



giving the Spirit room to

New Covenant
United Methodist Church
• **Preschool** •

2017-2018 Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

Welcome Messages	3
Open House Information	4
Curriculum	4
Communication	4
Class Placement	4
Withdrawal Policy	4
Tuition and Payment Information	5
Drop Off/Pick-Up Guidelines	5
Privacy Policy	6
Social Media Policy	6
Volunteers and Substitutes	6
Inclement Weather & Other Closings	6
School Calendar	7
Clothing	8
Potty Training Policy	8
Snack Time	8
Parent Visitation & Birthdays	8
Wellness Policy	9
Discipline Policy	9
Bite Policy	10
Safety Drills	10
Facility Safety	10
Recycling	10

A Message from Pastor Stuart Noell

Dear Parents and Families,

We are honored that you have chosen to entrust the care of your children to the New Covenant United Methodist Church preschool. Our preschool ministry is now celebrating over five years of influencing and developing the young people of our community. We are very proud of this program and we are very grateful for our gifted and dedicated preschool staff.

In Mark 10:14, Jesus spoke these timely words, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Children do have a special place in the kingdom of God and children have a special place at New Covenant United Methodist Church.

If I may be of assistance in any way, please feel free to contact me.

Yours in Christ,

Stuart Noell

A Message from the Director

We are excited that your family has chosen to become part of our family! We look forward serving your family and helping your child grow physically, emotionally, academically, and spiritually. We are ready for a great year!

Angie Bass, Director

A Message from the NCUMC Childcare Advisory Board

We are so honored and excited to be working with your children this year! Now in our seventh year of operation, we are a program that is dedicated to the development of the whole child: mind, body, and spirit. We look forward to watching your children grow and develop, and we believe that you will be amazed to see their growth over the coming year! Sharing the love of Christ with our community's youngest members is a breathtakingly important opportunity, and we are deeply grateful that you chose us as your family's preschool this year! Have a blessed year!

Childcare Advisory Board

Open House Information

We will host an Open House on **Tuesday, September 5 at 6:30 pm**. We will meet in the sanctuary and then visit the classrooms and meet the teachers.

Our Philosophy

The goal of our preschool is to nurture and develop the whole child, while providing a Christ-centered early learning experience. Our philosophy is that preschool-aged children primarily learn through play, and that play is the “work” of the child. We offer a blend of structured and unstructured activities throughout the school day, with an emphasis on open-ended opportunities for interaction and imaginative play. Each classroom will feature a number of centers (e.g. blocks, art and dramatic play) where children will have the opportunity to learn and play each day. Teachers will also lead children in daily age-appropriate learning activities (e.g., stories, games, crafts). Other regular features of our program will include Children’s Chapel and music time, lead by members of our church staff. Taken together, the elements of our program are intended to support children’s social, emotional, motor, and cognitive development, while providing a foundational model for Christian living.

Communication

Newsletters for each class will be handed out once a month to keep parents informed about classroom activities and upcoming events. We will also occasionally send home notes or emails with reminders, schedule changes and other information.

Each child will have a communication folder; please check this folder often for special information, updates, newsletters and artwork. **Please return this folder the next school day.**

Class Placement

We generally follow the North Carolina guidelines for appropriate Kindergarten placement (cutoff date of August 31st). Children will be assigned to a class at the first of the school year and will remain in that class for the entire year. We reserve the right to combine age groups if our numbers require it; we also reserve the right to move a student to a class that better fits his/her needs, after a meeting with parents and teachers, if deemed necessary.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents are asked to give a 30 day written and paid notice before canceling their child’s spot. If you cancel your child’s spot after the first day of classes, the first month’s tuition cannot be refunded.

Tuition and Payment Information

Our 2017 - 2018 monthly tuition rates are as follows:

1/2 Year Olds	W, TH - \$125.00
1/2 Year Olds	T, W, TH - \$185.00
3/4 Year Olds	T, W, TH - \$165.00
3/4 Year Olds	M, T, W, TH - \$200.00

There is a \$10 discount for additional children enrolled from the same family.

The first month's tuition is due by September 15th. **Beginning with October, monthly tuition payments are due the 1st of each month.** A \$25 fee will be charged for returned checks. Payments can be made by cash, check (payable to "New Covenant UMC Preschool") or money orders. To maintain your child's spot, monthly payments must be made, regardless of number of days attended. **Monthly tuition is based on the full school year's tuition, divided into nine equal payments.**

Drop Off/Pick-Up Guidelines

Class times are 8:30am to 12:00pm. We open our doors at 8:25am. Please do not drop your child off before this time; our teachers use this time to get ready for the day and will not be able to care for your child properly.

DROP OFF: Parents may walk their children in or use our drop off line. If you use the drop off line, please remain in your car and allow staff members to open the door and unbuckle your child. You are welcome to park and walk your child to the sidewalk, but please **DO NOT** let him/her cross the parking lot alone. We encourage parents to use the drop off line instead of walking their children in each day; this gives children an opportunity to be independent and can make separation easier. Parents of toddlers may use the drop off /pick up line at their discretion.

