



# first church PRESCHOOL

---

First United Methodist Church  
Knoxville, TN

## PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised MARCH 2023

# I. ORGANIZATION OF FIRST CHURCH PRESCHOOL

## 1. What are the mission and values of First Church Preschool?

**MISSION:** First Church Preschool (FCP) offers young students a play-based learning environment where we recognize and celebrate the uniqueness of every child.

FCP provides a safe and loving play-based learning environment that fosters the development of the whole child. By celebrating their unique sense of wonder and encouraging independence, we guide and support social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual growth in each student, both from a school-readiness perspective and by forming positive relationships with adults and peers. FCP values excellence in teaching, curiosity, independence, respect, inclusivity, and community.

We **educate** through play-based learning. We **inspire** creativity and wonder. We **nurture** acceptance and respect.

We are a non-profit, weekday ministry of Knoxville's First United Methodist Church (FUMC) and operate under the direction of the FCP Parent Advisory Board. Children must be at least 6 weeks old to enroll in the infant room and may attend until the time they start kindergarten. It is the position of FUMC and FCP that each child belongs to God and should have opportunities to develop in a loving Christian environment.

FCP is fully licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) and abides by their rules, regulations, and standards. Our program and facilities are inspected yearly by the Knox County Health Department (KCHD), the KCHD Environmental Health Division, the Knoxville Fire Department, and DHS. FCP is a smoke-free campus. Smoking, vaping, or use of chewing tobacco is prohibited in our building or anywhere on campus. Firearms of any kind (regardless of individual permits) are prohibited on campus at all times.

## 2. What are your teachers' educational backgrounds and professional experiences?

FCP has a highly qualified staff of teachers, trained in child development and early childhood education at colleges and universities known for their excellent programs. The staff members' professional experiences range from 1 year to over 20 years. Additionally, staff members receive training from many professional organizations and are required to complete 18–24 hours of early childhood education professional development each year. All teachers are trained to understand the needs of our students, to enhance student development, and to adhere to "best practices" of early childhood education.

All staff are certified in first aid and CPR. Many are members of professional organizations, such as the Knox Association for Children's Early Education (KACEE), the Tennessee Association for Children's Early Education (TACEE), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). They regularly attend teacher workshops and conferences to update their knowledge and skills. Each teacher has met the requirements for physical examinations according to DHS regulations. All teachers are fingerprinted and background checked upon hiring and rechecked every 5 years.

## II. GOALS OF FCP

We offer a high-quality program based on our conviction that preschool experiences are among the most important and influential in a person's life.

We balance activities for well-rounded physical, mental, social-emotional, and spiritual growth in developmentally appropriate ways. We also encourage language development and development of a healthy sense of humor!

We work hard to maintain open lines of communication with parents/guardians. You are sharing your child with us, and we know it is important to tell you everything we can about your child's activities.

FCP has adopted The Creative Curriculum as our play-based learning curriculum. This curriculum provides foundational support for our teachers as they create vibrant classroom environments, plan developmentally appropriate teacher-directed activities, scaffold child-led independent play, communicate effectively with parents, and provide ongoing assessments in four key areas of a child's development: social emotional, physical (gross motor and fine motor), cognitive, and language (expressive and receptive).

### 1. What are FCP's yearly objectives for my child?

Our objectives reflect our desire to see students develop in positive and ongoing ways. We want each student to:

- enjoy learning in a safe and loving environment
- develop an appreciation and a desire to care for our families, friends, school, and world
- develop a strong sense of self and learn to adjust to new situations, demonstrate appropriate trust in adults, recognize their own feelings and manage them appropriately, and stand up for their rights
- develop responsibility for self and others by learning self-direction and independence, taking responsibility for their own well-being, respecting and caring for classroom environment and materials, and following classroom rules and routines
- develop prosocial skills including recognizing the feelings of others and responding appropriately, sharing and respecting the rights of others, and using thinking skills to resolve age-appropriate conflict
- developing fine and gross motor skills
- develop learning and problem solving skills by observing objects and events with curiosity, approaching problems flexibly, showing persistence in approaching tasks, exploring cause and effect, and by applying knowledge or experiences to new contexts
- develop logical thinking skills by classifying, comparing, measuring, and arranging objects, recognizing patterns, showing awareness of time concepts and sequences, showing awareness of position in space, using one-to-one correspondence and using numbers and counting
- develop representational and symbolic thinking skills by taking on pretend roles and situations, making believe with objects, and making and interpreting representations
- develop listening and speaking skills, including hearing and discriminating the sounds of language, expressing self using words and expanded sentences, understanding and following oral directions, asking questions, answering questions, and actively participating in conversations
- develop reading and writing skills including demonstrating understanding of print concepts, demonstrating knowledge of the alphabet, using emerging reading skills, comprehending and interpreting meaning from texts, and understanding the purpose of writing

- feel a sense of accomplishment and personal worth
- develop spiritually as an important member of God's family and as a citizen in God's world.

