

# FUMC Preschool Handbook

Location: 4741 Carey Station Road, Greensboro, GA 30642

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 216, Greensboro, GA 30642

South Campus Main Phone: 706-999-9845; Preschool Office: Ext. 216

## Mission Statement

The Greensboro First United Methodist Church Preschool offers nurturing care, Biblical teaching, and early childhood education, in an environment designed for preschool aged children and taught by loving, Christian instructors. We want to enhance the growth of children in all areas of development: spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical. The morning includes a balance of individual and group activities, structured and free play, and teacher instruction both direct and guided. The program includes Bible stories and verses, parts of the Core Knowledge Curriculum, Music & Movement, Spanish, Library, and Art. We believe that God's Word is foundational to learning about and living in our world, whatever our ages. Our desire is that our preschool families "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (II Peter 3:18) We hope that you will get to know other parents so that you can support and encourage each other as your children grow and learn together!

## Preschool Team

I believe our teaching staff has been put together with God's guiding hand to form the best possible team of Christian educators for our Preschool! As teachers, we are both younger and older moms, even a few grandmothers. We have among us degrees in early childhood education and more importantly, many years of experience in parenting and in working with young children in school, church, daycare, and home care settings. All instructional staff members participate in a continuous program of in-service training in order to remain aware of the ever-changing needs of today's families and the findings of current research. Our team is accountable to and appreciative of guidance from our Preschool Board, with representatives from the FUMC church staff and membership, a former Director of FUMC Preschool who now teaches at Lake Oconee Academy, a Preschool parent, a Preschool teacher, and the Preschool Director.

## Preschool Staff

Kris Hopkins	Director
Christi Nichols and Catalina Franco	Pre K Four Class
Teresa Kelly & Lynn Dover	Track Class
Danielle Screws & Lucy Marshall	Three Day 3's Class
Kristen Sears & Ashley Laney	Older Two's
Sarah Wofford & Jordan Wheeler	Younger Twos
Mandy Bagley & Crystal Day	Tiny Tots
Molly Burke	Music & Movement
Patty Umphreyville	Librarian & Art Teacher
Catalina Franco	Spanish Teacher
Coach Lori	Fit Kids and Body Awareness

## Calendar for 2020-2021

Our Preschool follows the yearly calendar for Lake Oconee Academy, except for our beginning date. We close for inclement weather when the **Greene County Schools** close. Please listen to the radio station 103.9 FM for information at such times. A text message/and or email will be sent via Remind App notifying parents of school closures or delays. In the event that the county schools are delayed more than two hours (or until 10:00 a.m.), we will cancel school for the entire day. Our yearly calendar is always posted on our website as well as on the bulletin board in the Preschool entryway for quick reference. Due to our calendar restrictions, there will be no make-up days for unforeseen school closures.

## Class Days and Hours

The structured program for our Preschool is from 8:30 to noon on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday mornings. We offer two sets of drop off times each morning: Breakfast Club from 7:30-8:00 (extra charge per month) and Regular Drop from 8:00-8:25 (no charge). Please read our Arrival and Departure guidelines online. Registration is only necessary for Breakfast Club. **We will begin our school day promptly at 8:30.** Children who arrive after 8:30 will be marked as tardy. We do not want your child to miss any of our educational

program and need to keep the classroom routine from being interrupted. It is important that you are on time each day.

For the safety of the Preschool, we will securely lock the building and Children's Wing every morning at 8:40. If you arrive after morning lockdown, please ring the doorbell at the Preschool Entrance. Do not go through the playground and try to enter from the back doors. Teachers are instructed to not allow anyone to enter through those doors without first checking in at the Director's office.

Children will not be released from class until 11:50. Please do not pick your child up early unless you have arranged it in advance with the director and teacher – *all early dismissals must be signed out at Director's Office*. Carline is provided for safety and convenience. It will be at the main Preschool entrance under the porte-cochere. **Please have car signs visible in your windshield.** Cones will be placed directing you where to stop. Teachers will assist in bringing your child to you, please be sure to get out of your car so you can help your child get in their car seat. There will be a Late Fee of \$1 a minute, beginning at 12:05, unless the Director is notified of unavoidable delay. Carline pick up may be slow the first few weeks of school but as we get into the routine, it will be more efficient. **During carline, parents are asked to not enter the building due to the amount of children we have seated in the waiting area.** We will bring your child to you if you choose to park and walk up. This is not only for safety reasons, but also to help keep the flow of staff and carline procedures moving.