PICK UP: Children will be dismissed at 12:00. If you are using our pick up line, please **REMAIN IN YOUR CAR** and allow a teacher to assist your child into the car. If you would like to buckle your child in, please pull into the parking area. **Whether a caregiver or teacher buckles your child in, it is ultimately the responsibility of the driver to ensure a child's safety before leaving the parking lot.** If you wish to park to pick up your child, please enter at the main church entrance on the gym end (doors unlocked at 11:55) and wait in the hallway by the bathrooms for your child to be called. (On Mondays, all children will be released to the car line door.)

We will not release children to the car line **OR** the inside pick-up line until all children are seated in our dismissal area.

If you need to pick your child up early, please come to the main church entrance. The preschool doors will not be monitored from 11:45 - 12:00 as teachers need this time to help the children pack up. It is very important that children be picked up on time. There will be a fee of **\$1 per minute late after 12:10 pm.** This policy will be strictly enforced. If you are running late, please call **(704) 827-0794** to let us know.

If there is a change in your normal pick-up routine, we ask that you please inform the staff in writing when dropping off your child that morning.

If there is any change in who may pick up your child, especially if someone who has been regularly picking your child up is no longer allowed custody, please contact us immediately to change your child's records.

Privacy Policy

NCUMC Preschool takes the privacy of our students and families very seriously. Our teachers are not allowed to share information about students with anyone except their parents and/or other designated guardian. If you have a concern about another student, please share this information with the director only.

Social Media Policy

Our teachers have been asked to not accept Facebook or other social media requests from families currently attending our preschool. This protects both the privacy of our teachers and our families. Teachers are not required to end connections made prior to a family enrolling in our program. You are invited to "like" the preschool's official Facebook page. We also ask that for the privacy of all our families, that if you post pictures of children other than your own, that you not tag other children without permission from their parents.

Volunteers and Substitutes

If you would like to become a regular volunteer or paid substitute, you will need to complete a NCUMC Safe Sanctuaries volunteer application and attend a 15 minute training session. Our Safe Sanctuaries policy is a directive of the United Methodist Church that defines our interactions with children. Please see the director for more information.

Inclement Weather & Other Closings

While we are located in Gaston County, we may not always follow Gaston County Schools' closings. We will monitor any inclement weather situation and notify you by 7:00am with our decision. Please check your email or our Facebook page to verify whether we will be open and if there is a change in the time. We will not make up missed days in the event of inclement weather.

There may be times when the preschool needs to close early for church events (such as funerals). These functions are beyond the control of the preschool; we will make every effort to hold school that day even if it means early dismissal. You will be notified as soon as possible should such an event arise.

School Calendar

Our first day of school is Wednesday, September 6, 2017 (the Wednesday after Labor Day); our last day of school is Thursday, May 24, 2018 (Thursday before Memorial Day). Our calendar most closely follows Gaston County Schools. Important dates are listed below; parents will receive reminders in their classroom newsletters and by email.

September

- 5 Preschool Orientation in sanctuary 6:30pm
- 6 First day!
- 12 Soccer Shots Demo 10:30 – 12:00
- 13 August & September Birthday Party
- 26 Soccer Shots Begins (8 weeks) 12:05 – 12:40

October

- 5 Fall Picture Day
- 9 Butter Braids Fundraiser begins
- 18 October Birthday Party
- 19 Family Field Trip to Anne Close Springs Greenway, Fort Mill
- 25 Butter Braid Fundraiser ends
- 26 Fall Fun Day

November

- 8 November Birthday Party & Butter Braid pick up
- 14 Last Soccer Shots
- 16 Thanksgiving Feast
- 20-24 Thanksgiving Break

December

- 6 December Birthday Party
- 14 Pajama Day & Last day of preschool
- 18-29 Christmas Break

January

- 1 Happy New Year!
- 2 Teacher work day – PRESCHOOL CLOSED
- 3 Preschool reopens!
- 10 January Birthday Party

February

- 7 February Birthday Party
- 14 Valentine's Party
- 22 Evening Program, 6:30pm

March

- TBA Tumbling Begins (8 weeks) 12:05 – 12:40
- TBA Spring/Graduation Pictures
- 8 Daddy & Me Breakfast
- 14 March Birthday Party

April

- 2-5 Spring Break
- 11 April Birthday Party

May

- 2 May Birthday Party
- 3 Mommy & Me Breakfast
- 16 June & July Birthday Party
- 24 Last day of preschool /Family Picnic 11am/Graduation 6:30 pm

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothing appropriate for playtime indoors and out, and for working with a variety of craft mediums, including paint and glue. Please send a full change of seasonal clothing to be kept at school.

Shoes should be closed toe and appropriate for outdoor play. Athletic shoes are best. **NO sandals, cros or flip-flops allowed.** This will allow your child to play safely without worry of splinters from mulch or stubbed toes.