**2. Those are great goals! What kinds of activities will you do with my child so that he/she may reach these goals?**

- Children learn through play. Learning is active, so your child will have a variety of activities in which to be successful. Some learning will be teacher-initiated and directed, while other learning will be child-initiated and directed.
- Your child will have opportunities to pray at mealtimes and thank God for His blessings.
- Your child will participate in indoor and outdoor play. We will play outdoors every day, weather permitting.
- Your child will have time for active play, quiet play, and rest.
- Your child will have opportunities for self-directed individual activities as well as group activities.
- Your child will participate in art, dramatics, and music; all are planned to be creative and fun:
  1. Art activities are intended to encourage creativity with different art media.
  2. Your child will listen to stories being read and told to him/her with books, storyboards, puppets and finger plays. He/she will also be able to participate in storytelling, role playing, etc., with others.
  3. Musical activities include singing, listening to music, playing instruments, and dancing.
- Your child will be encouraged to develop language skills by talking and listening to others.
- Your child's imagination and sense of humor will be encouraged in all of our activities.
- Your child will participate in activities that require assuming responsibility such as cleaning up, picking up and sorting toys, wiping tables, and watering plants.
- Your child will participate in activities that require gross motor skills such as running, climbing, and exercising; and fine motor skills such as block building, assembling puzzles, finger plays, and art work.
- The Pre-K classes participate in community programs, field trips, and library visits. Parents are encouraged to accompany us.

**3. What are some of the play materials you use?**

- We use materials that are safe and appropriate for the age and skill range of your child, including sand, water, paint, fabric, clay, play dough, crayons, construction paper, paste, blocks, puzzles, balls, puppets, dress-up clothes, and riding toys.
- Toys purchased for the classroom include various types of blocks, dramatic play props, fine-motor manipulatives, sensory materials, and games that are designed to promote cognitive, social-emotional, physical and language development.
- We provide a variety of musical instruments, tapes, CD's and music streaming through SMART devices.
- We have books, tapes and CD's, flannel board stories, and story props covering a wide range of interests in each classroom and in our FCP library.
- Children may supply materials for special activities. If you have an idea for a project, please let us know. We are always open to suggestions.
- Our playground has been constructed for preschool children and meets the state requirements for environmental health and safety. We have a variety of child-safe, developmentally appropriate equipment. The children are under careful adult supervision at all times.

**4. What is your approach to behavior management?**

We follow a social-emotional curriculum called Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline is a research-based program that helps adults stay calm enough to see misbehavior and upset as a signal to teach instead of punish. It then provides effective strategies for teaching social-emotional and life skills to children.

We explain and demonstrate proper behavior to children, and we guide them to act in socially appropriate ways using both individual and group positive reinforcement and praise. Sometimes, simply the natural and logical consequences for misbehavior will be self-guiding. When a child shows negative behavior, we do the following:

- Distract and/or redirect his/her activities,
- Talk privately with him/her to review the rules and our expectations,
- Suggest he/she take a moment in the cozy center to calm down or reflect on his/her behavior.

NOTE: The use of corporal punishment is never permitted, nor do we speak in critical or embarrassing ways. The use of “time-outs” is prohibited with children two years and younger per DHS licensing rules. Older children may be offered a chance to calm down in a cozy corner.

### **III. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

#### **1. What are FCP’s general guidelines for my child’s health and safety?**

We care about the health and safety of all our children. We require that each child has an annual physical exam, and an immunization/medical form must be signed by the child’s physician. All immunizations must be current. ALL FORMS (medical, general, information, and emergency) MUST BE TURNED IN TO FCP ON OR BEFORE THE FIRST SCHOOL DAY as required by DHS.

Please instruct your child about good health and safety habits for home and school. Call us when your child is absent for any reason, but REPORT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IMMEDIATELY. You will be notified if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease at school.

Please drop your child off each day between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m via our car line which is monitored by faculty and staff. The teacher helping your child from the car will do a quick visual health check. You must answer the symptom checklist on the Procure app before you can digitally sign your child in for the day. Your child cannot stay at FCP if he/she seems to be ill. If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you. A sick child will be cared for in an office or in the FUMC Parish House until you arrive. Sick children may infect others and will not feel well enough to participate in normal activities. Upon entering the classroom, teachers will help (if necessary) your child wash his/her hands at the classroom sink. (See also **Appendix 2. Child Illness Policy.**)

FCP follows CDC guidelines for all illnesses including COVID-19. If your child is exposed to or contracts COVID-19, you should notify the director and follow the latest COVID-19 guidance which will be communicated to parents via email as soon as it is published. COVID-19 information is also included on our website. Masking will be determined by the CDC Community Levels metrics and changes in masking status (for teachers, parents and children two and older) will be communicated in a timely manner to parents via email and/or Procure messaging.

Notify us if you change your address, change your home, cell, or work phone number, or choose new emergency contact people so that we may update their annual Emergency Medical Form.

## 2. You mentioned immunizations. What is your formal immunization policy?

FCP adheres to medical mandates endorsed by the Tennessee Department of Health, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding the safety and efficacy of childhood vaccinations for the health and safety of all children in our program. **We cannot support or allow the enrollment or participation of any child who has not been immunized against preventable illness.**

FCP requires that each student present an official immunization record from the Tennessee Department of Health, available at your health care provider's office or a local health department office, for entry into school.

- Parents/guardians must bring us a copy from your health care provider BEFORE the child begins our program.
- In addition to documenting all received immunizations, this form must indicate the date your child was last seen by a health care provider. *Your child must have been seen within the last 3 months before beginning our program if under 30 months of age.* All other children must have an updated immunization record and proof of check-up once a year.
- It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to provide an updated immunization form each time your child is immunized. **Your child's continued attendance in the program will be dependent on receipt of updated records as needed.**

## 3. My child is on medication. May I bring the medicine to school?

DHS guidelines prohibit our staff from administering prescription or over-the-counter medication to children unless we have written permission completed by the parent/guardian and/or physician and communicated on your child's Procure page. Medication must be sent to school in its original packaging and labeled with the child's name and dosing instructions. All medication must be kept in a locked drawer, closet, or cabinet while at school. If your child requires medication, please contact the FCP Director to discuss how you should communicate this need through Procure. Diaper cream, insect repellent, and sunscreen are considered medications. Permission forms for those items will be included in annual student paperwork and must be returned with labeled bottles, tubes, or containers before teachers can apply.

