



Bethlehem First Preschool & Kindergarten

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Bethlehem, GA 30620
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Parent Handbook

*“A Program of Excellence for
Young Children”*

*As recognized by The United Methodist Preschool
Association of the North Georgia Conference*

Bethlehem First United Methodist Preschool & Kindergarten

709 Christmas Avenue
Bethlehem, Georgia 30620
770-867-3724
Lizzy Sheffield
Director

Mission Statement

The Bethlehem First Preschool & Kindergarten is an integral outreach ministry of Bethlehem First UMC. Our mission is to foster the holistic development of every child: spiritually, socially, emotionally, and academically. By balancing guided play with foundational learning and chapel time, we serve as a Christ-centered partner for families in our community.

Our Program: We offer a comprehensive curriculum designed for the whole child, featuring:

- **Faith:** Weekly chapel and spiritual guidance.
- **Academics:** Reading and Math Readiness.
- **Creativity:** Art, music, and dramatic play.
- **Activity:** Outdoor play and creative movement.

**Bethlehem First United Methodist
Preschool & Kindergarten
Preschool Handbook
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General Policies

Entrance Requirements

- Children who will turn two before October 31st may apply for the 2-day class that meets on Tuesday-Thursday.
- Children turning two before September 1st may apply for the 3-day class that meets on Monday-Wednesday-Friday or the 2-day Tuesday-Thursday class.
- Children turning three before Sept. 1st may apply for the 3-day class that meets Monday-Wednesday-Friday, the 2-day Tuesday/Thursday class, or the 5-day class that meets Monday through Friday
- Children who will be four before September 1st may apply for the 5-day class that meets Monday through Friday or the 4-day class that meets Monday through Thursday.
- Children who will be five by September 1st may apply for the Kindergarten class.

**The Preschool Board will have discretion based on both class space availability and observations during a 30-day probationary period for students admitted because of parents or guardian requests made outside of these age parameters.*

Registration

Parents may file the registration form with the Preschool Director or with the church office. It is essential that forms be filled out completely and that the registration fee is submitted along with the registration forms. Returning students will register online.

Registration Fee

A registration fee is due upon registering your child. **This fee is Non-Refundable and separate from tuition.** This fee is equivalent to one month's tuition (for example: registration for a two-year-old attending 2 days/week is \$155). If you have more than one child, the fee for the second child will be \$120. The supply/facility use fee is per child and is due on May 1st.

CLASS	RATIO	SCHEDULE	ANNUAL TUITION	SUPPLY FEE	FACILITY FEE
Young 2-year olds	1:4	T/TH	\$1395.00	\$50	\$50
2-year olds	1:5	T/TH	\$1395	\$50	\$50
2-year olds	1:5	M/W/F	\$1575.00	\$55	\$50
3-year olds	1:6	T/TH	\$1395.00	\$50	\$50
3-year olds	1:6	M/W/F	\$1575.00	\$55	\$50
PreK (age 4)	1:7	M-Th	\$1800.00	\$60	\$50
PreK (age 4)	1:7	M-F	\$1935.00	\$65	\$50
Kindergarten (Age 5)	1:8	M-F	\$2250.00	\$90	\$50

Tuition

Tuition is divided into nine equal payments. Some months the children attend more days than others, so rather than paying a different amount each month, the total cost for the year is calculated and divided by nine months. The first of nine payments is due on August 1st. September-April are due on the 1st of each month. Please make checks payable to **Bethlehem First UMC Preschool**. Payment can also be made in the Preschool office. No refunds are given for illnesses, snow days, vacations, or other non-attendance days. Families with 2 or more children in the program will receive \$10 off monthly tuition.

Late Fees

A late fee of \$20 will be applied for any payment received after the 7th of each month.

Returned Checks

There is a \$25.00 fee for all returned checks. The Preschool Director will immediately send you notification if your check is returned to us. **If a check is returned to the preschool, all further payments received on the account must be paid in cash or by money order.**

Hours of Operation

- Preschool classes meet Monday through Friday from 9:15 a.m. until 12:15 p.m.
- The Kindergarten class meets from 9:15 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Arrival Time (9:10 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.)

If you arrive after the staff or volunteers have gone into the building and the doors are closed, you must drive around back to the office door and walk your child to the classroom. **Teachers will be busy preparing their classrooms for the day and will not be available to supervise your child before 9:10 a.m.**

Departure Time (12:15 p.m. - 12:25 p.m.)

