May: God Gives Us Springtime With Birds Singing & Rain With Rainbows

Two Year Old Thematic Units

September: All About Me, My New School, Being A Helper, Playing With Friends
October: Fall, Apples, Pumpkins, Leaves, My Five Senses
November: Healthy Foods, My Family Gives Thanks
December: Christmas, Christmas Trees, Jesus Is Born, Stars
January: Colors and Shapes, Winter, Snow and Ice, My Community Helpers
February: Pets, Farm, Zoo
March: Day and Night, Spring
April: Easter, Plants, Planting Seeds, Bugs
May: Transportation, Oceans, Beach, Fish

Three Year Old Thematic Units

September: All About Me, My New Friends, My Family, I Am Unique
October: Fall, Apples, Pumpkins, Changes In the Seasons
November: Giving Thanks, Fall
December: Christmas, Christmas Around the World
January: Winter, Ice and Snow
February: Friendship and Love, Groundhog Day, Dental Health
March: Dr. Seuss, Community Helpers
April: Spring, Farm Animals
May: End of the Year Wrap-Up, Summer

Four Year Old Thematic Units

September:	Friends At School, Our Families, Apples
October:	Fabulous Fall: Pumpkins, Nocturnal Animals, Fire Prevention, Halloween
November:	Pilgrims, Native American Indians, Thanksgiving
December:	Christmas Around The World, The Birth of Jesus
January:	Winter Wonderland: Weather, Hibernation, Nutrition, Our Amazing Bodies
February:	Groundhog Day, Dental Health, Valentine's Day, President's Day
March:	Dr. Seuss, St. Patrick's Day, Space, Spectacular Spring
April:	Easter, Earth Day, Recycling, All About Bugs, Life Cycle of A Butterfly
May:	Zoo, Wild Animals, Creatures of the Sea

Kindergarten Thematic Units

September:	Five Senses, Apples
October:	Autumn, Our World/Geography
November:	The First Thanksgiving, Motion/Gravity
December:	Holiday Celebrations Around The World, Leo Lionni Author Study
January:	Arctic, Jan Brett Author Study
February:	Dental Health, Weather
March:	Dr. Seuss Author Study, Publishing A Book
April:	Spring/Easter, National and International Park Project
May:	Georgia, American Symbols

Curriculum

Our curriculum allows every child to explore and learn through teacher directed, self-directed, and hands on activities. This is accomplished through small and large group activities, learning centers, outdoor play, and numerous enrichment opportunities.

The curriculum was developed using a variety of Early Childhood resources and includes, but is not limited to publications from Wee Learn, Saxon, and A Beka. Our Bible curriculum allows us to teach the Bible concepts as they relate to young children. Big books, classics, poems, rhymes, stories, finger plays, dramatic play, story dictation, and Letter of the Week are used to introduce skills and concepts that lay the foundation for your child's future success in the area of reading and language arts. In addition to learning about each student, the traditions in their families, and their special place in God's world, the local community is also a focus of our Social Studies units. Our designated handwriting style is D'Nealian. Manipulatives are the basis of our math curriculum. Unifix Cubes, Pattern Blocks, Geo Board and common objects are used to teach math concepts like creating, identifying, copying, and extending patterns. Numeral recognition and counting are taught through "work jobs". This concrete beginning provides a firm foundation for more abstract concepts later.

Our kindergarten program uses a variety of curriculum. A Beka curriculum is used for Science, Social Studies, and Math. The Saxon curriculum is used for Language Arts. My Smart Journal is a curriculum designed to foster strong written skills. It encourages creative writing and gives the child the opportunity to practice their writing skills on a regular basis. The kindergarten student will be tested for academic readiness prior to enrollment.

Centers

All classrooms are center based that frequently change throughout the school year. The following centers are included in all age levels: books, blocks, manipulatives, dramatic play, art, and science. Other centers may include computer, sand & water play, listening, language arts and math.

Specials

Chapel

Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ~Matthew 19:14. We are dedicated to sharing God's love with each child in our care. Weekly chapel classes lay the foundation for children's spiritual growth and love for Christ. Creative lesson plans, which cross the curriculum, are simple enough for young learners to understand yet show them the importance of having Jesus in our lives. Chapel is an interactive and exciting worship experience. Bible stories from both the Old and New

Testaments, songs and fingerplays, puppets, science experiments, gross motor games and drama help students learn of God's love. Children enrolled in Two Year Old Classes – Kindergarten attend Chapel each week.

Assembly Chapel

Assembly Chapel is a wonderful enhancement to weekly Chapel. On a monthly basis, the children gather as a whole, worshipping together in the church sanctuary. There they sing fun songs and are introduced to a member of the pastoral staff who leads them in worship. The children love this time! It allows them to connect with SUMC's ministers and worship with all of their friends in a beautiful, more formal setting.

Music & Movement

Our Music & Movement class engages the child's body, mind, and spirit through the use of music and props such as scarves and parachutes. Music & Movement offers a positive outlet for energy, helps children learn about their bodies in space and in relation to others, strengthens listening skills, increases self-esteem, deepens sensory awareness, and helps children practice self-control. Additionally, children learn a variety of songs which prepares them for our annual performances such as Grandparent's Day, Christmas, and End of the Year programs. All age groups participate in Music & Movement each week.

Spanish

Numerous studies have shown that children who learn a second language demonstrate greater cognitive development, creativity, and divergent thinking than monolingual children. Our little ones are learning Spanish in a very fun, nurturing, and musical environment. Through structured and spontaneous activities, they are developing fine and gross motor skills, learning math concepts, social awareness, language, and literacy in Spanish. Story time as well as music and movement are part of our weekly activities. Children enrolled in Three Year Old - Kindergarten classes attend Spanish each week.

Library

Three Year Old - Kindergarten classes visit our library. Our library houses a vast collection of children's favorites. Selections include Caldecott and Newberry Award winners. Mystery Readers often surprise our students with a story and our Four Year Old and Kindergarten classes "check out" books on a weekly basis.

Computer Lab

Technology plays a significant role in all aspects of life today and this role will only increase in the future. The potential benefits of technology for young children's learning and development are well documented. At our school, we utilize age appropriate computer activities as one of many options to support learning. We currently use the award winning ABC Mouse which is a full online curriculum covering academic areas such as reading, math, science, art, colors, and music. Children in our Four Year Old - Kindergarten Classes attend Computer Lab each week.

Science

Though Science is part of the weekly curriculum in the classroom, we also offer a Science specials class which children in Three Year Old - Kindergarten enjoy on a monthly basis. The children explore and nurture their curiosity about the world around them. They participate in experiments and other hands on activities to reinforce concepts of Science. Space, reactions of magnets, and volcanoes are just some of the subjects that are discussed.

