

# Parent Handbook

for



**Voted Best Preschool in Acworth!**

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## Voted Best Preschool in Acworth!

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Dear Parents,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Acworth United Methodist Church and Preschool. We are thrilled you have chosen our school for your child, and we look forward to serving you and your family this year. The information in this handbook should be helpful in familiarizing you with the policies, procedures, and programs here at Acworth UMC Preschool.

The mission of the preschool is to provide a safe, secure environment with a loving, qualified staff that offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum centered on God's love. Our child centered program allows children to learn through hands on activities. The large and small group activities allow the child to grow and develop academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Our belief is to work with the families we serve to create a positive environment with an age appropriate and stimulating curriculum. We encourage frequent communication with you so we can best meet the needs of your child and family. Our staff will keep you informed on upcoming activities and events occurring at the preschool. We look forward to this partnership and know you will be blessed by the love and growth you will see in your child. Welcome to Acworth United Methodist Church!

Blessings,

Christine Cartwright

## HEALTH

Each child is required to have a signed Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) on file in our office. Every effort is made to protect the health and safety of every child. Your cooperation is needed and appreciated.

- Student temperature will be taken periodically in order to ensure students at school are fever free and feeling well.
- Parents should not give fever reducing medicine to children prior to school.
- Families are expected to follow any Covid19 or safety policies provided by the preschool.

To ensure a happy time for all children, please do not bring your child to school if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever in the past 24 hrs.
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hrs.
- Severe cold symptoms
- Rash or skin eruptions

Should your child exhibit any of these symptoms while at school, we will contact you to pick up your child. If your child becomes injured at school, we will call you. If it is minor, a note will be sent home in your child's bag.

Staff are not allowed to administer medications to any child. Epi-Pens and inhalers for emergency use are permitted for children with severe allergies and must be left with the director in the preschool office. You will need to complete a medical information form and have it notarized if your child requires an Epi-Pen or inhaler.

## ALLERGIES

If your child has any food allergies, please make sure the preschool office and classroom teacher know and an Epi-Pen is available in the office for your child. **Peanut butter, peanuts, etc. are prohibited in classes where a student has a peanut allergy.** During parent orientation, your child's teacher will let you know if there are any children with allergies in the classroom.

## SCHOOL BAG

First time registering students will receive a canvas tote bag which is included in the registration fee. Parents may order a replacement bag or additional bag if needed for a fee. This bag should be brought to school each day. A change of clothes, a lunch, and daily class folder should be carried to school daily.

## SCHOOL DAY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Carline will begin at 9:15 am each morning and again at 1:15pm each afternoon. Children cannot be dropped off before 9:15am as Acworth UMC Preschool falls under the Georgia state “exempt status for churches and preschools” and is not a licensed daycare. Therefore, we cannot legally operate for more than four hours per day. You will receive carline instructions which include a map during parent orientation. Please drive **slowly** and **carefully** while on the church property. Children will enter and exit on the passenger side of the vehicle. You will be given a carline number to display in the front of your car for pick-up. Only parents or those with advance written authorization will be permitted to pick up your child. **\*\*\*ALL PARENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO USE MORNING AND AFTERNOON CARLINE** We encourage the use of child restraint devices for your child while in route to and from the preschool. However, with our large enrollment, time will not allow our staff to buckle and unbuckle children. If needed, please pull off to the front of the church to buckle your child’s seat belt. If you arrive late or need to check your child out early, please ring the preschool doorbell and a staff member will bring your child to you or take your child to class.

## COMMUNICATION

Please send all messages to the school in writing. Verbal messages are likely to become confused or forgotten. If you need to contact your child’s teacher during school hours, please contact the preschool office, and we will gladly take your message to her so that the teacher may contact you as soon as possible. Classroom teachers will send home monthly calendars as a way to keep you informed of what is happening in your child’s classroom. The preschool director will send home a monthly newsletter to keep you up to date on upcoming events and activities. The director will also send out frequent emails and post important information on Facebook. Please “like” the preschool Facebook page in order to receive these reminders. The preschool office uses Remind 101 to notify parents quickly via text messages. Important reminders such as school closings, weather related closings or delays, and reminders about school events will be sent via Remind 101. Parents are encouraged to sign up for Remind 101. Information needed to sign up will be provided during parent orientation.

