

## **Welcome to the Mt. Pisgah Weekday School Family!**

On behalf of Mt. Pisgah Weekday School and our wonderful staff, we welcome you and your family. We are honored and delighted you have chosen us to partner with you. We believe that the early years of a child's life are crucial ones for learning trust, self-esteem, confidence and developing faith. These are best learned in relationships with other children and with the cooperation of parents and guidance of gentle, loving teachers.

We encourage you to observe often in our active, happy, creative classrooms and see your child learning through play. We want you to realize the validity of play and the importance of what they are learning. Together, as parents and teachers, we can help your child develop positive attitudes about themselves as they learn daily routines, master new skills, expand interests and participate in planning and decision making.

This handbook has been written to serve as a guide for the understanding of the relationship between Mt. Pisgah Weekday School and its families. Please reference this handbook throughout the school year. Our door is always open and we welcome honest and active dialogue if you have any questions about our policies and procedures.

We thank you for choosing Mt. Pisgah Weekday School and we look forward to building a lasting relationship with you and your child!

All the best,

Lorie Jones, Director

Misty Goodykoontz, Office Manager

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Purpose and Philosophy

Mt. Pisgah Weekday School provides a loving and happy learning experience for young children. The program is structured to meet, in a developmentally appropriate manner, all aspects of a child's growth: language, communication, intellectual skills, physical abilities, social, emotional, and spiritual development. We offer a planned but informal, flexible program addressing group and individual needs.

Mt. Pisgah Weekday School is a mission and ministry of Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church. Our doors first opened in 1976 with one Mother's Morning Out class. With the completion of the Herbert T. Penry, Jr. Education Building in 1990, it gave our school an expansive modern facility. Ivy Simmons, former director was instrumental in the growth of our school to ten classes and over one hundred families.

### Developmental Objectives and Goals

Our program focuses on whole child development with the understanding that each child is unique and learns at their own pace. Emphasis is placed on:

- Leaders who model positive, Christian behaviors
- Helping children express their feelings verbally through group participation activities
- Enabling a positive separation experience from parents
- Gross motor skill activities such as outdoor play, music and creative movement times
- Hands on learning through puzzles, games, manipulatives, various art mediums and additional fine motor skill activities.
- Providing appropriate classroom materials that promote curiosity and exploration.
- Use of interactive resources to introduce and teach children colors, shapes, alphabet, numbers, etc.

In addition to these learning experiences, the Weekday School is a church-sponsored program. While not teaching doctrine, the program uses Bible-based lessons to help children develop their faith foundation and to grow in awareness of God and His world. Children (Twos-Pre K Fives) will attend a brief chapel service twice a month and Christian themed stories along with songs will be introduced in the classroom.

### Class Developmental Highlights

**Toddlers:** Emphasis is placed on helping guide the child with the confidence to become comfortable with separation from parents and create a safe and loving environment to explore and learn. Teacher directed play includes encouraging the group to experience the same activity, such as blocks, puzzles or musical instruments all while introducing parallel play. Circle Time includes engaging the group in singing, finger plays, and theme-related songs as well as reading picture books. Children are introduced to various art mediums with the goal of showing the child that he/she can create a product. Tools may include brushes, sponges, stamps, stencils, die cuts, and foam shapes.

**Twos:** Emphasis is placed on helping guide the child with confidence to separate from parents, build social skills to share and play well with peers and follow simple directions from adults. Mornings begin with tabletop manipulatives and activities to help develop hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, sorting, sharing, and taking turns as well as free play. Theme oriented circle times include engaging the group with simple songs and listening to stories designed to reinforce concepts including colors, shapes, alphabet, and days of the week, etc.

**Threes:** Emphasis is placed on strengthening social and independent skills with peers as well as teachers. Mornings begin with playdough, table-top manipulatives, free art/free play to promote sharing and basic concepts. Circle

times provide theme based learning in areas such as sequencing, opposites and positional words, calendar concepts, shapes, colors, and patterning. Additional classroom activities focus on beginning letter/number recognition, name recognition, emerging writing skills, and categorizing. Learning centers, science experiments, games, and songs continue to reinforce learning through play.

**Pre-K Fours:** Children will begin socially and academically preparing for Kindergarten, in a fun, loving environment. Themes are presented in each class to give your child opportunities to explore in the following areas: letter/sound recognition, math readiness, fine motor skills, and various art mediums. Scientific discovery and experimentation allow for hands-on active learning. Pre-writing and writing skills are introduced using the *Handwriting without Tears* curriculum, with focus on proper pencil grip, left to right progression, sequencing, and an introduction to literature avenues.