In-House Cultural Arts Programs & Field Trips

Our children enjoy special performances by local artists who come to our school every other month. Some examples of our programs include: Parrot Productions, Lee Bryan-That Puppet Guy, David Ginn's Magic Show, A Butterfly Tale, Geof Johnson's Music for Kids, and Dr. Simmons Dentistry.

Age Appropriate Mission Projects

Children are encouraged to show God's love to others by being "His hands and feet." Our classes are involved in several service projects that focus on family, school, and the community. Partnerships with organizations such as the Southeast Gwinnett Co-op, Operation Christmas Child and Relay for Life allow us wonderful opportunities to grow in Christian service.

School Staff

Our teaching staff is a group of highly trained and dedicated women who maintain professional standards by attending workshops, seminars, and conferences throughout the school year. Staff members are trained in First Aid, CPR, Fire Safety, and Child Abuse. Teachers also complete at least 10 hours of Bright From the Start certified training each school year. Each teacher was selected because of special qualities, talents, and skills that they bring to the classroom.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to any child age 12 months – 5 years. Students must have attained class age on or before September 1 of the current school year.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

The School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies and admissions policies.

Immunization Requirements

All students, Preschool-12th Grade, who register in Georgia schools, **are required by law** to have an official immunization certificate on file at all times. Parents are responsible for knowing when their child's next shots are due, having them administered, and providing the School with an updated certificate. These forms must be submitted on or before the first day of school. Acceptable immunization forms for admission into the School are:

*State of Georgia Immunization Certificate Form #3231

*Affidavit of Religious Conviction- This form is for those parents who object to immunizations due to religious beliefs.

Additionally, students in our Kindergarten class are required to have Hearing, Vision, and Dental Form #3300.

Hours of Operation

School Office hours are 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

School instruction hours are from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

School Calendar

SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten closely follows the Gwinnett County Public Schools calendar with a few exceptions. Kindergarten begins mid-August, and Preschool classes begin the day after Labor Day. Early Release days will dismiss at 11:40 a.m. We are closed Good Friday. We conclude our school year a few days prior to Gwinnett County.

Tuition & Fees

The School is a self-supporting ministry of the church and operates solely on student tuition and fundraising events. Teachers' salaries are paid and supplies are purchased based on enrollment. It is critical that tuition is paid completely and promptly. Tuition is paid on a monthly basis and is due on or before the 15th. Tuition is paid one month in advance with the exception of September tuition, which is due by May 15th of the prior school year for re-enrolling families. For example, October tuition is due September 15.

Payments received after the 15th will incur a late fee of \$10.00. Payments can be made at the School Office or sent in your child's folder. Nonpayment of tuition for two consecutive months, or the equivalent balance due, will result in the relinquishment of the child's place at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten.

Credit card, cash, check or money orders are accepted, as well as use of our Tuition Express program, which allows automatic bank drafts from your checking or savings account.

There is no refund of tuition due to absence. In the case of an extended absence, tuition must be paid in full in order to hold the child's place in the class.

Monthly Tuition Rates

2 day classes \$170.00
3 day classes \$190.00
4 day classes \$210.00
5 day classes \$230.00
Kindergarten \$290.00

Registration Fee

A nonrefundable enrollment fee is due to secure each child's space in a class. This annual fee also helps provide each child with a multitude of resources to enhance the learning environment such as art and craft supplies, Scholastic student subscriptions to Clifford and Let's Find Out Magazines, In-House field trips, special parents events, etc. It will also provide a yearbook at the end of the school year for each child.

Multi-Child Discount

Any family enrolling a second child will receive a \$5.00 discount off the lowest monthly tuition amount.

Late Pick-Up Fee

Due to Department of Human Resource regulations, it is necessary to ensure the prompt dismissal of all children. Any time after 1:40 p.m. is subject to a late fee of \$1.00 per minute and will be added to your account balance.

Gwinnett County Department of Family and Children Services will be notified of any child left in the program 30 minutes after closing without prior notification from a parent/guardian or someone on their child's emergency contact list.

Withdrawal

Teachers are hired and supplies are purchased based on enrollment. Withdrawal at any point prior to the end of the school year places a severe hardship on the finances of the school. If for any reason you plan to withdraw your child, a one-month notice must be given to the Director in writing. If this notice is not received, parents will be assessed a fee equivalent to one month's tuition.

Arrival & Dismissal Guidelines

Children should arrive at school between 9:25 a.m. – 9:40 a.m. Children should be picked up from school between 1:25 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.

Late arrivals: Parents must sign student in at the preschool office. Your child will be taken to their classroom by an office staff member.

Our campus is secured for the safety of the children entrusted to us and we require that all parents adhere to the Arrival & Dismissal procedures as well as the Visitation procedures outlined below. In order to provide for the safety of each child, help traffic run smoothly and avoid unnecessary delays, please adhere to the following guidelines.

Safety Items to Keep In Mind

Please drive slowly through the parking lots. SUMC is a large and active church with many ongoing activities/ministries that overlap with the School hours. Please watch for parents escorting their children into the building, cars backing out, and pedestrian traffic from church members and visitors who may be on campus.

If you have parked to walk your child to or from his/her classroom, please make sure to hold your child's hand.

If you are coming into the building during arrival or dismissal time, please park in spaces away from the carpool lane and avoid spaces designated as Handicapped and Senior Parking unless you have a valid permit or are above the age of 60. Families within the School and SUMC members need these spaces to be available at all times.

School staff are not allowed to fasten children into car seats or seatbelts. Please move forward out of the flow of traffic to secure your child.

Please make every effort to have your child at school prior to the beginning of class. Tardiness affects the learning process for both the student who is tardy and his/her classmates who are interrupted.

Arrival & Dismissal for children enrolled in our Toddler Class

Parents of Toddlers are required to walk their children to and from the classrooms each day and sign them in and out. Please enter and exit the building from the single door at the lower end of the Cokesbury Building, Building D. Upon entering the door for afternoon pick up, please show your carpool tag to the person that is manning the door. If you do not have your carpool tag, you will be asked to show your identification.

We have found over the years, transition from home to school is easier for your child if you make your goodbyes positive, upbeat, and brief. If your child should happen to be upset, we encourage you to ask one of the school office staff to check on your child and telephone you with a report on how he/she is doing after your departure. We are happy to do this for you, as we are all parents and understand how unsettling it can be to leave your child unhappy for any reason.

Walk in is not allowed through our main entrance under the brown canopy during regular arrival or dismissal time due to hazardous conditions created by carpool traffic.