Potty Training Policy

We understand that all children develop at different paces. If your child is not potty trained by age 3, we will do our best to work with you and your child. Each class will have at least two scheduled bathroom breaks each day. Our toddler room does not have the facilities for potty training; please let us know if your toddler is training.

Snack Time

We ask parents to supply snacks for a week for the entire class, if they are able. Teachers will send home a "SNACK BAG" on Thursday to be returned for the next week. You may include whatever type of healthy snack you and your family like; a list of suggested snacks, number of children, and allergy information will be included on the bag. **You will be alerted if there is a food allergy in your child's class. We ask that you send snacks in their original packaging so we can double check ingredients.** If for any reason you are unable to supply snacks, let the director know and your child will be able to "shop" from our extra supplies for the week.

Please do not send sippy cups or juice boxes/pouches with your child. We will supply cups and a drink (usually water) for your child. One of our goals is to teach children to use an open cup at the table. We will use plastic cups that will be cleaned after each use; reusable cups protect the environment and save money. During the winter months, when sickness is at its worse, we will temporarily switch to disposable cups.

Parent Visitation & Birthdays

After children have acclimated to preschool, parents are welcome to visit our classrooms any time. A schedule will be posted outside classrooms so you will have an idea of what children will be doing and when.

Birthdays are special and important occasions and we want to make sure each child is celebrated. This year we are going to try something new: **a MONTHLY birthday celebration held during our normal snack times.** Each month, we will ask the parents of all the children celebrating birthdays to send in items for the party. Our hope is that celebrating this way will cut down the number of sugary sweets in our classrooms AND allow your child to eat a healthy lunch after preschool. We will still celebrate each child individually on his/her birthday with a crown and the birthday song.

Wellness Policy

For the safety and well-being of all children and staff, the following health and wellness policies will be strictly enforced. A child should not attend preschool if any of the following conditions exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in childcare activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. The child has any of the following conditions:
 - A fever higher than 100 degrees. Child must be fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to preschool.
 - Continuous and/or colored nasal drainage. A current note from a physician can be provided if drainage is caused by allergies.
 - Diarrhea. Child cannot have more than two loose stools in a 24 hour period.
 - Vomiting within a 24 hour period.
 - Communicable diseases (including lice).

If a child shows any of these symptoms while at preschool, the parent/guardian will be asked to pick the child up promptly. Children may return to preschool after 24 hours if they are symptom free or if a written note from the child's doctor is provided to us.

Please note that teachers are not allowed to apply sunscreen to children or administer medication (except for epi-pens).

Discipline Policy

It is our goal to work with your children without the distractions that discipline issues can cause. We understand that learning discipline is a part of maturing; we will provide clear rules and limits so your children will understand appropriate behavior.

Our plan includes:

- Clearly stating class rules and appropriate behavior
- Positively praising/rewarding appropriate behavior (rewards may include stickers, stamps, prize box, etc.)
- Improving behavior
- Teaching consequences for inappropriate behavior such as hitting, throwing objects or mulch, use of ugly language, and defiance of adult authority

It will be at the discretion of the teachers to use the appropriate means of behavior modification. The following means may be used:

- Verbal warning
- Redirection
- Time out (1 minute per year of age)
- Staying inside with another teacher for up to 5 minutes (max) while class goes outside for PE
- Sitting outside director's office or taking a walk with director for a maximum of 5 minutes (director and child visible at all times)
- Request for removal of child by parent

Bite Policy

Children often bite others because they do not have the words to express their emotions. We are dedicated to helping your child use his/her increasing vocabulary to work through this phase. However, for the safety of other children, your child may be asked to take a day off from preschool if the bite breaks the skin; recurring issues will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Any time there is a bite, both children will receive a note home detailing the incident.

Safety Drills

To prepare our students for the possibility of an emergency, we will routinely conduct safety drills (fire, tornado, etc.). Students will be taught how to leave the building or assemble in a different indoor location quickly and in an orderly fashion. In the event of an evacuation, you will be contacted to pick up your child when the authorities from the fire department and/or emergency officials tell us they can be released.

Facility Safety

We take the safety of the children in our care very seriously. New Covenant UMC is a very active church, with several groups meeting during the morning hours. Door checks will be made periodically to ensure that doors are locked at all times. Parents will be made aware of regularly scheduled church events where the main doors may be unlocked for short periods of time. We will ask a member of each regularly scheduled group to be responsible for locking the door, and we will check more often on these days to ensure the door is relocked. Our current regularly scheduled groups are Prayer Meeting, Tuesdays 9am; Circle of Love Quilters, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 9:30am; United Methodist Women Morning Circle, 4th Thursdays, 10am.

Recycling

We try to be as "green" as possible. Children will learn about and participate in recycling in their classrooms. Other ways we help the environment include using reusable towels for cleaning (NOT hand washing!) and recycling materials into art and other classroom items.

Questions or Concerns?

Please never hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or concerns! We are here to serve your family.