If your child requires an Epi-Pen or inhaler, please ask the FCP Director for a long-term action plan that must be completed by your child's physician. The medication must remain at school in the classroom in a safe place, not accessible by the students, but readily available to the teachers in case of emergency use. Further, if an Epi-Pen or inhaler is stored in the classroom, a posted note must be visible to all staff members with dosage information and instructions for use.

## 4. My child has some allergies. May he/she come to school?

Yes, however the teacher needs to know about allergies or possible skin rashes, including:

- Poison ivy, oak, etc... Children should be evaluated by a physician; if deemed to be contact dermatitis, children can return to school with rash
- Food: Since we have a wide variety of food brought to school by our students, we need to know of allergies to foods or food additives. If your child has a food allergy, we will prohibit those items from

the classroom and communicate that information to the other families in the classroom. Food allergy/sensitivity information is posted at each classroom door.

- Pets: Occasionally pets visit our classrooms. Please tell us if your child is allergic to fur, feathers, etc.
- Insects: If your child is allergic to bees, please supply us with physician-approved medication.

## 5. What should my child wear to school?

Please dress your child for comfort and freedom of movement. Choose play clothes that will not be harmed by brightly colored paints, sand, or active play. Please save dressy clothes for special occasions. Choose fasteners and belts that are easy for little fingers to manage. Socks and properly fitted shoes, which fasten securely, are required. No flip-flops, cleats, tap shoes, or dressy shoes please. We want to protect little feet from accidents.

We go outside whenever possible, so please dress your child accordingly. In cold weather your child will need a jacket, sweater, hat, mittens, etc. Please send rain gear (including raincoat or rain suit with hood and rain boots) that will be kept at school. Please mark all outerwear with your child's name. Pack an extra set of clothing in your child's backpack each day for use in emergencies and more than one extra pair of underwear and socks!

If your child is not toilet trained, please bring a sufficient number of disposable diapers and wipes monthly or weekly. TUITION DOES NOT COVER THE COST OF DIAPERS AND WIPES.

## 6. Speaking of toilet training... how is that handled at school?

Before you begin potty training, please talk to your classroom teacher about your methodology/philosophies and how you'll handle potty training at home. At school, we are here to encourage and support your child, but must also comply with DHS licensing policies.

When you're ready to begin, please:

- Talk to your classroom teachers about your potty-training philosophy and schedule for potty visits.
- Send your child to school in underwear. (They cannot be "commando"). Training underwear is fine. Girls should also wear pants or leggings under dresses to "contain" accidents.
- If your child has a fecal accident in their underwear, we are supposed to cut the underwear off and dispose of it, but we are willing to try to remove it if we're able to do so without a large mess. If we can remove the underwear, we will seal it in a plastic bag and return it to you.
- When your child begins potty training, you must provide five extra pairs of underwear, three extra pairs of pants, three extra pairs of socks and an extra pair of shoes. If we don't have extra clothing from home, we will put your child in a pullup.
- If your child has two accidents in their underwear in one day, we will put them back in a pull up for the remainder of that day, though we will still remind them to visit the potty on our agreed upon schedule.
- Please send a pack of pull ups when your child begins potty training. We'll return any unused pull ups when potty training is complete!

## 7. I assume you have safety rules for your playground?

Yes, we do. Children are supervised by adults at all times. Older children (3's and 4's) do not use the playground while the younger children (toddlers and 2's) are using it. Food and beverages (with the exception of water bottles) are not allowed on the playground. Some of our playground rules are:

- Swings: One child per seat. No standing on seats. No twisting chains. Always walk outside the swing's reach.
- Slide: Walk up the steps, sit feet first, slide down one person at a time when the way is clear. Do not use the slide if it is hot or wet.
- Sandbox: Do not throw sand or put it on other people. Keep sand in the sandbox. Use only sandbox-designated toys in the sandbox.
- Climbing: Climb only where climbing is intended. Do not climb on the fence or on top of the playhouse or swing sets.
- Riding Toys: Children ride in only one direction. No bumping or sideswiping other children, toys, walls, etc.

### **8. Do you have fire drills?**

FCP is equipped with a fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, and clear exit signs. Fire drills are held monthly to test the equipment and to acquaint the children with safe procedures for exiting the building in an emergency situation.

### **9. How do you handle emergencies?**

All teachers are certified in first aid and CPR. In the event of life-threatening illness or accident, we will contact 911 and follow their instructions, then we will contact you. If you cannot be reached, we will contact the people listed on your child's emergency form. If an ambulance is needed, it will take your child to East Tennessee Children's Hospital, 2018 Clinch Ave. (514-8000; 541-8133 for the emergency department). Please supply us with a copy of your family medical insurance card. The FCP Director is required to notify DHS in the event of serious or life-threatening emergencies that occur during school hours.

In the event that we need to evacuate, we will take the children next door to Calvary Baptist, 3200 Kingston Pike. Your child's teacher will contact you. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to update phone numbers and addresses should they change.

In the event of weather emergencies (tornado, strong winds, etc.), children will be escorted to the choir room, located on the main floor of the education building and behind the kitchen. The choir room has no windows and is well protected. In the event of a weather emergency, all children will gather there and will remain there until the emergency has passed. FCP keeps an emergency stash of water, snacks, diapers, and wipes in case we are there for an extended period of time.

Parents will be notified immediately via ProCare in the event of a school-wide emergency and will be notified again when the emergency has been resolved. Parents should not come to FCP during an emergency, as we cannot release any children during an emergency situation.