The single door at the lower end of the Cokesbury Building, Building D will be locked and unmanned at 9:40 a.m. due to office and classroom responsibilities. If you arrive after this time, please park, and enter at the main Preschool & Kindergarten entrance under the brown canopy, and ring the bell located on the panel to the right of the double doors. We will greet you and buzz you in at which time you will need to bring your child to the School Office and sign him/her in. A member of the office staff will then walk your child to his or her classroom.

Arrival for students enrolled in our Two, Three, Four Year Old and Kindergarten Classes

Parents of children enrolled in our Twos, Threes, Fours, and Kindergarten classes may walk their child to their classroom or use our carpool lane. If you prefer to walk your child inside to his/her classroom, please enter through the single door at the end of the Cokesbury Building, Building D. The entrance will be unlocked at 9:25 a.m. and will be monitored by a staff member until 9:40 a.m.

Carpool begins the first day of school. Our carpool line forms parallel to the sidewalk outside the Preschool & Kindergarten Main Entrance, Cokesbury Building, Building D, under the brown canopy. Morning carpool begins at 9:25 a.m. and lasts until 9:40 a.m. A school staff member will open your car door, help your child out of the car and walk him/her to the building where another teacher will assist them to their classroom.

All exterior doors will be locked and unmanned after 9:40 a.m. due to office and classroom responsibilities. If you arrive after this time, it is your responsibility to park, ring the doorbell located on the right side of the double doors under the brown canopy and sign your child in at the preschool office. A member of the office staff will walk your child to his/her class. Under no circumstance should a child be dropped off and allowed to walk unsupervised into the building or to the classroom.

Afternoon Dismissal for Twos, Threes, Fours and Kindergarten Classes

Parents with children in our Twos, Threes, Fours and Kindergarten classes can use carpool or walk into pick up their child. Dismissal begins at 1:25 p.m. and security procedures are in place for the safety of the children.

A Carpool Flow Chart is included in the back of the handbook for your convenience.

Carpool Pick Up for Twos, Threes, Fours and Kindergarten Classes

Students are dismissed from their classrooms and will be picked up from the school main entrance, Cokesbury Building, and Building D under the brown canopy.

Each child or family will be assigned a carpool tag to be displayed from your rearview mirror each day. A staff member will be stationed outside at the dismissal location to radio names back to the teachers, so a member of your child's teaching team can bring your child to the loading area for dismissal and assist them into your car.

Please be mindful that arrival and dismissal times are not meant for conversations between parents and teachers. In order for our carpool lines to run smoothly, please be mindful of other cars behind you. If there is anything that needs to be discussed with your child's teacher, please walk in to pick up your child in the classroom.

Parents of students who prefer to walk in will enter through the single doorway at the end of the Cokesbury Building, Building D. Please park in the Cokesbury Building lot in the far spaces, closest to Henry Clower as to not impede the flow of traffic for carpool. This door is not as easily seen from the lot, so as a reference point, look for the brown and cream concrete sign that reads Children's Worship Center, Early Learning Program and follow the sidewalk to the door. A greeter will unlock this entrance at the beginning of afternoon dismissal and remain at the doorway until the completion of afternoon dismissal. **For the safety of our children, parents are required to have their child's carpool tag in hand in order to enter the building and for identification at your child's classroom.**

Written Permission must be given to the office staff or to the classroom teacher if anyone other than a parent comes to pick up in the afternoon. This includes relatives and friends that you have given us permission to release your child to on the Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form. These individuals must present their Driver's License for verification. If at all possible, please give whoever is picking up your child his or her carpool tag. Carpool tags are provided so each parent will have one in their vehicle at all times.

Please note: we will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on the Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form. In cases of divorce, where legal custody is an issue, **official documentation** must be on file in the child's permanent records.

There will be times, especially at the beginning of school while children are adjusting to a new routine, that we will be running a few minutes late. We apologize for any inconvenience but ask that you wait patiently outside instead of ringing the bell and coming inside. We ask this to keep all the children on task and to keep from upsetting our younger children who are making the huge transition from home to school and school to home.

Multi-Family Carpools

Parents often find carpooling convenient. The school assumes no responsibility for arranging carpools. If you are in a multi-family carpool, please see that the office has the following information listed on your Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form.

1. Names of all children in the carpool.
2. Names of parents/guardians driving each day. The driver is expected to act as parent substitute for all children in the carpool and should follow all procedures for parents outlined in this handbook.

Please note that school staff are not permitted to transport children to or from school.

Policy for Individuals Not Authorized To Pick Up a Student

In the event an unauthorized adult arrives to pick up a child from the school, the parents will be contacted. If the parent does not provide verbal permission for the release of the child, then the unauthorized adult will be asked to leave the building. If the unauthorized adult exhibits a negative behavior, the police will be notified.

Stormy Weather Arrival or Dismissal

On the rare occasion that there is stormy weather in the area (thunder & lightning) a red flag will be displayed at our entrances. The red flag will indicate that carpool has been suspended due to weather conditions for the safety of the children and staff. Parents are asked to park and walk his or her child into the classroom when it is safe to do so. The church office entrance (Building B), the School entrance (Building D), and the single end door (Building D) will be unlocked for easy access.

Visitation

We have an Open Door Policy here at the School and look forward to you being on campus. We encourage you to have lunch with your child, help in the classroom, substitute, or volunteer for any or all of the fun opportunities throughout the year. You are also invited to attend any Bible Study, parenting, educational, or fitness classes offered by SUMC.

All visitors are asked to enter through the main School entrance located at the double doors under the brown canopy area of the Cokesbury Building, Building D.

Security

All visitors must report directly to the school office to sign the Visitor's Logbook and receive a Visitor's sticker.

Any student leaving prior to regular dismissal time must be signed out at the school office.

Dress Code

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing and shoes that are suitable for painting (all paint is washable, however, it may stain), active play outdoors, snack and lunch. Closed toe shoes are recommended for preschoolers. The offer more support for running and jumping, and keep feet free from mulch.

Winter Recess

Even in the cold winter months, we believe outdoor recess is an important and valuable part of the student's day. With that in mind, we ask that you consider the temperature and weather conditions when assisting your child with clothing for the day. There may be times when the weather is deemed too cold for outdoor recess. We make that determination on a daily basis, but please remember that on most days we will have outdoor recess even if it is for an abbreviated time. Winter coats, hats, gloves and long pants are most appropriate on these cold days.