## LUNCH

Please send plastic sippy cups or cups with lids for the Toddlers and 2 year olds. Lunches should be prepared at home. Children do work up an appetite after a busy morning at school. Please send a healthy lunch each day with your child. Please do not send red or purple beverages, soft drinks, candy, or gum. Water is the preferred drink for all children. Please be sure your child’s name is labeled on their lunches and cups. Teachers will notify you of any limitations in the classroom due to food allergies.

## PROGRAM

Our mission statement is Praise, Play, Grow, and Go! Our goal is to provide students with opportunities to praise God, play with peers, grow academically, socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and be prepared to go to Kindergarten. Our program provides a safe, secure environment with a loving, qualified staff that offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum centered on God's love. Teachers structure the classroom environment allowing students to explore and learn through self-directed activities and learning experiences that educate the "whole" child. Children will learn and grow as they engage in arts and crafts, sing songs, read and hear stories, and develop their fine motor skills.

A variety of **extra-curricular classes** are offered to all students. All students will attend music class and Bible class weekly. Chapel is offered twice a month for our 3, 4, and 5 year old classes. Students in the 3, 4, and 5 year old classes at least 3 days a week will also attend STEAM class weekly. Students in the toddler and 2-year-old classes will attend a Storytime & Creative Play class as well as Bible and music class weekly. Bible stories, songs, crafts, and Christian basics are taught regularly as part of our preschool program. Students will learn a new blessing and Bible verse monthly.

Due to safety concerns and car seat regulations, all field trips will be held "in house."

## FUNDRAISERS

**Scholastic Book Club:** Book order forms will be sent home monthly for you to review. Books can be ordered for children of all ages. Book orders sent home will be designed for younger students. Materials for older children are available when placing orders on line. Orders may be placed on line or sent in with your student. Checks should be made payable to Scholastic. All orders are optional.

**School Pictures:** A professional photographer will take individual student pictures twice a year as well as a class group picture once a year. Proofs will be sent home with students with the option to purchase prints or a CD of digital images.

**Original Works:** Your child will create an original piece of artwork at school. This company will use your child's artwork to make creative keepsakes such as mouse pads, coffee mugs, phone cases, night lights, hot pads, etc. These make great gifts at Christmas!

**Kroger Rewards:** We encourage parents to add or link their current Kroger Rewards card to our preschool account. This can be done online for free simply by following a few steps. The preschool receives a percentage back from the sales linked to the preschool account. These rewards will only be used on curriculum and materials for the classrooms.

**AmazonSmile:** AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that allows customers to enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price to charitable organizations. We encourage parents to select Acworth UMC Preschool as their charitable organization.

## TUITION

Tuition for the first month of school is due by July 1. This is the first of 10 tuition payments; the other nine payments will be made August-April. Please make checks payable to Acworth UMC Preschool. During the school year, a tuition envelope will be provided to you. Please return tuition checks in the envelope. If you are paying cash, please bring your payment to the preschool office. Your child is enrolled for the entire school year and budgets are set accordingly (August-May). A 10% discount is available for the youngest child to families with more than one child in the program. A 15% discount will be applied if a third child is enrolled in the program. Monthly tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> will incur a \$15 late fee. The payment for August is due on August 1 but will not be considered late until after August 16, 2022. The preschool can only accept checks or cash. Credit card or debit card payments may be made online on the preschool website.

Should Cobb Co. schools close for 2 weeks or less for inclement weather, natural disaster, or pandemic, tuition will not be refunded. If a closure is over 2 weeks, parents will be issued a prorated credit or a prorated refund. Staff will not work or be paid after 2-week period.

**Tuition Amounts:** Check with the preschool office for current rates

**Registration/Supply Fees:** Check with the preschool office or preschool website for current rates. Registration fees are due at the time of registration. **Registration fees are non-refundable.** Teachers may provide parents with a "wish list" of optional items they would like to have for their classroom and students.