A childcare fee of \$5.00 per ten minutes will be assessed after 12:25 p.m. for all preschool students still in the building. One warning will be given before the fee is assessed. If there is an emergency, please call so that your child's teacher will know you are going to be late. Students must be loaded and unloaded from the passenger's side of the vehicle only. All Kindergarteners must be picked up by 1:25 p.m. **Children must be buckled into their car seats when leaving school, and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the seat belts are securely fastened.**

Holidays and Closings

Each student will receive a school calendar to be kept in their folder. Although starting and closing dates differ, in general, we follow the Barrow County School calendar for holidays and inclement weather closings. A message will be sent via the REMIND App. We will not have weather make-up days added to the end of the year.

Carpool

In the morning parents pulling through the drop-off driveway should not get out of their car but allow the teachers to assist the child. If you walk your child into school, please park your car and hold your child's hand through the parking lot to ensure their safety during drop-off and pick-up times. Please leave the child at the door with the teacher.

At departure time we ask that you place your car sign with the child's name on the passenger side of your windshield each day. Please continue to do this all through the year. This is for your child's protection and safety. We utilize all of our teachers each week in this procedure and having the name on the windshield helps us to keep the line moving quickly.

Please make certain that we are aware of all carpool arrangements in writing. If you will not be picking your child up, or the carpool arrangements will be temporarily changed, **YOU MUST NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IN WRITING.** Your child will not be released to anyone except parents, legal guardians, or those persons listed on the Registration Form unless there is a written note from the parent or legal guardian. Please tell the person that they will need to show their identification to the teachers before the child is allowed to leave with them.

Custody Agreements

We require a copy of any existing legal custody agreement, court order, or parenting plan be provided to the school office at the time of enrolment or as soon as an order is issued. This ensures staff are aware of legally mandated directives concerning the care and release of the student. All court orders on file will be followed without exception.

Visitors

The outside doors to the building will be locked at all times after 9:25 a.m. If you need to come into the building for any reason, you must drive around back to the office door and enter the building at this location. You will then sign in at the reception desk to proceed to check in at the preschool office. We must follow this rule for the safety of all children and staff.

Guests

We invite parents to visit our preschool at any time. We do enjoy having Mommy, Daddy, or an adult friend sharing their hobby, job, culture, or other areas of interest with our classes. In order for teachers to plan their schedule, all of these visits must be arranged in advance.

Communication

Open communication between parents and staff is essential. Your child will benefit from parent/teacher communication. Avenues of communication which are provided by the school include:

Calendars/Parent-Teacher Folders

A class calendar via student folders listing events and snack information is sent home to post. Please, always check your child's bag for the monthly calendars and folders. Alert the school or classroom teacher if you have not received these items.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are offered if needed, with one mandatory conference scheduled at the end of April for the four-year-old classes (at the end of May for Kindergarten) for the purpose of sharing your child's progress and Kindergarten/First-grade Readiness. Additional conferences can be arranged by parents or teachers if a need arises. Progress reports for twos and threes will be sent home twice a year. If you would like to schedule a meeting with your child's teacher or with the Preschool Director, please contact that person directly to arrange the details. Please approach staff with questions or concerns; *however, please respect the teacher's time with the children during school hours.*

Phone/Written Communication/App

The staff will make attempts to notify parents via the phone or by written note whenever a situation arises that we feel you should be aware of. **If you need to get a message to a teacher call the Preschool Office at (770) 867-3724 or email lorie.segar@bethlehemfirstumc.com and put the teacher's name on the subject line of your message. She will deliver it to the teacher. To contact the Director email lizzy.sheffield@bethlehemfirstumc.com, call the school office, or use the REMIND App.** If there is an emergency and you cannot get through to the Preschool, call the main church office at (770) 867-3727.

Safety

Unfortunately, accidents do happen. When they do we treat them immediately with tender loving care. If your child does have an accident that does not require emergency medical care, he/she will bring an "ouch note" home explaining what happened. In case of an injury to a student, a staff person will see that the wound is cleaned. If it is necessary to call the parents and inform them of the injury, then the staff person will notify the director also. If the injury appears to be serious appropriate action will be taken. The staff person will complete an accident report about what happened to be included in the student's file and sent home to be signed. This procedure is used so that you can have full information regarding the incident.