Backpacks

Your child will need a **large** backpack. Please place a COMPLETE change of clothing in a large ziploc bag labeled with your child's name and leave it in your child's bag. Accidents and spills happen occasionally and children feel more comfortable in their own clothing instead of borrowing from others. This clothing will remain in your child's bag unless needed. As the temperature changes during the year, please adjust the clothing as appropriate. If your child has an accident or becomes sick on their clothing, the soiled clothes will be sealed in a plastic bag and sent home.

Announcements and work completed in class will come home by way of your child's backpack, so please check it daily.

If your child wears diapers, please remember to include 3-4 diapers per day in his/her backpack.

Potty Training

Potty training is such a big milestone for children. When you are ready as a parent to begin the potty training process with your child, we are here to help. Our teachers in the two and three year old classes are wonderful in assisting in this way. We ask that parents send disposable training pants such as Pull-ups during this transitional period. Please send the child in Pull-ups until they are completely potty trained and can also communicate to the teacher the need to visit the restroom. Children enrolled in Four Year Old and Kindergarten classes must be potty trained to attend Snellville United Methodist Church Preschool & Kindergarten.

Classroom Hygiene

Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infection. Children are encouraged to wash their hands frequently for general hygiene. Proper hand washing techniques are taught by the teachers and posters are hung in the bathroom. Countertops, table surfaces, and chairs are disinfected daily. Toys are sanitized on a regular basis.

Snack & Lunch

Parents of Toddlers, Two, and Three Year Old classes bring snacks on a rotating basis. Snacks for Four Year Old and Kindergarten classes are at the teacher's discretion. A snack calendar will be sent home with your child at the beginning of each month. It will have an assigned day(s) for your child to bring in a nutritious snack to share with the class. A snack bag or basket will be sent home the day before it is your child's turn to make it easier to transport from home to school. **Please note any allergy alert information attached to the snack bag or basket.** Your child's teacher will let you know how many children to prepare for. Also, please send necessary supplies with the snack such as cups, napkins, spoons, water, etc. Toddlers do not need cups. Generally, 6-8 water bottles or a gallon jug of water is sufficient for the class.

Homemade snacks are wonderful too. Please note any allergy alerts from your child's class and complete the **Ingredients Card** included in the snack bag or basket.

A copy of the Ingredients Card and Health Snack Suggestions is included in the back of the handbook for your convenience.

Store bought snacks should be unopened and in their original packaging.

In the event that your child is sick on his/her snack day, don't worry, we will provide the children with a snack from our snack cabinet. However, on the next day that your child attends class, please send in a nonperishable snack to replenish the cabinet. This will guarantee there is always a snack when needed.

Parents of children with severe food allergies are asked to send in an appropriate snack for your child each day.

Please send a well-balanced lunch and drink daily. Be sure to label your child's lunch box, thermos, and utensils. Opened but uneaten food will be discarded at the end of the lunch period. Teachers are not able to heat up food.

Special Events

Birthdays

Birthdays are special days for children. Parents are encouraged to send in a special snack to recognize their child's birthday. Teachers will schedule your child's snack day on, or as close to their birthday as possible if it does not fall on a school day.

If you are planning a party outside of school and plan to invite all of the children from your classroom, we are happy to pass out invitations for you. If only a few children are being included, please mail their invitations to their homes.

As a special way to honor your child, many families choose to "gift" the preschool with a book at the time of their child's birthday. A label is put in the front cover of the book, indicating that it was contributed to our school in honor of your child's birthday. The books are then used in your child's classroom and eventually are placed in the school library for everyone to use. This is strictly optional. If you would like to do this, your child's teacher would be happy to make suggestions regarding children's favorite titles or authors.

Holidays

All children experience and celebrate holidays in different ways. As part of our Social Studies curriculum, we will study and celebrate a variety of holidays with the children. All parents are welcome to come in and share the ways their family celebrates different holidays. Exposing children to different holidays and customs promotes understanding and acceptance of a global view of the world we live in.

Field Trips

Our Threes, Fours, and Kindergarten classes may take an occasional field trip that corresponds with the thematic unit being introduced in the classroom. There is usually a minimal charge for these. We rely on parents to provide transportation on these special days. Permission slips will be sent home 1-2 weeks prior to the trip with all pertinent information.

Please be aware that the safety of your child is of the utmost importance to us. Georgia law requires children under age 8 to ride in an approved car seat or booster seat that is appropriate for their height and weight. Children under age 8 are also required to be in the back seat.

No child will be allowed to attend a field trip without written parental consent and an appropriate car seat.

Before departing the school, teachers are required to have permission slips; emergency information for each child; a first aid kit; cell phone numbers; and a copy of the driver's license and insurance card for each person transporting a student. Teachers are not permitted to transport students.

Health & Attendance

In an attempt to prevent the transmission of infections, group childcare settings institute universal hygienic precautions and have exclusion policies that follow criteria established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and specific regulations set forth by Georgia's Department of Public Health. Therefore, please notify the Office Staff if your child acquires a contagious illness or communicable disease.

School's Definition of Illness

A child who has any of the conditions listed below, or a child who shows extreme discomfort from ears, stomach problems, etc., is considered ill and will be temporarily removed from their class.

1. If the child does not feel well enough to participate in routine activities.
2. If a child has a fever of 100 degrees orally or 99 degrees axillary, behavior change or other sign of illness such as a sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, etc.
3. Children with signs of severe diarrhea. If the child has one loose bowel movement, the parents will be notified. Parents must come and get their child:
 - a. If the child has diarrhea twice in one hour or three times in two hours.
 - b. If the child has diarrhea with any other symptoms such as abdominal pain.
 - c. In Toddlers, severe diarrhea is defined as 2 loose stools that cannot be contained by a diaper.
4. Any child who has vomited twice or has vomited with symptoms of abdominal discomfort, lethargy, etc. will be sent home, and will not be allowed to return until vomiting has stopped for 24 hours.
5. Children with mouth sores or undiagnosed rashes will not be allowed in school until seen by a physician and it is determined that it is not a communicable disease. A physician's note is required for return.
6. If the child has been diagnosed with an infection such as strep throat, bronchitis, pneumonia, RSV, etc., they may not return until they are fever free (without Tylenol or other medication) for 24 hours, feel well enough to return and are on antibiotic for 24 hours.

At the discretion of the Director a child may be excluded if there is concern that they are exhibiting symptoms of a possible illness that is communicable to students.

For the protection of children and staff we strictly adhere to this policy. We ask that you use your best judgment when determining whether your child is truly well enough to be in the school setting. If you notice they are feeling "under the weather," irritable, or tired, they are not going to enjoy school and it may be best to keep them home for the day.

Please note that if your child is sent home from school with any symptoms listed in items 2-6 above they will not be allowed back into school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

Children Who Become Sick At School

Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately if they become sick at school. If a parent cannot be reached, the next available person on your Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form will be contacted. Children who become ill at school are isolated and kept as comfortable as possible until picked up.