Parents who are late in picking up their children after school are subject to a **late pick up fee** of \$1.00 per minute. In addition, after the third late pick up in one month, a \$25 penalty will be charged.

\*A one month's notice is required when a child is to be **withdrawn** from the program during the school year.

## CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes which are comfortable and washable. Please put tights, shorts, or pants under the girls' dresses. We also request you send your child in tennis shoes and socks. Please do not send them in flip flops, Crocs, or sandals. These make it difficult for them to run on the playground. All personal items should be labeled with the child's name. If needed, please send a sufficient number of diapers. All children should have a change of clothes in their bag. **We require that all children entering the three year old classes be fully potty trained.**

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Please make sure the preschool office has emergency contact numbers for your child in case we are unable to reach you. If your contact or emergency contact information should change, please notify the preschool office.

## TOYS

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, stuffed animals, etc. to school. Exceptions will be made if the teacher has requested these items for a class activity.

## HOLIDAY PARTIES

Each class will participate in Christmas parties, Easter parties, and End of the Year Celebrations. Other holidays or birthdays may be celebrated with a special snack. Parents are invited to participate in class parties and their child's birthday. Please do not send in goodie bags or lunch for the class. We can only hand out birthday party invitations that include all boys, all girls, or the entire class. We want to avoid tears due to hurt feelings. Parents may send in a class birthday treat to celebrate their child's birthday. Please confirm the date and time with the classroom teacher. Please bring a treat that can easily be eaten in the classroom. Suggested birthday treat ideas include; donut holes, mini muffins, cookies, popsicles, ice cream cups, donuts, or rice krispy treats.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

You will receive a complete calendar for the school year during parent orientation. The preschool follows the Cobb Co. school calendar. The preschool will be closed on Good Friday, while Cobb Co. schools may remain open. When Cobb County schools close due to inclement weather or have a delayed start, AUMC Preschool will be closed. If Cobb County schools call for an unscheduled early dismissal, the preschool will release the equivalent amount of time early. (For example, if Cobb County dismisses 2 hours early, the preschool will also dismiss 2 hours early, at 11:15am. ) Parents will be notified of an early dismissal via Remind 101 texting. We do not make up any days that are lost due to weather. The preschool board will decide

which, if any, days will be scheduled early release days for the preschool. Preschool early release days will only be on days in which Cobb County has scheduled early release and will be used for the preschool staff to attend training. Preschool dismissal will be 11:45am-12:00pm on these assigned days.

## STAFF

Every class is staffed with a Christian teacher and an aide who are certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff are required to have a clear background check and to receive Safe Sanctuary Training.

## ADMITTANCE

AUMC Preschool welcomes all children and does not discriminate because of race, religious, physical, or mental differences. However, our facilities, equipment, staff training, and ratio numbers limit our ability to meet the needs of some students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, hyperactive behavior, or severe visual, auditory, or learning impairments. Therefore, admittance and continuance in our program will be considered and reviewed on an individual basis by the director and the Preschool Board.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Acworth United Methodist Church Preschool Committee has established a discipline policy. Our objective is to teach children self-control and responsibility. We insist on an orderly environment and the cooperation of the children in our program. We need and desire a positive relationship between home and school. We cannot accept behavior which is distracting, disruptive, or which might habitually inflict bodily harm or personal injury to themselves or other children enrolled in our program. When necessary, we employ proven methods (time out, talking with the director) of dealing with unacceptable behavior.

In the interest of safety for all, students who injure or endanger themselves or other students (biting, scratching, hitting, etc.) will bring home to their parents a written warning which must be signed by the parent and returned to the preschool director. Following two written warnings, a conference will be held between the parents, teacher(s), and preschool director, and the parents will be asked not to return their child to school for one week. If a third incident occurs, the parents will be asked not to return the child to school that month. Should a fourth incident occur once the student returns to school, the parents will be asked to withdraw their child for the remainder of the school year. No prepaid tuition will be refunded for time missed, but the child will be allowed to register for the next school year at the same time as returning students. This will assure their place in the program for subsequent school years.