**Pre-K Fives:** Our Pre-K program provides children an additional year of growth both socially and academically. Children will continue to work on gross and fine motor skills as well as increase their vocabulary and reading abilities through sight words and word families. Math skills will be enhanced through addition and subtraction as well as word problems. Themes will be presented to explore additional concepts of science, art, and history. *Handwriting without Tears* curriculum is used to teach writing skills in a developmental approach that helps children build confidence.

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### Admissions

The Toddler, Two, Three and Pre-K Fours programs are for children who attain the age of one, two, three, and four by August 31 of the enrolled school year. Our Pre-K Fives class is designed to meet the needs of children who have completed a Pre-K Fours class.

### Registration Process

Registration forms will be distributed to currently enrolled families in January. Every effort will be made to offer future placement to currently enrolled students that register on the first day. A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 must be received for the registration to be official. If your child has an IEP or IFSP, please attach a copy to the registration form.

### Enrollment

The enrollment process is complete when the enrollment package is returned to the school office with September tuition and a copy of the child's most current immunization record.

### Class Assignment

Teacher assignments are based on enrollment. The director will balance classes by size, gender and readiness. It is best to talk to your child about getting ready for school in general terms. Please do not reference a teacher's name, room or specific friends.

### Tuition

Tuition is divided into nine equal payments. Payments are due before or on the first of each month.

A late fee of \$36 will be applied if the tuition is not received by the seventh of the month. The returned check fee is \$36. Please speak with the director or office manager privately if you are having financial issues. Tuition accrues regardless of attendance. Tuition is not discounted for excessive absences or extended leave from school, without written permission from a doctor for a medical reason.

### **Cancellation of Enrollment**

If you find that you need to withdraw your child from our program, please notify the director in writing as soon as possible. This will allow the school to fill the vacancy with a child on the waiting list. No portion of monthly tuition will be refunded for a partial month's attendance. If a tuition refund is due it will be mailed to your current address. The school reserves the right to cancel enrollment based on the following:

- Failure to comply with the immunization requirement
- Consistent failure to pay tuition in a timely manner
- Student that demands excessive amounts of staff time at the expense of other children, or placing another child at risk from inappropriate or uncontrolled behavior
- If a student's needs change to those beyond our capabilities

Parents will be initially informed of the situation by the director via phone call. Documentation of concerns will be presented and a meeting will be set with the director prior to dismissal from the program.

### **Guidelines for Discipline**

Our purpose is to guide children in developing self-discipline as well as considering the needs of their peers. Discipline is not punishment; it is teaching, done positively and with respect, and is appropriate to the situation and age of the child.

Classroom rules are developed on an age appropriate level. Discipline may include:

- Redirection to another activity
- Discussion of future positive choices
- Separation from peers

If the occurrence is severe or the child is unable to correct the behavior:

- The child may visit the office
- Parents may be asked to conference with the teacher and director
- Parents may be called to pick up their child

### **Birthdays**

We welcome birthday celebrations during class time. If your child would like to share their birthday with their school friends, please do so by bringing a simple treat to share with the class. Efforts should be made to allow for children with allergies to be able to enjoy the treats. Please be sure to coordinate your plans with your child's teacher. Please do not pass out party invitations during school hours unless the entire class is invited.

### **Class Parties**

Class parties are held periodically throughout the school year. A parent sign-up sheet is posted at the beginning of the year for parents to volunteer their time in coordinating the parties. School sponsored parties should be held during class hours.

Food and activities for class parties may be planned at the discretion of the organizing parent group with the advisement of the classroom teachers. Efforts should be made to allow for children with allergies to be able to participate safely. Parents may solicit funds for teacher gifts if contributions are optional and anonymous.

### **Field Trips**

Pre-K Fours and Pre-K Fives enjoy field trips through the school year. These experiences are designed to offer students "hands on" experiences and reiterate lessons taught in the classroom. A one-time activity fee will be collected at the beginning of the year. This fee includes field trip admission fees, t-shirts, guest speakers, graduation DVD and any other materials unique to Pre-K.

Field trip transportation is provided by parents. A volunteer driver form must be on file in the preschool office. Two adults must be present in any vehicle. Proper child safety restraint laws must be followed. Parents accompanying children on field trips are there to directly assist the teachers and ensure the safety and welfare of

children assigned to them. If enough drivers cannot be secured by one week prior to a field trip, the trip will be cancelled. Chaperones are responsible for paying for their own entry.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event school is delayed or closed due to inclement weather, an announcement will be made on WFMY 2 and Fox8 WGHP. In general, if GCS has a one-hour delay, we will have a one-hour delay (opening at 10 am). If GCS has a two-hour delay, we will have a two-hour delay (opening at 11 am). If GCS has a three-hour delay, we will be closed. If weather conditions become hazardous after your child has arrived at school, please pick up your child as soon as possible; many of our teachers may also have to pick up their children. Safe staffing levels are part of the closing and opening decision making process. The church administration will advise if the building is safe for occupancy and if the parking lots are clear. The school calendar is planned to accommodate up to four days of inclement weather or other unforeseen closings. Closures in excess of four days will not be made up.