Re-Admittance To School

As stated above, children who are sent home with an illness such as fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, must be free of symptoms (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

Example: If your child is sent home at 10:00 a.m. he/she is allowed to come back to school at 10:00 a.m. the following morning if he/she has been symptom free the entire 24 hours.

In the case of strep throat, rashes of unknown origin and other conditions listed below (that are contagious to others) a physician's statement must accompany your child stating when he/she can return to school.

Common Infectious Illnesses
Communicable Disease Recommendations
Adopted from Georgia DHR and Children’s Health Care of Atlanta
The following exclusionary policies apply:

Disease, Illness Organism	How it is spread?	When is it most Contagious?	Return to School?
Chicken Pox (Varicella)	Airborne or direct contact with droplets from nose, mouth, and skin lesions of infected individuals.	From 2 days before rash, until all lesions are dry and crusted.	When all lesions have crusted, usually 7-8 days.
Cold Sore (Herpes Simplex)	Direct contact with infected oral lesions or secretions.	While lesions are present.	After lesions are scabbed over.
Common Cold (Upper Respiratory Infection)	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth; virus can live in environment 24 hours.	Variable- from day before symptoms until symptoms resolve.	No exclusion, unless fever, or child too ill to attend.
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) May be viral, Bacterial, or allergic	Contact with secretions from eyes, or contaminated surfaces.	Variable – allergic conjunctivitis is not contagious.	When cleared by physician, after 24 hours treatment, if bacterial.
Croup (Viral respiratory infection, causes “barky” cough)	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth.	Variable – usually from day before symptoms and for 3 days of illness.	When breathing comfortably, cough improved, and no fever for 24 hours.
Ear Infection (Otitis Media) Sinusitis	Not Contagious	Not Contagious	No exclusion unless child too sick to attend.
Fever (100.0 orally or 99.0 Axillary)	Unknown until illness identified, safe to assume it may be spread by contact with any secretions.	Unknown, assume child is contagious while fever is present.	After 24 hours without fever, without the use of fever reducing medication, and child behaving normally.
Fifth Disease (Parvovirus)	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth.	During the week before the rash develops.	No need to restrict once rash has appeared.
Gastroenteritis, viral (Adenovirus, rotavirus, Norwalk virus)	Contact with stool, saliva, or vomit from infected individual; directly or from contaminated surfaces.	From 2 days before illness, until vomiting and diarrhea improve.	When no fever or vomiting for 24 hours, and stool returns to normal.

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus)	Contact with stool, oral or respiratory secretions.	May be contagious for several weeks after infection.	When no fever for 24 hours, and child is behaving normally.
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	Close contact with infested individuals and sharing combs, brushed, hats, or bedding.	When there are live insects on the head.	After treatment, if crawling lice are gone, remove nits.
Influenza	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth of infected person.	Variable – from the day before, until the first 5 days of illness.	After 24 hours without fever and symptoms are improving.
Ringworm (Tinea Capitis, Corporis, Pedis) Fungal infection	Direct skin or surface contact.	From onset of lesions until treatment begins.	After treatment begins.
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	Contact with droplets from nose and mouth.	From onset of symptoms until 24 hours after treatment begins.	After at least 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and no fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication).

Medication for Illnesses

Staff members are NOT allowed to give medication to the children. However, if your child is taking medication, prescription or over the counter, parents are asked to notify the teacher as a child’s behavior can be affected by medication.

Allergies

Allergy information is to be recorded by the physician completing the Emergency Treatment Form. This form should be turned in to your child’s teacher by Open House. It is the responsibility of the parent to also inform the child’s teacher of the type of allergy and any special instructions. This information will be listed on a chart in the child’s classroom. If food substitutions are required for snack, cooking experiences, etc., parents are asked to supply proper foods.

Medication for Life Threatening Allergies

If a child has life threatening, allergic reactions and requires an Epi-Pen, a physician’s statement must be on file, and renewed annually.

The School Office Staff is only allowed to administer medication that meets the following conditions:

- Medication has not expired.
- Medication is prescribed for the child only.
- Medication is in the original container from the pharmacy and is properly labeled with the child’s full name, name of medication, the date prescription was filled, the prescription number, the name of the provider who wrote the prescription, the expiration date, and administration. If medication comes in a box with a prescription label, the box must be presented with the medication.

The parent/guardian of the child must assume full responsibility for informing our Staff of any change in the child’s health or change of medication.

Planning For The Individual Student: Entry Into School

Prior to entry into school (or, for a student who is already in school, immediately after the diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition), the parent/guardian should meet with the School Director to develop an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP).

The Parent/Guardian Shall Provide The Following:

- Licensed provider documentation of food allergy
- Licensed provider order for epinephrine by auto-injector as well as other medications needed. Medication orders must be renewed at least annually and it is recommended that the order be from an asthma and allergy specialist.
- Parent/guardian's signed consent to administer all medications
- Parent/guardian's signed consent to share information with other school staff
- An up-to-date Epi-Pen (More may be necessary based on the student's activities and travel during the school day.)
- The type of allergies (e.g., to milk, tree nuts, etc.)
- Description of the student's past allergic reactions, including triggers and warning signs
- A description of the student's emotional response to the condition and need for support
- Name/telephone number of the student's primary care provider and allergist
- Method to reach parent/parent designee should an emergency occur, e.g., telephone, cell-phone.
- Age-appropriate ways to include a student in planning for care and implementing the plan; assessment for self-administration.
- Parent/guardian's interest in participating in the training/orientation in the student's classroom

The Director Will:

- Initiate an IHCP based on the information provided by the parent, as well as the doctors' assessment. The plan shall include the student's name, method of identifying the student, specific offending allergens, warning signs of reactions, and emergency treatment. The plan should include, but not be limited to, risk reduction and emergency response during: the school day, before and after school programs, and field trips. The IHCP should be signed by the parent, School Director, and by the student's physician.
- Initiate an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) which, with the parent's permission, will be with the student at all times and appropriate adults should know where the AAP is located. The AAP should include the student's photo, the student's name, specific offending allergens, warning signs of reactions and emergency management, including medications and names of those trained to administer. The AAP should be signed by the parent and School Director.
- Complete a medication care plan, which should include who is trained in administering the Epi-Pen, plans for field trips or short-term special events, where the Epi-Pens shall be stored (including a back-up storage) and how they should be monitored for currency.
- Based on the student's age, class, etc., identify who will be part of the multi-disciplinary team approval. (These may include but not be limited to the Director, classroom teachers, specials teachers, substitutes, local EMS, etc.)
- Assess the student for his/her ability to self-administer epinephrine.
- Determine the appropriateness for the student to carry his/her epinephrine.
- The Director and parents will meet with Staff member to assist them in preparing for their responsibilities.
- The Director will give an overview of the allergies, anaphylaxis and the student's IHCP. As a team, prevention and management of life threatening food allergies will be discussed.