Notify the preschool, in writing, of any changes in your authorized "pick up" list or of any other changes on your child's emergency form or "pick up" routine. A child will not be sent home with anyone except those authorized by the parent on forms kept in the child's file. A parent must leave a written message with the teacher to make any changes or additions on the "pick up" list. We require identification when someone other than a parent comes for pickup. If your child is going home with a friend, you must send a note or call the office. We cannot accept verbal messages from your child.

We would like to be notified in advance if you know that your child will not be at school because of a planned trip. We also appreciate your calling/emailing/text messaging the Preschool Director to let us know about illness or other reasons that

may keep your child from being with us at Preschool, especially if the absence is for more than a day or two. We care about you and your child and want to pray for you in times of need and in times of celebration.

### Tuition and Payment Policy

Monthly Tuition is processed on the first business day of each month. All families must be enrolled in our Procure Tuition Express ACH payment plan upon enrollment. Tuition is \$260 a month for our four (4) day classes and \$195 a month for three (3) day classes. All students will have a \$25 activity fee charged with September's tuition. This fee will cover special events and special visitors throughout the year.

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 your child's place in the class. We maintain a waiting list and count on a certain level of enrollment to take care of salaries and expenses.

**It is expected that parents will honor the terms of 9 month enrollment. If relocation or unforeseen circumstances make it necessary to dissolve the contract, one month's written notice and tuition for the month is required.**

Childcare Expense Forms (for tax purposes) may be found by logging into your Procure account and viewing your payments.

Financial assistance is available on a very limited basis. Applications for financial assistance are available in the preschool office.

We will have a few fundraisers throughout the year; we aim for 100% participation from all our Preschool Families. Two of our fundraisers are Fall & Spring Picture Day. Package prices are a great deal and proceeds go to the Preschool. Other fundraisers may include a Family Dinner Night. Our tuition covers staff salaries and fixed expenses but we depend on fundraising for special projects, program improvement needs, and financial assistance.

## Home and School Communication

Our main communication to you will be in the form of a monthly newsletter with a calendar of upcoming events. Our monthly newsletter and calendar will give you more detailed information about the daily activities and needs of the Preschool, such as Bible stories, themes, books we are reading, and important dates to remember. At the end of each week, children will come home with their weekly K.I.T. Binder. This binder will contain student work, behavior logs, important notes, etc. Parents are responsible for checking, signing, and returning folders the following Tuesday. Conferences will be held only at the request of either Director, teachers or parents.

Other forms of communication that may be available are the following:

**Email:** Email addresses for Director, teachers and staff are given to parents at Open House. Not all teachers communicate through email, but if they do, they will provide you with this information.

**Preschool Parent Portal:** Our Parents website will allow you to easily view our calendar, important documents, and class rosters.

**Preschool Office Phone:** If you need to get a message to a teacher or the director after the school day has begun, call the preschool office at 706-453-7064. Teachers may not be able to come to the phone during school hours, but calls will be returned within one business day. **\*It is not appropriate to text your child's preschool teacher at any point throughout the school day.**

**Remind App:** Instructions for signups will be emailed and also found on Preschool Parent Portal.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Our curriculum is based on both Biblical concepts and traditional early childhood education practices. We combine parts of the "ABC Jesus Loves Me" curriculum, parts of Level One of the Core Knowledge Curriculum, the Wilson Program, plus

lots of “tried and true” traditional early childhood education activities and lessons our teachers have chosen or designed themselves.

Monthly teaching units include interdisciplinary themes, Bible stories and verses, sensory activities, nursery rhymes, songs, letters, numbers, colors, shapes of the month, and art projects. We use hands-on activities and manipulative materials, as appropriate for each age group.

Play is the “work” of young children, so it is an important part of our day. Play allows for the natural process of learning by doing. Every day includes free play, inside and on the playground. Children choose from a variety of learning centers, such as housekeeping, art, blocks, puzzles, books, sensory tubs, plus games and toys that promote small motor skills. All our children have “Circle Time” to begin the morning with other instructional times for themes and skills. Chapel, Library, Fit Kids, Spanish, Art and Music times are scheduled weekly. Our older children have “Teacher Table Time” in small groups for individualized instruction. All classes will have special in-school guests each month called “Community Visitors”. This year we will be introducing our Media Center to classes. We have a variety of character building DVD’s and Christian based films to coordinate with each month’s lessons.