A copy of our complete Emergency Preparedness Plan is available on our website at [www.firstchurchpreschoolknox.com](http://www.firstchurchpreschoolknox.com)



## 10. Tell me about the Gold Sneaker Initiative.

The Gold Sneaker Initiative is a program endorsed by the DHS that addresses issues about childhood obesity, healthy eating, the benefits of physical activity, and more. FCP applied for Gold Sneaker certification in 2019. All staff members are trained in Gold Sneaker policies as part of their yearly training program. Specific Gold Sneaker policies are as follows:

1. Children attending less than a full-day program shall be offered a proportional amount of the physical activity time as required by DHS licensure rules. Physical activity for children ages 3 and older must be a balance of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting), utilizing age-appropriate activities.
2. Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of **limiting screen time** according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan.
3. Children shall not be allowed to remain **sedentary** or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime. Child care directors shall take **Go NAP SACC Self Assessments** (Infant and Child Safety Physical Activity and Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards.
4. Child care providers must ensure physical activity is a **positive experience** for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior.
5. Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including **breastfeeding**. All educators shall be trained to advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly. Providers shall publicly **display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage** or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in *Breastfeeding Welcomed Here* through the Tennessee Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding).
6. Child care educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including **adequate time for snack and meal consumption** and age-appropriate portion size. Child care educators shall **provide education to families** twice each year (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size. All eating opportunities shall consist of a respect for the child and promotion of a **positive attitude toward food**. Child care educators shall apply evidence-based **early food preference learning strategies** such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like, and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods.
7. The child care provider **campus shall be free of all tobacco-related products**, including smoking, smokeless, and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used to transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all indoor locations, whether or not children are present. Child care employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off campus at provider-related activities (i.e. field trips, walks, and all other outdoor activities). Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to **change clothes and wash hands** thoroughly prior to interacting with children. **“No Smoking” signs** shall be conspicuously posted at each child care provider entrance, as required by state law.

## IV. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL INFORMATION

## 1. What are the arrival and dismissal procedures?

Preschool (part-day) hours are 7:30/8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Full-day hours are 7:30/8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. During the morning, parents will drop their children off via car line between 7:30 and 8:30 am. Please pull up in one line at the main preschool entrance. A teacher will perform a visual health check while you sign your child in via the Procure app. Please note: if you arrive after 8:30, you will need to park and walk your child to their classroom. You may gain entry to the building using your individual security code.

In the afternoon, parents will use their security code to enter the building and retrieve their children from the classroom. Part day students should be picked up at the classroom at 2:00. Full day students may be picked up anytime between 2:00 and 6:00 p.m. When you or an authorized person comes for your child, always be sure the teacher is aware and acknowledges that you are taking your child.

Children can only be released to their parent/guardian, or other persons authorized by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians must include all authorized individuals in their child's individual Procure profile and can update that information at any time.

FCP will verify the identity of a parent/guardian/authorized individual by requiring presentation of photo ID for comparison with the child's Procure profile/list of authorized individuals if the teacher or staff member does not recognize the individual. Authorized pick-up persons will sign your child in or out via our sign-in kiosk. Parents/guardians will use their Procure app and digitally sign their child in and out each day.

DHS requires that in the event an unauthorized person requests release of a child, authorization must be obtained by calling the parent/guardian and FCP will document the date and time of contact, authorization, and verify the identity of the individual.

FCP will immediately call 911 or other local emergency services if anyone whose behavior may place a child at imminent risk attempts to pick up a child.

Our driveway is **ONE WAY ONLY**. Enter by the EAST driveway and exit by the WEST driveway. Drive slowly (below 5 mph) into the FCP parking lot. Children may be in the driveway when you come.

We keep the main door locked from the outside during the day. Upon registration, you will be provided a unique code that will allow you to access FCP from the main entry door (to the right of the playground). Each parent will have his/her own code. If a grandparent or trusted adult regularly picks up or drops off your child, he or she can also have a code. If someone on your approved transportation list is picking up your child only occasionally, we ask that he/she ring the doorbell and wait to be greeted. He/she will need to provide ID and allow the classroom teacher to verify that he/she is permitted to transport your child.

## 2. Due to a last-minute change of plans, I will not be picking my child up today. May he/she go home with someone else?

If your child will be picked up by someone other than the usual driver, we need direct communication from you (Procure message, written note, text, email, or phone call). Be sure your child knows who his or her driver will be. If your plans change during the day, you must call us with information about your child's driver and be sure that person has an ID for us to check.

### **3. May my child play on the FCP playground for a while after I pick him/her up?**

No. Our insurance regulations do not allow that. When a child is released from our authority, but remains on the premises, this may cause a violation of student/teacher ratios.

### **4. Under what circumstances would you close schools?**

FCP is committed to following our posted yearly calendar, which follows Knox County Schools (KCS). However, there are circumstances beyond our control that may require us to close school, including inclement weather, building issues, or school-wide illnesses. The decision to close school will not be made lightly. If we are able to meet state-mandated teacher/student ratios, we will be open. If we do have to close unexpectedly, we will notify parents as soon as possible via email, Facebook, Instagram, teacher communications, and the ProCare app.

We do follow the KCS schedule for inclement weather. If KCS closes for inclement weather, FCP will also close. If KCS opens late due to inclement weather, we will also open late. If KCS moves to virtual learning, FCP will open one hour late to allow travel during daylight and to allow the FCP Director to assess morning weather and road conditions. Should the weather take a turn for the worse overnight, it may be necessary to close school for the day. That information will be communicated via ProCare at 7:00 a.m.