Emergency Medical Care

If the Director/Staff determines that medical care is needed, every possible effort will be made to contact you so that you can help in planning further steps to be taken in the particular situation.

If emergency medical attention is needed, and the parent cannot be reached, or there is not time to reach the parent first, 9-1-1 will be called and the child will be transported to a local hospital. The Emergency Treatment Form on file will be taken with the child to the hospital. **Parents, it is your responsibility to keep emergency telephone numbers updated. We should be able to reach you at any time during the day if needed.**

Minor Accidents and Medical Care

Staff members are trained in CPR and emergency first aid procedures. When minor accidents occur, that do not require medical attention, the Director/Staff will handle the situation and parents will be notified. Notification may come by phone call if warranted, and/or a written accident report. Signatures of the classroom teacher, the Director, and the parent are required on all accident reports. A copy of the signed accident reports is given to the parent and one is placed in the child's permanent record.

Notification of Exposure to Communicable Diseases

Parents will be notified in writing of the occurrence of any illness considered a communicable disease within 24 hours of the school becoming aware of the illness or the next working day.

Inclement Weather

We follow Gwinnett County Public schools weather plan. Gwinnett's school superintendent works with officials from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and State Department of Transportation when inclement weather is an issue, assessing road conditions and from there decides on the advisability of conducting school.

Holidays, inclement weather days, or any circumstance beyond our control that may result in school closings does not reduce the amount of tuition. Cost is figured on the total number of days in the school year and averaged out so that the tuition rate will be the same every month regardless of the number of days scheduled.

If Gwinnett County Schools are closed or delayed, we are too.

The decision to cancel school is normally made between 6:00 - 6:30 a.m., and all major radio and television stations in metro Atlanta are notified. WSB radio and your local TV station will keep you updated on any closings. If possible, we will also have a message on the school's voice mail to confirm school closing.

Should severe weather move into the area during the day and we feel the need to cancel classes, we will contact you by phone using the contact numbers provided at enrollment.

Please note inclement weather days will **NOT** be made up unless they exceed 5 days. Inclement weather days that exceed the allotted maximum of 5 will be made up. (*Example: Inclement weather days totaled 6 for the year. One day would be made up.*)

Emergency Preparedness

The school has a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan in place. Each year we undergo training to reinforce procedures that may need to be performed during an emergency situation. We work closely with local authorities preparing an appropriate emergency response plan. We conduct emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.

Required Drills

The school is required to conduct training for staff to familiarize them with all emergency plans. Plans include guidelines for handling injuries and illnesses, fires, thunderstorms, tornadoes, flooding, winter storms, earthquakes, utility failures, bomb threats, civil disturbances, and terroristic acts. Our emergency plan also includes provisions for communicating information on emergency procedures to students.

School wide drills, both announced and unannounced will be conducted by the school administration to help children learn what to do in case of an emergency

Fire drills are held each month, and tornado and lockdown drills are conducted at least twice a year. Disaster alerts are indicated by bullhorn alarm or whistle and/or Walkie Talkie announcements. Evacuation routes and tornado drill instructions are posted in every room used by our students. We work closely with state and local emergency preparedness personnel to ensure our plan is in accordance with acceptable practices on all levels.

As Early Childhood professionals, we do everything we can to make these safety measures as stress free as possible to your child. Some young children may show signs of distress at the flashing warning lights and noise. If this happens, please let the teacher know so that we can provide additional support to your child in future drills.

Civil Disturbances/Community Crises

A lockdown occurs if there is a threat in or near the vicinity of the school. All exterior and interior doors are locked and students are confined to their classrooms.

There are two types of lockdown, hard and soft. During a hard lockdown no entry or exit of the school is allowed. A hard lockdown (Code Red) occurs if there is an immediate threat inside the school. For your safety as well as that of the children's, parents will not be allowed to enter the school and may be kept away from the school until authorities determine it is safe.

A soft lockdown (Code Yellow) occurs if there is a threat outside of the school. In some cases, parents could be admitted into the school with proper identification. A sign will be posted on the entrance to the school if the school is in a lockdown.

If lockdown occurs during dismissal, children will be released one at a time if it is deemed safe by local authorities. You must have your carpool tag or proper identification.

Hazardous Conditions

In the event of a hazardous material spill, students would shelter in place until notification from local emergency response agencies that it is safe to dismiss.

Loss of Electrical Power or Water

If loss of electrical power or water occurs during school hours, the day will continue and be kept as normal as possible. Should the electric or water supply be interrupted for more than one day, school will be closed until the utility can be restored. In the event of a gas leak, the building will be evacuated until the gas company can complete an inspection and issue an all clear to return to the building. Your child's teacher will notify you in the event that we cannot safely return and need to dismiss for the day.

Parental Assistance

As a parent, the number one step that you can take to prepare for a school emergency is to provide us with accurate emergency contact information, and to notify us if your information changes.

If an emergency were to occur, you can be confident that we will notify you as soon as safely possible.

In the event law enforcement and emergency response agencies determine the school should be evacuated, we will notify you, and you will be directed to a specific location to reunite with your child. You will be required to show proper identification. Remember, students can only be released to their parents or an adult who is documented as an emergency contact.

Place of Refuge/Reunification Site

The school has designated Building H, Heritage Hall on our campus as our primary place of refuge/reunification site in case of an emergency evacuation that prevents us from reentering our designated preschool/kindergarten areas. In such an emergency, parents will be contacted from Building H and asked to immediately come and pick up their child. Building H is in the main parking lot across from the Four Year Old Playground.

Our secondary place of refuge/reunification site will be Mount Zion Baptist Church Preschool. Our school staff will transport our children in the church vans and private vehicles to Mount Zion Baptist Church which is located at 1525 Scenic Highway (Highway 124) Snellville, Ga. 30078, across from Sam's. Telephone: (770) 972-5014.

Discipline

It is our number one priority to offer a safe and loving environment for each child. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage and promote appropriate behavior. If an inappropriate behavior is exhibited, the teacher will handle the situation as positively as possible. Consequences for inappropriate behavior are as follows:

1. Redirection – direct the child’s attention elsewhere and offer an alternative.
2. Model & problem solve – model expected behavior and offer suggestions.
3. Discuss logical consequences of actions.
4. Time Out – allow child a brief time out (1 minute per year in age) to help get feelings under control. Time out is not used as a punishment; it is used as a teachable moment.
5. Office visit – child is brought to the Director for a brief time to regain his/her composure. The Director will reiterate why the child is there and offer alternative suggestions.
6. Consult with parents.