Lost and Found

A lost and found box will be located in the School Office. Please let us know immediately when your child has lost an item at school. If items are not claimed within a month, we give them away to various charitable organizations.

Fire Drills/ Weather Drills

During September, the Director will set a time and date for a fire drill. A procedure will be shared at this time. Fire drills will be held regularly. In March the Director will set a day and time to practice a tornado drill. Procedures will be posted in the classroom.

Pets and Plants

Animals are not part of our everyday preschool routine. However, our preschool does allow animals to visit a classroom on approval from the director. Children's allergies are considered. If a child is allergic or frightened, great measures are taken to ensure the well-being and safety of that child. No animal that would pose a problem to a child or adult would be allowed at our school. While in our preschool, pets must be under the close supervision of an adult. All pets must be current on their shots and be restrained on a leash or in a pet cage. Non-poisonous plants may be grown in a classroom provided there are no children with allergies in the class.

Harassment Policy

It is the policy of Bethlehem First UMC Preschool & Kindergarten to forbid unlawful harassment of all employees and students at all times during all occasions while at school, in the workplace, at any school event, or church activity. Any act of harassment of students or employees by other students or employees based upon race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including termination of employees, suspension, or expulsion of student.

Fieldtrips for PK4 & Kindergarten Classes Only

A few field trips are planned during the year. You will be notified of these and any costs associated with the trip. You will be asked to sign a permission form for each field trip and specify how your child is to be transported. **Since your child considers it a special treat for you to accompany him/her on a field trip, we ask that you make other arrangements for younger brothers and sisters and/or other children in your care so that 100% of your attention can be focused on your preschooler during his/her field trip.**

Clothing

What to Wear to School

Please dress your child in play clothes and tennis shoes. Children's clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for floor activities and messy experiences. **No costumes or pajamas** unless specified on the calendar. We stress learning bathroom independence, so wear play clothes that are simple, comfortable, with few buttons, and workable zippers. Unless the temperatures are extremely cold or it is raining, the children will spend time outside every day and should be properly dressed for the weather. Label all cool weather garments and accessories with your child's name. A complete change of clothes (appropriate to the season), including socks and underwear should be in the backpack in case of accidents. This policy is for all ages.

Children in diapers should bring at least 4 diapers every day. The Preschool does not stock diapers. When you are ready to start potty training for your child, please speak with your child's teacher so that she will know the best way to help your child concerning potty training.

What to Bring and Not to Bring

1. Please send a backpack to carry your child's work home from school each day.
2. Children are encouraged to bring flowers, nature objects, and articles pertinent to the current unit of study.
3. Toys should not be brought to preschool unless it is Show and Tell Day. Check your monthly calendar for these dates.
4. The following items should not be brought to preschool; guns, knives, balloons, small pocket toys, or anything of the monster variety. These are distracting and do not have a place in our curriculum.
5. Children should not bring money unless it is for a specific purpose, in which case it should be placed in an envelope and clearly marked with the child's name, the amount enclosed, and what the money is for.
6. Parents are encouraged to save and send in any items that may be used in art projects such as spools, laces, ribbons, and kitchen throw-always. Teachers may send home a wish list of specific things for you to save at home.

Health Policies

Immunization forms must be submitted to the preschool by the first day of school. You may obtain these forms from your doctor or the County Health Department (the form will have the #3231 on it). The form may also be faxed to 770.867.3729. Note the expiration date on the form so that you can keep the form updated throughout the school term.

Illness

If your child is not healthy enough to play outdoors, do not send him to school. We go outside almost every day of the year when it is not raining. We do not have the personnel to supervise one child inside while the rest of the class is outdoors. Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if he/she is showing signs of illness. Any child who has any of the following symptoms within 24 hours should not attend preschool.

Severe cold
Persistent cough
Fever
Sore throat

Earache
Rash
Upset stomach
Nausea or vomiting

Red or sore eyes
Discharge from nose, eyes, ears
Diarrhea
Swollen glands

We insist for their own sake and the protection of the other preschool children, that they be kept at home under the above conditions. If any of these symptoms appear while at school, you will be notified to pick up your child. **A child should be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school. Fever-reducing medications will not be given at school.**

Communicable diseases should be reported to the school at once so we can notify other parents.