### **Fire/Safety Drills**

Monthly fire drills are performed to ensure our staff and children are prepared for an emergency. We are inspected yearly and follow the guidelines of the Guilford County Fire Marshall.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Working together we strive to keep all the lines of communication open in order to provide an optimal learning experience for your child. Parents are invited to visit the classroom, to observe, read a favorite book, or have lunch with your child. Please discuss the best times to visit with your child's teacher. Our door is always open should you have any questions or concerns that may arise. Please notify the director and lead teachers if an unusual change exists at home such as hospitalization of a family member, separation, divorce, a death, etc. as these changes may affect your child's performance or behavior at school.

Teachers prepare a monthly newsletter and calendar to keep you informed of monthly activities. Please take time to review this information when received to help your child be prepared for the various activities.

It is the teacher's discretion to make their personal cell phone number available. Teachers are not able to answer cell phones or text messages during school hours. Please call the weekday school office at (336)288-3335 and a message can be relayed to the teacher during school hours.

### **School Communication**

MPWS sends periodic emails via Mail Chimp to let families know about upcoming school-wide events. Families will be signed up automatically for this service and have the option of opting out at any time. A school-wide directory will be distributed in the fall. We ask that you please do not use the contact information for soliciting purposes.

### **School Website**

Our school's website is [www.mpws.org](http://www.mpws.org). This website contains lots of valuable information about MPWS. Please feel free to share!

### **Weekday Committee**

The Weekday School is a mission and ministry of Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church. The Weekday Committee is comprised of church members and church staff nominated and elected annually by the charge conference. The committee governs the policy and procedures of the school including the school budget, personnel matters, mission, programming, and the calendar.

Matters pertaining to administrative policies and other school-based concerns should be discussed with the director. Questions concerning your child or the classroom program and procedures should be discussed with the lead

teacher and then with the director. The Weekday Committee takes an advisory role in the welfare of the school.

Please contact the following key committee member with your concerns:

Ivy Simmons, chair and director emeritus, [insimmons4@aol.com](mailto:insimmons4@aol.com)

Additional committee members contact information available upon request.

### **Safe Sanctuary Policy**

The Mt. Pisgah Weekday School operates under the policies of the Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church. The church's Safe Sanctuary Policy states that all children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult at all times while on the church campus. Please be sure you are accompanying your child at all times including drop off, pick-up, after school playground time, etc. All staff are trained in Safe Sanctuaries annually.

## **HEALTH/WELLNESS**

### **Physical Health**

A copy of your child's most current immunization record is required before the first day of school.

Please advise the teacher of any dietary, environmental, seasonal or insect allergies. If a child suffers from an allergy which requires emergency care, we must have an Emergency Medical Plan in file before the first day of school. This plan must be updated yearly. Teachers or staff members may administer Benedryl or an Epi-Pen as part of an Emergency Medical Plan signed by the prescribing physician.

We want all of our children to learn and play in a safe and healthy environment. Please use your best judgment if you suspect your child has become ill or has not completely recovered from a previous illness prior to sending them to school.

Your child should remain home from school if he or she has:

- a fever of 99 degrees or higher in the last 24 hours
- diarrhea/vomiting in the last 24 hours
- has been on an antibiotic less than 24 hours
- pink, encrusted or swollen eyes
- a constant cough
- heavy or green nasal drainage
- is generally not herself/himself and cannot perform their classroom responsibilities
- has symptoms of a possible communicable disease

### **Your child may return to school when they have been symptom free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.**

Please inform the director and your child's teacher immediately if your child has contracted a confirmed contagious disease (hand, foot, mouth disease; lice; flu; pink-eye; fifth disease; chicken pox; pinworm) or has been exposed to a contagious disease. The guidelines provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC will be used to determine if a student must be excluded from school, with the exception of lice. Due to the sharing of costumes, pillows in reading areas, and active nature of preschoolers, we ask that you please do not send your child to school unless they are free of active lice.

The director will have the authority to send home any child who in their discretion is not well. Students who develop a fever or who are vomiting at school will be sent home. We do not have the facilities to care for sick students, and they will need to be picked up from Mt. Pisgah immediately upon notification from the school.

### **Immunizations**

All children must provide an up to date immunization record at the beginning of the school year in order to be enrolled in the school. A copy may be emailed to [mpws@mtpisgahgso.org](mailto:mpws@mtpisgahgso.org) or faxed to (336) 288-8014. *Failure to comply with immunization requirements will result in dismissal from our program.*

### **Toileting**

Child-sized toilets are located in or adjacent to every classroom, from Toddlers to Pre-K Fives.

Child changing stations are located in the Toddlers and Twos classrooms. Please note the Threes classrooms are not equipped with changing stations.