At no time will any form of physical or verbal abuse be used. Discipline will not be associated with toileting or food.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior includes, but is not limited to kicking, biting, hitting, spitting, pushing, profanity or verbal threats. If your child’s behavior becomes so severe that it compromises the classroom environment for the other children, we will seek to remedy the situation with the parent’s help, using the following guidelines.

- Incidents will be documented by the teacher, reported to the parents and the Director.
- If the child’s aggressive behavior continues to occur, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the teacher, and the Director. At this time, a corrective plan will be made for the child.
- If the child’s behavior does not improve, he or she will be withdrawn from school for the rest of the year.

Please be assured that dismissal would only come as a last resort, and that we will make every effort to help you with alternative placement options.

Indecent Exposure

It is important for children to know that their bodies are sacred. Exposing parts of their bodies is not appropriate behavior that will be tolerated at school. If any act of indecent exposure or lewd conduct occurs, the child will be issued up to three warnings.

- If a child removes their clothes on campus, the Director will conduct a conference with the parents of the child to discuss the inappropriateness of the child’s actions.
- If it occurs a second time, the student will be suspended from the school for two days.
- If it occurs a third time, the student will be asked to leave our program.

Biting

Biting is a disturbing and potentially harmful behavior that parents and educators must discourage from the very first episode. The experience can also be just as frustrating for the parents of the biter, as it is for the parents of the child who was bitten.

Generally, children who bite are not doing it just to be mean. For most children, biting is a temporary problem that is brought on by experimentation, frustration, often due to lack of language abilities, or a need to control their environment. When any child exhibits biting behaviors, staff members are instructed to inform the Director. Teachers will be given support to monitor and modify the behavior appropriately. The child’s parents will be asked to meet with school staff to determine the potential “cause” of the behavior. Parents are expected to work with the teacher to help keep all the children in the class safe.

In order to protect the confidentiality of the child and family, it is our policy not to divulge the child’s name who did the biting. However, both sets of parents will get a copy of the biting report.

Consequences of Biting

- First Offense: Conference with parent
- Second Offense: Director calls parent to pick up child for the remainder of the day
- Third Offense: Child is removed from the program for 2 days
- Fourth Offense: Child is removed from the program for 1 week
- Fifth Offense: Child is removed from the program for the remainder of the school year

Support Services

Often children enroll at our school as their first experience in a group care and educational setting. This type of care presents many opportunities and experiences that children may not have been exposed to in smaller care environments and in their own homes. Sometimes certain behaviors, conditions, or other developmental issues present themselves that parents have not seen or noticed before. Many of these situations are very typical. Our staff is prepared to help each individual child as they learn how to get along with others and adjust to a new environment.

Sometimes children exhibit characteristics and behaviors that are atypical and require professional expertise to experience success, and to help parents and our teachers to meet the child's needs. When these situations arise, we work together with parents to find out what the child needs and at the parent's request, utilize outside resources. We welcome professionals from Babies Can't Wait Early Intervention Services for children up to three years of age and Gwinnett County Preschool Special Education Services for children three years and up. Both of these agencies provide outstanding on and off-site services to help children thrive, as well as support families and teachers.

Please note, the school will make every possible accommodation, when deemed necessary, for all children; however, we are not equipped to provide one-on-one care for any child. If your child has special needs that require special accommodations, please meet with the Director in advance so that we may better prepare and serve your child on his/her first day of school. We welcome community agencies that provide support staff for any child receiving special services, and look forward to working with them to provide a supportive, nurturing learning environment.

Special Needs Policy

The school will accept children with special needs if we feel we can meet their needs. In cooperation with the parents/guardians, a mutual probationary period (up to 1 month) can be set up to ensure the proper placement of the special needs student. During that time, either party may terminate the enrollment and parents will receive a refund of any unused tuition. The school will make "readily achievable accommodations" for all children with disabilities.

Parent Involvement

As your child's first and most important teacher, you have essential knowledge of your child's skills, interest, and needs. Thus, communication with School Staff is an invaluable component to providing the best learning environment for your child. Your involvement gives your child a strong, positive message of acceptance and support.

Our school has an open door policy. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to come in as often as possible to have lunch or volunteer in the classroom with activities such as party planning, reading stories, cooking, etc. Help is also needed with theme related celebrations several times per year. We invite you to share special talents, occupations, cultural heritage, hobbies, and interests with the children.

We also have an active Parent Teacher Association that we hope you will join. Our PTA meets throughout the year and works in a variety of ways to support the Preschool & Kindergarten; such as planning special events for children and parents, supporting program goals, and serving as a liaison to teachers and parents and for perspective families.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Each day your child's teacher looks forward to your child's arrival and encourages you to share information about your child that you feel will be helpful.

Your child's teacher will keep you informed by way of a monthly newsletter and calendar. All memos will come home in your child's backpack, which should be checked daily.

In the event of an emergency or problem, please call the school office at (678) 430-6010. Office hours are from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. each day. If no one is available to answer, please leave a detailed message and a number where you can be reached, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Parent/Teacher Conferences provide the opportunity to communicate valuable information that will set the stage for a great school year. Parents, your active participation is essential. Working with your child's teacher is one of the first steps in your child achieving academic success.

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, the first being in mid to late October. This will be an informal conference to discuss your child's social and emotional adjustment to school. You will have the opportunity to find out how your child is getting along with classmates, how they are progressing in school, and what you can do at home to build on strengths and overcome challenges. This conference may be in the form of a phone call or a written note from your child's teacher, or you may be asked to meet in person.

A second conference will be in late April or early May. At this time parents are asked to come to the school on a scheduled day and have time to sit together and share formal assessments that have been completed during the year. We will also offer suggestions of activities you can do with your child at home over the summer to help him/her get ready for school the following year. We look forward to seeing you and want these conferences to be relaxed and very productive.

Student Assessments

An assessment is the process of gathering information about children in order to make decisions about their education. Teachers obtain useful information about children's knowledge, skills, and progress by observing, documenting, and reviewing children's work over time. On-going assessments that occur in the context of classroom activities can provide an accurate, fair, and representative picture of children's abilities and progress.