## **V. FCP SCHEDULE**

### **1. What are FCP's hours of operation?**

Full-day hours are from 7:30/8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. year-round. The part-day program is from 7:30/8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, September through May.

Your child should be picked up no later than 2:00 p.m. for part-day children and 6:00 p.m. for full-day children. If you must be late (emergency), please call FCP as soon as possible. Children left after 2:00 or 6:00 p.m. will be charged a late fee.

In the event of an after hours emergency, you may contact the FCP Director by phone at 865-375-5712.

### **2. May my part-day student stay late occasionally?**

Part-day families should contact the FCP Director to discuss late dismissals. There is an added fee for part-day students who stay late. Those fees will be added to the following month's tuition bill.

### **3. My child has a mid-morning snack. Will he/she have one at school?**

Yes. All children have at least one snack per day. Full-day children will be offered two snacks per day. Parents provide all food for their children, including snacks. Lunches and snacks sent to school by parents should be in accordance with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutritional guidelines. More information about CACFP can be found <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

#### **4. Can my child celebrate her birthday at school?**

Yes! We love to celebrate birthdays in our classrooms. If you'd like to send a special morning snack, please message your teacher to confirm there are no allergies, conflicts, etc... Please do not send balloons or party favors. We have our own birthday traditions and will make sure that your child is celebrated well! You may send outside party invitations to school as long as every student in the classroom is invited. If you are not inviting everyone, please mail or email invitations using the classroom directory that is published each fall.

#### **5. Tell me about playtime.**

The play schedule includes active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor play, and creative, dramatic, musical, and artistic play. Play is the way children learn about the world and people in it.

FCP is equipped with many child-safe toys that were carefully chosen for play and learning in large group settings. **Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home**, unless it is a "show and tell" item or a cuddly item used at nap time. If you do allow your child to bring a toy for show and tell/naptime, explain that the toy will be kept in his/her cubby until the teacher tells them it is time to retrieve it. Toys brought from home tend to create conflict, can be lost or broken, and might not be safe for all the children in the classroom.

For everyone's safety:

- No **GLASS** containers may come to school
- No toy guns, knives, or toys that encourage rough or violent play
- No gum, candy, or balloons
- No money or other valuables

#### **6. May my child bring his/her pet for "show and tell?"**

Any potential animal visitor to FCP must have teacher permission ahead of time regardless of the length of the intended visit. If a student in your child's class has an allergy to that species of animal, you should not have your pet visit. We allow only docile, household-domesticated pets totally under the control and supervision of the adult owner. After visiting FCP for no longer than one-half hour, the adult owner must remove the pet from the FCP property. Pets are not allowed on the playground.

#### **7. Tell me about lunchtime.**

Children bring their own lunches from home. You may want to buy a lunch box that comes with a small cold pack. Otherwise, pack lunches that do not require refrigeration. Your child may enjoy helping to pack his/her own lunch. All food should be in containers that are easy and safe for your child to open, hold, and eat from during lunchtime. Unbreakable Thermos-type containers can be used for soup, pasta, etc. We want the children to eat nutritionally balanced meals. See information in item 3 regarding USDA recommendations for healthy lunches. DHS prohibits any beverages with added sugar. If you send juice for your child, it must be 100% juice with no added sugar. Children will need a water bottle for school every day. We will refill water bottles from the classroom's filtered water system. Please clean your child's lunch box daily.

- **Children are required to bring milk or a milk substitute every day for lunch.**
- **Toddlers need their food cut into "toddler-sized" pieces in a sectioned container.**
- **Please do not send any items in glass containers to the classroom.**

## **8. Will my child rest at school?**

All children rest each day after lunch, and some even fall asleep! Each child needs his/her own foldable rest mat (approximately 20 x 45 inches and 2 inches thick), available at Walmart, Target, etc. A fitted crib sheet is needed to cover the mat and will need weekly washing. Your child may bring a small blanket and his/her favorite snuggly. Please mark all nap-time articles with your child's name. We ask that rest mats, blankets, etc... arrive at school each week in a clean fabric laundry/yoga bag. This ensures that mats are able to be stored without touching others sheets and blankets. During rest time, we listen to quiet, soothing, and nap-inspiring music.

## **9. What enrichment opportunities do you provide?**

In addition to the vibrant classroom play and learning your child will experience each day, he/she will also be offered enrichment activities each week. Some of these activities, such as literacy, music, movement, and weekly STEAM activities are included in your yearly tuition. Others may be offered at additional fees. More information about all of our enrichment activities will be offered at the beginning of the school year and on our website.

## **10. How do you celebrate the holidays?**

We want to celebrate special times throughout the year. Perhaps you can help us with special party food, room decorations, arts and crafts, or special music for one or more of these celebrations. Let us know what your specialty is. Here are some special days we may celebrate:

**August**                      **Celebration Sunday (typically the Sunday before the first day of school - includes invitation to worship, school-wide picnic and classroom open houses.**

**October**                      **Fall Fest, Halloween**

**November**                      **Thanksgiving**

**December**                      **Christmas**

**January**                      **MLK, Jr. Day**

**February**                      **Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras**

**March**                      **St. Patrick's Day, Read Across America**

**April**                      **Easter**

**May**                      **End of School Party or Picnic**

In addition to the above holidays, we celebrate many other special days throughout the year, such as Johnny Appleseed Day, National Day of Peace, The Week of the Young Child, and more. Please check the community bulletin board/calendar, parent emails, newsletters, social media, and our website for more information about special days!

### **11. Do the children go on field trips?**

Our Pre-K students occasionally take field trips. We will ask you to sign a general permission form for your child to participate. Before each trip, special notification will be made regarding times, destination, purpose, possible costs, and travel arrangements.