### Evaluation

Our teachers will enjoy teaching your child skills and concepts that are age appropriate. We will let you know, with the Director’s observation and input, of any outstanding strengths or weaknesses. Our staff is available to meet with you upon request. Please feel free to contact any of us if you have questions. The Preschool Director’s office number is listed at the beginning of the Handbook. Evaluations will be done twice throughout the year; January and May.

### What to Wear

Children need to wear clothes that are practical, comfortable, and washable. Because of outdoor play, art and floor activities, there is much

wear on clothing. Children need to be comfortable with play and getting messy. Make sure your children are adequately dressed for outdoor play in all seasons. We recommend warm, layered clothing in the winter. Classes do go outside even when it is cold, if other conditions permit. All clothing, jackets, sweaters etc. need to be clearly labeled with your child's name. Shoe style should have toes and heels enclosed, preferably tennis shoes with socks. *PLEASE NOTE THAT CROC STYLE SHOES ARE EXTREMELY DISCOURAGED FOR SAFETY REASONS.*

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### What to Bring and What Not to Bring

Children are provided a tote bag each year to carry to class each day. Please do not send book bags or diaper bags – we have limited storage space for these items. Please send a “no-spill” cup and label it with your child's name. We will provide filtered water throughout the day. These cups will stay in the classroom and will be washed and sanitized each day. Please send an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothes, including socks and underwear, in a Ziploc bag on the first day of school. This will be put up for your child if they are to have an accident. Label the bag as well as the items of clothing with your child's name. If you have a child still in diapers or pull-ups, we suggest leaving a month's supply in their classroom.

Children are encouraged to bring flowers, nature objects, and articles pertinent to topics of interest in the classroom. Use plastic, not glass containers. Please do not send any toys from home unless requested by the classroom teachers! “Security comforters” are allowed; however, keep in mind that your child may feel threatened by another child's natural interest in the item. **Absolutely no guns, knives, or other weapons, real or pretend, will be allowed.** Small pocket toys, candy, or gum is not acceptable.

### Snacks and Birthdays

We will provide filtered water and snacks, such as goldfish and graham crackers, each day. If you would like to provide a special snack on or near your child's birthday, please make arrangements with your teachers in advance. For special birthday snacks and for parties, remember that some children are allergic to

peanuts or nuts of any kind and do not select these or cookies and crackers that have such ingredients. Also, please do not distribute invitations to private parties at school unless every child in the class is invited. If your child's birthday is in the summer and you would like to celebrate on an alternate day during Preschool, please talk to your teachers. (All Class parties will be celebrated at 11:00)

### School Parties

Classroom parties are held to celebrate the seasons of the year. At Open House we will have signups for parents to take charge of planning and enjoying one of these parties with the class: Halloween/Fall, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and End of the Year. All Class parties will be celebrated at 11:00 unless otherwise noted.

### Parental Involvement and Field Trips

\*Parents are encouraged to become involved in our program. You will be asked to assist with field trips, class projects, and class parties. Parents may also help when one of our teachers is absent. Please let the Director know if you would like to be a substitute teacher. For field trips, we ask that you or another adult chosen by you accompany your child. If you cannot arrange this for a field trip, let us know, as one of our teachers, the Director, or a loving member of our church family may be available to fill in for you on that day. As mentioned before, we encourage you to reinforce what we are teaching by talking at home about our monthly topics, Bible stories and verses, and by getting to know other families.\*

*Due to the pandemic, activities involving parents will be postponed.*

### Custody

If there is any concern regarding custody of a child, a copy of the court document verifying legal custody must be presented. We are required by law to release children to their legal guardians unless there is a current court order prohibiting

that release. The preschool cannot be placed in a position of arbitrating a child's departure or a parent's visitation rights.

### Illness

Sick children should stay at home, of course. If your child becomes ill during the morning, the Director will call you to come for your child. **Any child who has any of the following symptoms within the prior 24 hours should not attend school: Severe cold or persistent cough, greenish discharge from nostrils, nausea or vomiting, fever, diarrhea, earache, red/pink eyes, rash.** If a parent cannot be reached we will call your emergency numbers. It is important that you keep these numbers updated and that you pick up a sick child immediately. A doctor's note may be requested if symptoms are present but not deemed contagious. Preschool staff does not administer medication. This does not apply to medication needed for severe allergic reactions. Please space the administration of medication, so that doses do not need to be administered during the preschool hours. There are always changes in our environment and our world that require us to use extra precaution. These will be handled on a year to year basis and you will be given instructions more specific for bringing children to school. For example: Covid-19 2020. Please see separate guidelines outlining our current policies.