A child must be completely independent in the restroom to be enrolled in Pre-K Fours or Pre-K Fives. A child is considered independent in the restroom when he/she initiates going to the toilet and can maneuver their own clothing. The child will also wipe themselves, flush and wash hands.

Toilet training is a process and we will support your family any way possible. A child doing well at home may not be quite ready to go at school. Please do not send a child to school in underwear until he or she has stayed dry for two school weeks. We understand that accidents happen in preschool. However, if a child has two accidents in one day, the child will be placed in a pull up and the parents will be called. This is to maintain a sanitary environment for all children.

Disposable diapers and wipes must be furnished for children enrolled in Toddlers, Two and Threes that are not toilet trained. We are unable to accept cloth diapers.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

### **Morning Drop Off**

School officially starts at 9:00 am and we will welcome families starting at 8:55 am. We encourage students to arrive on time to ensure a full, enjoyable preschool day. Parking is available in the church lots as well as the shared lots of the Lewis Recreation Center. A security system has been installed for the safety of children and staff. All doors are locked during school hours. If you need to enter the building during school hours, push the call button located to the right of the doors and we will be happy to let you in.

A sign-in sheet will be provided outside of each classroom every day. Please sign your child in each day and include the phone number where you can be reached during school hours.

### **Afternoon Pick-Up**

Children are to be picked up by an authorized individual at 1:00 pm. We appreciate your cooperation as our staff has additional duties that they must complete. There will be an extra charge of \$5.00 per excessive occurrence (more than three times in one month) added to next month's tuition invoice for children left 10 minutes or more after their scheduled dismissal time. Should your plans for pick-up arrangements change, please call the office.

### **Pick Up Authorization**

Children will only be released to adults listed on the authorization form. All individuals should be prepared to show an ID at pick-up time.

## **Custody**

It is our duty to keep our school a consistent and safe place for all our students. The teachers and staff of MPWS are child advocates and will not participate in custody disagreements. We will abide by any court order and ask that we be given a copy for your child's record.

Both parents should be in agreement concerning enrollment at MPWS. It is also understood that the parent that enrolls the child is the financially responsible party.

## **After School Programs**

All after school programs are under the direction of outside sources. All communication and payments should be made directly with the coaches of those programs. Should you run late in picking your child up from an after school program, please call the office and we will let the coach know. Your child will stay in the care of the coach until you arrive.

## **Playground Rules**

The playground is designed for the use of children under the age of ten. Children should be supervised at all times. The following guidelines are for all children using the playground:

- Climb up the steps and go down the slide feet first
- Feet should stay on the ground, do not climb on the fence or on top of playground equipment
- Keep sand and mulch on the ground
- Do not pick leaves or flowers and leave sticks on the ground
- Only children 3 and under are allowed on the little playground
- Kind words and helping hands
- When leaving, take your trash and close the gate

The playground is available to our families after school hours unless it has been reserved for after school programs or other events. Please familiarize yourself with the playground rules that are posted in the preschool foyer. Also, be sure your child has used the bathroom facilities before the office closes at 1:30 p.m. as all doors leading into the school will be locked at that time.

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### **Daily Clothing, Shoes, and Sunscreen Wear**

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothing that is easy for self-dressing and diaper changing (no overalls, belts, etc.). Please remember children participate in outdoor play and free art on a daily basis and clothes may get dirty. Dresses should have leggings or shorts underneath them. Sneakers or sandals with back straps are best for outdoor play. Children do play outside as weather permits. If needed, please apply sunscreen to your child prior to bringing them to school.

At the beginning of the school year, your child will need a complete change of clothes to be left in their backpacks or cubbies. It should include underwear, shirt, pants, and socks. These items should be placed in a zip locked bag and clearly labeled with your child's name. Please remember to change out these items as the child grows and seasons change or when they have been used.

### **Personal Belongings**

Please encourage your child to leave all toys at home. We cannot be responsible if personal items are lost at school. For Threes classes and older, the teacher will designate a time for show and tell. Special toys and belongings can be brought in during this sharing time. Items will be placed in bins where they are left until sharing time. Weapons, pretend or real, are prohibited on the church campus. These include pretend guns, swords, lasers, etc. and extends

to the playground after school hours as well as classroom prize box toys and party goody bags distributed during school sponsored parties.

### **Snacks and Lunches**

Parents are to provide a healthy light snack and lunch each day, which may include finger foods or other foods easy for your child to handle. Please send any silverware needed, napkins and a non-carbonated beverage (water is highly recommended). We also encourage independence, therefore please send containers and water bottles easy for your child to open.

*Mt. Pisgah Weekday School reserves the right to change any policies set forth in this manual if deemed necessary. You will be notified of any changes. The last revision of this handbook was August 2019.*