If your child is not healthy enough to play outdoors, do not send him to school. We go outside almost every day of the year when it is not raining. We do not have the personnel to supervise one child inside while the rest of the class is outdoors.

If your child has an allergy of any kind, we must have this information on their registration form explaining their allergy triggers and reactions.

First Aid/Medical Care

Our staff is committed to the safety and well-being of all students. In the event of minor injuries or symptoms, authorized staff are permitted to administer basic first aid, including the application of over-the-counter topical treatments such as diaper cream and antibiotic ointment, and oral over-the-counter antihistamines. Parents will be notified of any first aid administered to their child.

Should a medical emergency arise, our staff will seek and provide the best medical care available, which may include contacting the child's doctor directly. Please ensure your child's emergency contact and medical information is kept current with the front office.

Snacks

Parents will provide the snacks for their each day they attend school.

Grapes must be pre-sliced. Do not send popcorn, nuts, hot dogs, raw carrots, or hard candy. We will not serve these foods to preschoolers because of the danger of choking.

Discipline

The teacher and teacher's assistant want to offer a nurturing learning environment for each child. If behavior problems arise the teacher or assistant will handle the situation as positively as possible.

First, a redirection of the child's behavior will be used. If needed the child may spend some calming time with the Director or Assistant Director and then return to the classroom. If misbehavior continues, the teacher may:

1. Call the parents at home to discuss the situation
2. Request a conference with the parents at school
3. Request a conference with the parents and the director

Children with Special Needs

If it is determined by the teacher and director's observations that a child is having difficulty with the adjustment to school, is struggling, is frustrated with the learning situation, or is disrupting the learning environment for other children, the director and the teacher will meet with the parent and discuss their observations. Our staff will work diligently to meet the needs of all children to the best of our ability. If the occasion arises that the director and teacher feel they are not capable of meeting the concerns of a child with special needs, we reserve the right to ask the parents to find a school that might better meet the needs of the child.

Withdrawal

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child, **a one-month notice in writing** must be given to the director. You should arrange to withdraw at the end of a month. If you withdraw your child during any month, full tuition for that month is due at that time. The school also reserves the right, after providing at least two weeks' notice in writing, to ask that a child be withdrawn if we feel our school cannot properly meet the needs of that child.

Special Activities

Birthdays

Each child's birthday is important. We emphasize it by providing a special sticker for him/her to wear on the special day. If a parent would like to visit or send a special snack, you are invited to do so. A day in May will be assigned for students who celebrate summer birthdays. Please, do not send party invitations to school unless everyone is included. No matter how carefully the child distributes invitations, such wonderful plans cannot be kept quiet, and someone is hurt if everyone is not included. Invitations can be sent by mail. Please use your directory for names and addresses.

Parties

We will have several parties throughout the school year. We will have a Fall Costume Parade,, Christmas, Easter, and End of the Year party. Each parent will be asked to help with at least one classroom party during the year. At the beginning of the school year a party host sign-up sheet will be available from your child's teacher. Usually, parties consist of a drink, a special snack, and a small favor for each child. Cost should be shared equally between party hosts.

Since your child considers it a special treat for you to help with a party, we ask that other arrangements be made for younger brothers and sisters, or other children in your care so that 100% of your attention can be given to your preschooler and other classmates.

Chapel

We will have chapel programs for all classes. The emphasis in chapel is on the nature of God as a loving caring Father who shows love and care to each one of us through nature and the people around us. We are a part of His plan and may help in showing God's love and care to those people we are around and in caring for His world. Sometimes pictures or objects are used to illustrate points in the chapel program.

Curriculum

The curriculum at Bethlehem First Preschool & Kindergarten is organized around units of study. Each unit is designed to help your child develop intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually. We are using the *Wonder-Filled Weekdays* curriculum by Abingdon Press, *World of Wonder*, and *HighReach Learning*. We may supplement this guide with other materials from time to time, although this curriculum is the basis for all our units. The premise of this program is that our children learn as they play from manipulating materials to interacting with other children and adults.

Our Pre- Kindergarten program uses *Little Minds at Work* by Tara West, Zoo Phonics and other materials relating to Georgia Early Learning Standards.

Our Kindergarten is currently using the *Guided Phonics and Beyond*, and *KinderWriting*, *KinderMath* curriculums developed by Tara West, and other materials correlating with the Georgia Performance Standards.