Outside play is part of our daily routine except in the case of extreme weather conditions. Before a child returns to preschool after an illness, parents should make sure he/she is able to participate in the entire program.

### **BEHAVIORS & DISCIPLINE**

*At the beginning of the year, we will have a six week introductory period to confirm that FUMC Preschool is the right place for your child. During this time, if needed, a conference with the Director will be requested by either parents or staff, after which parents may withdraw a child or the staff may request that the student be withdrawn.*

## Special Needs

The FUMC Preschool will make every effort to accommodate the special needs of your child, such as physical needs related to allergies or emotional needs that merit some extra “tender loving care.” However, our staff is not trained to design special programs for learning disabilities, speech problems, unusual behavioral issues, or physical and/or developmental disabilities that would keep a child from participating in the normal activities of the school day or that might interfere with the regular activities of the class. We may not be able to enroll or keep enrolled children with special needs but will help in any way we can to make referrals to specialists or allow your child’s personal therapist to have sessions with them during the school week at our facility.

## Discipline

We strive to offer a loving, fun, and safe learning environment for every child. We try to be positive about discipline and our interventions include but are not limited to :

- Redirecting
- Planning ahead (often prevents problems)
- Encouraging appropriate behavior
- Developing and discussing clear and consistent rules
- Encouraging children to evaluate problems and generate reasonable solutions
- Accepting logical or natural consequences
- Time out (in an age appropriate fashion)
- Developing behavior intervention plans with parents

Under no conditions will children be subjected to harsh or physical punishment. Children will not be humiliated, threatened, shamed, frightened or subject to profane or abusive language. If a child’s behavior becomes so severe that it compromises the classroom environment for other children, we will seek to remedy the situation with the parent’s cooperation. If solutions are not found, after exhausting all possibilities, we may ask parents to seek an alternative program.

## Biting Policy

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then redirected.
- A written Accident Report is given to the parents of the bitten child and an incident report is given to the parents of the biter when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.

*Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child do we consider asking a family to withdraw the child.*

## Toilet Training Policy

Students must be toilet trained to enter our three and four year old classes.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- 1) Be able to TELL the adult they have to go to the restroom BEFORE they have to go.
- 2) Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
- 3) Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
- 4) Be able to get off the toilet by themselves.
- 5) Be able to wash and dry hands.
- 6) Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom.
- 7) Wears underwear daily (no diapers or pull-ups)

We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 6 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

### Confidentiality

ALL INFORMATION CONCERNING CHILDREN AND/OR FAMILIES WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND IS FOR PRESCHOOL STAFF AND TEACHER USE ONLY. Teachers refrain from disclosing the names of children involved in discipline incidents or accidents while sharing with parents. Please limit your questions to teachers and staff members. It is not appropriate to confront a parent who was not present when the incident occurs.

### Procedures for Concern

All concerns are to be directed through the following channels. First, parents should discuss concerns verbally with the classroom teacher. If the concern is not resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parent and teacher, then he/she should discuss the matter with the Preschool Director. Most problems result from miscommunication and can be resolved by talking to the teacher with or without the Director. It is our goal that your child and family have a positive experience with our program!

### Social Media

The GFUMC Preschool online presence supports a sense of community by connecting people with similar interests, sharing information about school events, building school spirit, and providing ways for people to dialogue. GFUMC Preschool aims to ensure that our school, students, educators, and families are not compromised on any form of social networking. However, we acknowledge the important role that social media can play in maintaining a sense of community

among the families we serve. The following guidelines ensure the privacy, dignity, and rights of the preschool, students, staff, and families.

Confidential and proprietary information about GFUMC Preschool may not be posted. Material that could be deemed as threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile toward any individual or entity may not be posted.

Any staff member, parent or volunteer found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring GFUMC Preschool into disrepute, or deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the Preschool or other employees, children or staff may face disciplinary action in line with the Preschool disciplinary procedures (parents and students will be asked to leave immediately).

### Representative Schedule

Each class will have a daily schedule posted in their class room. The activities listed below will give you an idea of what we do each day at Preschool.

Arrival: table activities and free play

Circle Time

Bathroom break

Snack

Small group instruction with language, math, art

Specials time of Chapel, Music, Art, Spanish, Fit Kids or Library

Playground or indoor free play

Centers or individual instruction to complete work

Daily review

Dismissal

*Class Schedules will be available for viewing and distributed at Open House*

*Updated February 2020*