We need parents to assist with supervision, so please volunteer if your schedule allows. We will request that a couple of parents volunteer to help transport and chaperone our trips. A copy of your driver's license and insurance card will be required. FCP employees, teachers, and administrators are not permitted to transport children to or from field trips.

Children younger than 4 years old do not take field trips. For children this young, trips are best done as a family event.

### **12. My child loves school. May he/she attend FCP more often than we originally registered for?**

Yes. If you signed up for 2 or 3 days per week and would like to add additional days, please ask the FCP Director if there is any availability on other days of the week. If the Director and classroom teacher agree on the change, then a change request form must be completed.

You may also change from part day to full day (should space allow) or from full day to part day. FCP allows for one change per year. If you make more than one change per year, you'll be charged \$20.00 for each additional change. If you **reduce** the number of days or hours of attendance, you will be charged a \$30.00 fee.

If you only need an occasional extra day, please check with your child's teacher to see if there is room for your child on that day. Charges vary by classroom for an extra day. Extra-day fees will be added to the next month's tuition bill.

### **13. If my child misses a day in which he/she was scheduled, can he/she come a different day as a make-up day?**

No. FCP must meet specific guidelines for teacher/student ratios in each classroom. Staff are scheduled each day to meet these guidelines. There are no make-up days when children miss a scheduled day. This policy also applies for snow days or inclement weather closings.

### **14. Can my child attend FCP during the summer?**

Full-day students are automatically enrolled during the summer months, and we are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for full-day students. Part-day students may enroll in the summer program during our annual spring registration should space allow. The summer program hours for preschool students are 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### **15. How and when do you transition children from one classroom to another?**

FCP follows the Knox County Schools calendar with the "first" day of school typically occurring in early August and the "last" day of school occurring at the end of May. June and July are considered "summer camp" months. We honor and value our classroom families and do not typically transition children during the school

year. However, on rare occasions it may be necessary to transition a child to an older classroom mid-year. Should this occur, parents will be consulted and a transition plan will be put into place.

Transitioning children from one classroom to another is as critical a time as when a child first enrolls in our program. There is a partnership needed between the child's family, the sending teachers, and the receiving teachers that must be in place to afford an effective transition. We follow the procedures below:

- The FCP Director will contact parents before confirming a mid-year transition. We will discuss program goals for the next age group, what a typical day may include, things the children will need from home, introductions of new teachers, and other topics unique to the age group such as potty training for toddlers.
- The "sending" and "receiving" teachers will meet prior to transition to discuss individual goals for the child, special needs, and any family concerns. Parents are encouraged to be a part of this conversation.
- Children will begin to visit the receiving classroom. Visits to the receiving classrooms will be based on many factors, including student/teacher ratios, student schedules and more.
- During visitations, families are updated on the child's progress via the Procure app.

## **VI. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **1. What is FCP's tax ID number?**

Our tax ID number is 62-6001890. Use this number on your tax form W-10 if you declare the child care deduction on your income tax.

### **2. How do I register my child?**

Your child will be enrolled in his/her class for the upcoming school year based on his/her age as of August 15 of that year. Registration for the following school year begins in January. Current FCP families should register during this early enrollment period to guarantee their places for the next school year. After current family enrollment, FCP will open enrollment to church members and then the general public. When rosters are full, FCP will accept wait-list applications. The wait-list application may be found on our website. There is a \$50.00 annual fee to be placed on the wait list. Any wait-list fees previously paid will be applied to a student's first registration fee if/when he/she is enrolled. All families must schedule a tour with the FCP Director before they can enroll or join the waitlist.

### **3. What does it cost for my child to attend FCP?**

See our website for tuition rates. There is also a nonrefundable registration fee of \$150 per child to be paid at registration. This reserves a place for your child and covers the cost of insurance, assorted publications, supplies, and equipment.

## **VII. TUITION POLICY**

Tuition is billed on the FIRST SCHOOL DAY of the month and is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Bills paid after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month are assessed a \$20.00 late fee. Each family account can have **ONE** late fee waived during each calendar year if the tuition is paid by the last school day of the month in which the late fee was applied.

**Tuition is due by the 15th of each month whether or not a statement is received.**

Tuition may be paid by Venmo (@CDCKnoxville) or by writing a check. Please make your checks payable to FUMC (First United Methodist Church). It is also very helpful if you will write your child/children's name(s) in the memo line on your check and "FCP." You can leave your checks in the lockbox on the library door. The library door is on the bottom level of the building, on the right as you are heading toward the kitchen (Fellowship Hall). **If your check is returned for Non-Sufficient Funds, you will be charged a \$40.00 Returned Item Fee.**

If an account is in arrears by an amount of one month's tuition or more, you will receive a letter and current account statement. If your balance is not paid within 7 days of the date of the letter, you will need to schedule a meeting with the FCP Director. **Your child will not be able to attend FCP until we have had a meeting and/or if there is still a balance due on your account.**

FUMC members receive an 18% discount on the tuition amount for one child. Church member discounts are evaluated by the FCP Parent Advisory Board each year. FUMC members who have children enrolled at FCP are encouraged to include your monthly church donation with your tuition payments to simplify giving. Non-church members receive a 10% discount when they have a second child enrolled at the center. The 10% discount is taken off the lowest monthly tuition.

### **1. With whom do I speak about my invoice?**

Please contact the FCP Director. You may call the office at 865-525-8843 or email at [director@firstchurchpreschoolknox.com](mailto:director@firstchurchpreschoolknox.com).