Assessment involves:

- Multiple steps of collecting data on a child's development and learning
- Determining its significance in light of the program goals and objectives
- Incorporating the information into planning for individuals and programs
- Communicating the findings to parents

Assessments are like road maps, they show where a child is developmentally at a particular point in time. As each child is unique and will learn at his/her own pace, do not become frustrated if your child does not master simple skills right away. When they are developmentally ready, they will acquire all the basic skills necessary to succeed in school. It is important for us at home, and school, to create a safe environment where a child can go through all the stages of learning rather than being pushed.

Assessments At The Preschool Level

We assess to evaluate our curriculum and instruction to see if what is expected of children at each age interval is being taught by us and acquired by the child. We also monitor a child's progress to see if he or she is acquiring developmentally appropriate concepts and skills at each level.

How Teachers Evaluate Preschoolers

Your preschooler will not receive tests and grades, but that does not mean his/her teacher is not noticing how he or she is doing. In the midst of play dough and paint, your child is developing important skills and mental abilities. There is a whole lot going on in your little one's head these days, and baby-talk is just the tip of the cognitive iceberg!

- Motor development - Does your child run, jump, climb easily and with coordination?
- Fine Motor development - Does your child have good control using a paintbrush or crayons and working a puzzle?
- Cognitive development - Does your child understand the concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow?
- Number correspondence - This is different from counting. It occurs when a child understands "I have one block here. How many will I have if I add one?"
- Pre-reading - Can your child come up with a rhyme? "What sounds like cat?"
- Attention span - Can your child sit still during story time? Does he/she concentrate for short periods of time when building with blocks, or does he/she move quickly from one activity to another?
- Relationships with others - Does your child play well with other children? How does he/she respond to conflict? Can he/she take turns? Stand up for him/herself?
- Relationship with the teacher - Does he/she feel comfortable asking for help when needed?
- Emotional development - How does he/she handle transitions during the day? If he/she cries when mom leaves, does he/she bounce back quickly?

Scholastic Book Club Information

Each month you will have an opportunity to order books from Firefly or Honey Bee Book Club. They offer a wide variety of books suitable for preschool children. You are encouraged to order for two important reasons.

First and foremost, research shows that a child's experiences at home during preschool years set the stage for reading success. As a parent, you are special, and your love for and understanding of your child makes you his/her most effective teacher. By taking a moment to look over monthly offerings, you are able to select books that build on your child's interest, therefore personalizing his/her learning experience.

Secondly, for every book you order for your child, the teacher earns bonus points, which enable them to receive books for the classroom free of charge, so everyone benefits. If you decide to purchase a book(s), please complete the order form and make your check payable to Scholastic Book Clubs. Your child's books will arrive at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten within a few weeks.

Parent Evaluation

We continually assess ourselves and our program to provide a quality program for the children and families we serve. Therefore, parents are asked to participate in an annual evaluation process. Toward the end of the school year a Parent Evaluation will be sent home for you to assess us. Please take a few moments to complete this form and return it in the envelope provided. Your input will be reviewed to help us improve our program.

Parents are also encouraged to discuss any ideas or concerns they may have with their child's teacher or the Director.

School Photographs

Our school photographer is Portraits by Dell who does an excellent job with background arrangement, as well as working with the children to create lasting memories. Individual pictures are made in September or October. Christmas pictures are made in November to allow time for delivery prior to Winter Break. Individual spring and class pictures as well as cap and gown pictures of our Four Year Old and Kindergarten students are taken in March. Specific dates will be noted in your child's classroom newsletter.

Portrait packages are reasonably priced, generally around \$25.00 - \$30.00. Specific pricing information will be sent home along with your child's proof package 2-3 weeks after being photographed for your consideration. If you wish to purchase your child's pictures, simply complete the package information and make your check payable to Portraits By Dell for the specified amount. If you choose not to purchase the pictures, return the proof sheet to us and we will forward it to the photographer. Christmas and Spring Pictures are photographed using a "pre-paid" option to make sure pictures are delivered before Christmas break and before the school year concludes. Portraits by Dell offers a complete refund if for any reason you are unhappy with your Christmas or Spring portraits.

Consignment Sale

We are fortunate to have a major fundraising opportunity that does not require our parents and/or their children to go door-to-door selling products. In order to raise funds for capital improvements, such as playground equipment/inspection, mulch, computer equipment and software, and specific educational materials for the classroom, the school organizes and conducts an annual Fall and Spring Consignment Sale. This sale is well received and respected by residents of Gwinnett County as one of the area's premier children's clothing sales. If you have not had the pleasure of shopping one of our sales, you are in for a treat. You can help us several ways: you can volunteer to work a shift prior to the sale to help with set up, work during the sale or at the completion of the sale to help with sorting or breakdown. You can support our efforts by consigning toys or clothing your child has outgrown or by donating gently worn items to us. If you elect to consign with us, you will receive 70% of everything that is sold for yourself and the school will receive the remaining 30%. Sellers also get to shop our preview sale before the sale opens to the public.

Fundraising

We participate in a couple of simple and rewarding ongoing fundraising events that occur throughout the school year. The first is General Mill's Box Tops for Education program. Simply cut the coupons out for us and send them to school with your child. We receive 10 cents per top, which adds up very quickly, and all funds are used to purchase educational materials for the children. You can find these little pink and purple rectangular coupons on hundreds of participating products from General Mills, Pillsbury, Yoplait, Betty Crocker, and many others. For a complete listing of products, log onto the Box Tops website at www.boxtops4education.com. Please start clipping and saving these for your child's teacher. We have classroom contests during the year and the winning class is surprised with a special party.

We also participate with Kroger's Community Rewards program in which you can link your Kroger Shoppers Card to our Preschool & Kindergarten account. Every time you shop, Kroger will donate a percentage of your total purchase to our program.

Toys

Please do not bring toys from home to school, since these items frequently create disruptions in the classroom environment. Toys from home will be placed in their backpacks for children to retrieve when they leave that day. Children in older classrooms may have designated days to bring items from home to share with their class. Please make sure the items brought are clearly labeled with first and last names. Fragile items and toy weapons (guns, knives, swords, etc.) are not permitted. Please ask a teacher or office staff member if you have any questions about appropriate items. We are not responsible for personal items that are lost or broken.

Pet/Animal Policy

Teachers will check each child's Emergency Treatment Form for allergies before permitting any animal in the classroom or allowing children to go outside to visit an animal. Animals brought in the building must be in a carrier. Large animals must be on a leash and remain outside the building. A parent bringing an animal to school should stay with the animal at all times. The visit should be brief but long enough for all children to observe and enjoy the experience.

Thank You

Thank you for reading the SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten Handbook. This is an important step in establishing a positive partnership. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any information presented in this handbook, please contact the Preschool & Kindergarten Director before your child's first day of school.