### **2. Some months have fewer school days than others. Do I still pay the same amount of tuition?**

Yes. After calculating the yearly budget, we determine what the yearly tuition will have to be. The tuition is then equally divided by 12 months. This is the most efficient bookkeeping procedure and is used at most preschools and private schools. Although it may seem you are paying "extra in December," the alternative would be to pay less in December and more in the longer months. That would make FCP's (and your family's) bookkeeping and budgeting more complicated and costly than when payments are kept a uniform amount each month. Please keep in mind that FCP is a preschool program with professional teachers. This is not a daycare center, Mother's Day Out, or babysitting service where you would pay only for the hours your child attends (where caregiver turnover is a constant problem due to minimum hourly wages and unpaid vacation time).

### **3. What happens if I am late to pick up my child?**

If your child is not picked up on time (2:00 pm for part-day students and 6:00 for full-day students), the following will occur:

**1st offense per school year:** Director acknowledges late pickup with an email to parent, reminder of policy

**2nd offense per school year:** \$50 per child fine and reminder of policy via email

**3rd offense per school year:** \$100 per child fine and an in-person meeting with the FCP Director to establish understanding that the next offense will result in immediate dismissal/expulsion from the program.



## VIII. EXPULSION/GRIEVANCE/RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES

### EXPULSION POLICY

A family wishing to withdraw its child from FCP is required to notify the FCP Director in writing at least 30 days prior to the last day of attendance **or payment for the entire month's tuition will be required.**

**The safety and well-being of all children, teachers, and staff are FCP's first and most important priority.** As a private entity, FCP reserves the right to the **immediate** withdrawal of a child for any reason deemed necessary by our Parent Advisory Board (PAB) and/or recommendations from the FCP Director. Parents who refuse to comply with the policies outlined in this handbook and that are agreed upon each year upon receipt of the annual parent contract risk disenrollment for their children. If possible, FCP will assist in the planned transition of a child to another program if expulsion must occur. As required by DHS, aggregate data that includes reasons for expulsions shall be maintained and reported to DHS annually.

FCP does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

### GRIEVANCE POLICY

It is essential that the concerns and grievances of parents/guardians, teachers, and staff are addressed and resolved quickly. It is important that the FCP Director be made aware of all grievances so that all parties involved are assured that a proper course of action is taken. Grievances should not be discussed with the parents, teachers, or staff not directly involved. Please express your concerns only to the person(s) who should hear it. Unneeded worry, harm, and hard feelings result when problems and dissatisfaction are expressed to persons other than those directly involved with the problems or situations.

In the event that a parent has a complaint regarding a classroom, the parent/guardian should first discuss and attempt to resolve the issue with the classroom teachers. If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached, then the concern should be reported to the FCP Director. Questions regarding policies and procedures should be taken to the Director. If parents/guardians have explored these options and have yet to reach a resolution, then they may appeal beyond the FCP Director to the FCP Parent Advisory Board (PAB).

**Procedures:** If you have a concern or a grievance that you would like to have addressed, please take the following steps:

1. Request a meeting in a private setting to discuss your grievance with the person whom it concerns. The person with the grievance is responsible for setting up the meeting at a time convenient for both parties. The meeting should not interfere with running of a class. Staff involved will be responsible for communicating the details of the meeting to the FCP Director, along with the time of the meeting and the resolution reached.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, request a private meeting with the FCP Director. The Director will arrange a date to meet with the parent, teacher, or staff to seek a resolution to the grievance. The Director has 14 days to resolve the situation with all parties involved.
3. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting with the FCP Director, you may submit a written appeal to the PAB to hear your grievance. A subcommittee will be appointed to hear your

situation in a special meeting. Its discussion on the issue will be private, and the decision the subcommittee reaches will be binding for all parties.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Babysitting: Many of our families rely on FCP teachers to provide after-hours babysitting. FCP is not responsible for employee's actions after hours. Parents/guardians who hire our employees to babysit after hours do so at their own risk and must sign a HOLD HARMLESS policy form each and every time an employee cares for their children after hours. Parents may access our HOLD HARMLESS FORM on our website on the "Everything You Need to Know" page.

## **IX. PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

It is important that good communication exists between parents and FCP. We are partners in caring for and educating your child/children. Please inform your child's teacher or the FCP Director if your child is experiencing changes at home. Some changes in home life may alter your child's behavior at school. We want to work with you to help your child through these transitions.

### **1. Is there any regular communication between FCP and our home?**

Yes. Excellent communication is important to us! FCP will send a monthly e-newsletter to each family as well as other email updates as needed. Your child's teacher will communicate daily via our ProCare app and will share information about the classroom, lesson plans, activities, updates, and other important information. A community bulletin board is posted at the main entry. It is updated regularly with monthly calendars, flyers, and interesting tidbits. You will also receive an email each month with your account statement and current balance. We encourage our families to follow us on social media. Find us on Facebook by searching: First Church Preschool Knoxville and on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/firstchurchpreschoolknox](http://www.instagram.com/firstchurchpreschoolknox). We encourage families to check our website at [www.firstchurchpreschoolknox.com](http://www.firstchurchpreschoolknox.com) regularly for important information.

### **2. What can I do to help my child's teacher?**

Be on time when you drop your child off each morning. Transitions are easier and less stressful when your children arrive during the 7:30 - 8:30 drop off window. Please make your daily drop-offs quick and cheerful. We want you to always feel welcome, but we also know that children do best if parents/guardians are confident, trusting, and cheerful at drop-off time. Your child's teacher will get to know your child and will understand if he/she needs an extra cuddle before starting a busy, fun-filled day. If you'd like to schedule time to spend in the classroom, talk to your child's teacher about being a Mystery Reader or a special guest. We absolutely encourage parental involvement in positive and productive ways!

Label **everything** your child brings to school with his/her name. This helps us identify items that are left behind.

Read the notices and emails that your teacher posts. This will help you stay informed about what is happening in your child's classroom and can remind you of upcoming events.

Please read the daily updates provided via ProCare. There may be notes asking you to send more diapers, wipes, clothes, or food for your child.

Speaking of extra clothes... please make sure your child always has at least one spare outfit at school and more than one extra pair of underwear and socks. Your teacher may choose to store the extra clothing in the classroom and will notify you if it needs to be changed, washed, etc.

Carefully review the Parent Handbook for our policies.

If there are any special circumstances or events that may affect your child's behavior or mood, please tell the classroom teacher so we can help your child while he/she is at FCP.

## **Appendix 1. Child Illness Policy**

Children may not attend FCP with a fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or contagious disease (such as pink eye, chicken pox, whooping cough, impetigo, etc.). Teachers are required to make a casual check of each child as he/she arrives and before a parent/guardian leaves. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you (or one of your emergency contact people) to return to get your child.

Colds: A child may attend FCP with a common cold, providing he/she knows how to cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing and to follow with hand washing. Your child will also be asked to wash hands after blowing or wiping his/her nose. Colds usually cause a stuffy nose, sneezing, and watery eyes, but little fever.

Children MAY NOT attend FCP with one or more of the following:

- Fever (temperature >100.4 degrees)
- Sick appearance or behavior
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Skin rash (whether localized or general; whether itchy, watery, or non-itchy)
- Severe headache
- Earache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (see chart\*)
- Severe stomachache or cramps

Please make use of the chart on the next page for further information.

## **Medication Policy**

1. All medications must be in original childproof containers, labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage amount, and the time(s) for it to be administered. We keep all medications in locked closets, boxes, or cabinets or in the FCP refrigerator.
2. Teachers may give medication only if a parent has sent detailed information in writing on the Procure app. Medicine will not be given unless the correct date is included in the message and a dosage and time are given. Please do not indicate "give as needed." A specific time must be stated (excluding use of diaper cream, insect repellent, and sunscreen). When teachers administer medication (excluding diaper cream, sunscreen or insect repellent), they will note medication given, dose and time in the child's Procure app.
3. Parents are responsible for picking up medicine containers that will not remain at school (i.e., antibiotics that need to be given multiple times per day) at dismissal time, as teachers are busy attending to children's supervision and may not always remember. Medications (excluding diaper cream, sunscreen and insect repellent) must be sent home each day and can not be kept at FCP. The exception to this rule is an inhaler or Epi-Pen.

## Illness Chart

If your child has any of the symptoms on the previous page and/or any illness described on this chart, use these guidelines for knowing when your child may return to FCP.

Illness	Symptoms	Child may return when:
<b>Diarrhea</b>	Two or more abnormally loose stools	Diarrhea free for 24 hours or had a normal stool
<b>Vomiting</b>	Ejects stomach contents	Vomit free for 24 hours
<b>Fever</b>	Temperature >100.4 degrees (often indicates infection)	Fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication
<b>Severe coughing</b>	Child gets red or blue in face; may make barking or whooping sounds	Severe Symptoms disappear
<b>Ear Infection</b>	Child may run fever; complain of ear pain or tug on ears	Fever free and cleared to return by medical professional
<b>Pink Eye</b>	Tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation followed by swelling and/or discharge of pus	Cleared by physician to return to school
<b>Chicken Pox</b>	Itchy rash of small red bumps on back, stomach, waist, under arms, around ears spreading to face	Usually 7 to 10 days (when rash is totally dry and scabbed over)
<b>Strep Throat</b>	Severe sore throat, high fever	On antibiotic for 24 hours; no fever for 24 hours
<b>Head Lice</b>	May see small eggs or lice in hair; itchy scalp or neck	Proof of treatment; needs recheck in 1 to 2 weeks
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	Fatigue, listlessness, loss of appetite, yellowish skin and whites of eyes, brown-tinged urine, and light-colored stool	Requires physician clearance to return
<b>Impetigo</b>	Flat, yellow, crusty or weeping patch on skin	On antibiotic for 36 hours
<b>Scabies</b>	Severe itching of skin	May return the day after treatment
<b>Ring Worm</b>	Small round patches on skin	Must be treated and covered
<b>Pin Worm</b>	Squirming while sitting or lying; scratching rectal area	Physician's release saying treatment is completed
<b>Thrush</b>	Oral yeast infection; looks like spoiled milk that will not rinse off (usually only infants)	On medication 24 hours and symptoms resolve
<b>Fifth Disease</b>	Lacy rash that looks like a slap or sunburn; usually not itchy	Note from physician

<b>COVID</b>	Fever, Cough, Runny/Stuffy Nose, Sneezing, Vomiting/Diarrhea, Stomach Pain, Rash	See CDC guidelines available on website for information about when and how to return to school
<b>Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease</b>	Vesicular rash can be found in mouth and on palms/soles. Usually associated with fever. Decreased oral intake. Sore throat	Fever free for 24 hours; symptoms improving; no open weeping rash
<b>Flu</b>	Fever, cough, nasal congestion, sneezing, body aches	Fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication; symptoms improving
<b>RSV</b>	Fever, cough, sneezing, nasal congestion	Fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication; symptoms improving

Thank you for sharing your children with us. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and are eager to hear your questions, concerns, thoughts, and suggestions and to fully embrace the philosophy of the United Methodist Church: