

Forest Hill Christian Preschool



2017/18 Parent Handbook

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Preschool Director
Ms. Kris James

Forest Hill United Methodist Church Staff
Rev. Mandy Jones, Senior Pastor
Rev. Suzanne Dornsmith, Associate Pastor

Administration

Forest Hill Christian Preschool is an outreach ministry of Forest Hill United Methodist Church. Policies and procedures for the program are established by the Forest Hill Christian Preschool Board. The Board has the authority (lawful right) to adjust or change any rules, regulations, policies, or procedures during the preschool year. The Preschool Director, Dawn Gustafson, is responsible for the day to day operations.

Forest Hill Christian Preschool Overview

Forest Hill Christian Preschool was established in 1985. We have classes for children ages 6 months to 5 years. A Transitional Kindergarten class was added in 2007 when Cabarrus County Schools changed their cut-off date from October 16 to August 31. This class allows us to cater to children who were affected by this change.

The Preschool curriculum is filled with age-appropriate academic lessons, play experiences, and activities to encourage each child's development. Activities such as circle time, dramatic play, art, physical exercise, and prayer help develop happy children. They will grow in independence, gain more responsibilities, and become better prepared for kindergarten and more. We do stress play and center time, as play is the language of children.

We take pride in our program and understand that for a lot of the children in our care, preschool is the first learning experience outside their home. Our staff is prepared each day to give the best possible start in their educational experience. Our staff provides every child with love, respect, trust, and encouragement.

Mission Statement

The mission of FHCP is to provide a quality weekday children's ministry that shares the love of Christ with young children and families. Our primary objective is to provide a safe, loving environment that enables children to grow and learn spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. We recognize that each child is a unique gift from God, and we hope to instill in each of them a confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

Program Objectives

Our experienced Teaching staff works to accomplish our mission by providing a variety of enriching experiences to all of the children in our care that are age and developmentally appropriate in the following areas:

Spiritually

- Help the children develop an understanding of God as our Creator and to learn about the life of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Teach children about God's love for us.
- Celebrate and discuss Christian Holidays.
- Take children to Chapel once a week.
- Teach children a weekly Bible verse.
- Communicate the Christian Faith through Bible stories, music, and prayer.

Socially

- Provide opportunities to practice independence and self-reliance.
Example: provide center-based play.
- Assist children in developing friendships. Example: play friendship games, etc.

- Teach children to respect the rights of everyone by accepting authority, sharing, taking turns, and practicing good manners.
- Teach children to work-out disagreements with problem-solving, compromise, and encouraging them to use their words.
- Teach children to develop self-discipline and assume responsibility for their actions.
- Teach children that there are rules that change according to the situation.
Example: loud voices are for outside.
- Teach children self-help skills. Examples: helping keep the room organized, disposing of trash properly, putting items away when finished, toilet training, washing hands, etc.

Emotionally

- Provide an environment where children feel safe and secure.
- Have hugs, cuddles, and a warm lap to sit on whenever needed.
- Understand that children make mistakes and this is an acceptable part of the learning process. Be patient. Remember, children learn through repetition.
- Give praise for accomplishments and for being well-behaved to build their self-esteem.
- Provide many opportunities to relate feelings in a positive and constructive manner. Example: role-playing, games, etc.

Physically

- Provide opportunities for children to enhance and refine gross motor skills (large muscle) through running, jumping, climbing, etc. Physical activity will be provided each day. If outside play is not possible, an alternate activity will be provided.
- Teach about exercise and healthy choices.
- Teach and apply safety rules.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop and strengthen fine motor and eye/hand coordination skills through numerous activities, such as throwing, catching, building/stacking, and playing with small manipulatives, such as clothes pins and stringing items.
- Identify various body parts and experiment with the movement of each using song, dance, and music.
- Explore various materials using all the child's senses – sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch.

Intellectually

- Play! We realize that an abundance of play at this stage provides a crucial foundation for academic skills needed later. Through play, children develop an understanding of the world around them, build relationships, explore, and master skills at their own pace.
- Explore language by encouraging children to use their words, speak their own ideas, and listen to others. Language is also explored through singing, reading stories, and observing words in a print-rich environment. Other activities include working on letters and sounds, learning to write their letters, their names, and eventually words.
- Express creativity by making crafts and artwork. Provide a large variety of art materials for the children to use to express themselves.
- Identify shapes, colors, and objects using items in their environment.
- Teach children to become familiar with numbers through counting, singing songs involving adding or subtracting items, estimating, viewing, grouping items in different amounts, and changing those groupings.
- Teach children to compare, contrast, sort, match, and classify items.
- Have ooey, gooey, messy fun! Sensory experiences, such as playing with sand, water, play dough, finger paint, and blowing bubbles, bring out the scientist in us all.
- Help children to begin developing a sense of time by experiencing and discussing units of time, such as a minute, hour, day, week, month, and year.

- Teach children to listen, follow directions, and eventually complete tasks.

Teacher/Child Ratios

FHCP maintains lower ratios to provide the highest level of safety and development for the children entrusted to our care. We strictly abide by the following ratios.

Infants (6-12 months)	1:4 (8 children maximum per class)
Ones	1:4 (8 children maximum per class)
Twos	1:6 (12 children maximum per class)
Threes	1:7 (14 children maximum per class)
Fours/Transitional Kindergarten	1:8 (16 children maximum per class)

Daily Schedule

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Early Arrival Kidsplay
8:55 – 9:10 a.m.	Drop-off (doors will be locked at 9:15)
12:30-12:40 p.m.	Pick-up for Infant - Fours Classes
12:40-1:00 p.m.	Kidsplay
12:55-1:05 p.m.	Pick-up for Transitional Kindergarten/Kidsplay

*12:40 p.m. *Children must be picked up by 12:40 p.m. (1:05 p.m. for Transitional Kindergarten).
A fee of \$1.00 will be charged for every minute after 1:05 p.m..

AM Kidsplay

We offer early arrival for families needing early care. Early arrival begins at 8:30 a.m. and is similar to Kidsplay. Children who arrive at 8:30 a.m. enjoy puzzles, coloring, writing and playing. Early arrival is an additional fee of \$6.00 per day.

PM Kidsplay

Need an extra half hour, Kids Play is for you!

These extra hours of fun are offered Monday-Friday, 12:30-1:00 p.m. The cost is \$6.00 and is paid at pickup. Please indicate on the sign-in sheet for your child's class if your child will be staying for Kids Play.

Arrival and Departure

Children must be walked to their classrooms, and signed-in for the day. Children should be picked up in their classrooms promptly at 12:30 p.m. and signed-out for the day. All children not picked up by 12:40 p.m. will be taken to Kids Play. Late pickup beyond 1:05 pm will be billed at \$1.00 per minute.

Authorized Adults

Please provide a list of adults authorized to pick up your child in your absences on the Student Information Form. Anyone who picks up your child must be on this list and will be required to show a valid driver's license. We will release children to authorized adults only. Please keep your list up-to-date.

Safety

The Preschool doors will be locked from 9:10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and again at 12:40 p.m. If you are picking up a child from Kidsplay, want to visit during this time, or need to pick up your child early, please ring the doorbell and someone will assist you.

Please drive slowly and carefully in the parking areas, and be on the look-out for children walking between cars. Never leave a child unattended in your vehicle.

Please Do Not use the Handicap Parking spaces unless you have the proper tag. These spaces are reserved for individuals who medically require them.

Please do not allow children to climb on trees in the church yard.

Calendar Year

We follow Cabarrus County Schools' Calendar with few exceptions. Parents will be given a calendar for the year outlining all days the preschool will be closed and any special occasions scheduled for the year.

Inclement Weather

We follow Cabarrus County Schools' closings as related to inclement weather.

- If schools close while in session, you should pick-up your child as soon as possible.
- If there is a one-hour delay, we will delay for one hour and begin at 10:00 a.m.
- If there is a two-hour delay, the preschool will be closed.
- If school is closed for the entire day, we will be closed as well.

Preschool make-up days are handled on a case-by-case basis. We do not make up any classes on Saturdays. When Cabarrus County Schools announces the date(s) of their make-up day(s), you will be notified whether or not your child's class will be made up.

Tuition

Tuition is due the first day of each month. Each tuition payment will be the same amount regardless of a child's absence(s) from school, teacher workdays, holidays, or days missed due to inclement weather.

Tuition payments can be placed in the pencil pouch located in each child's daily folder or in the locked white preschool mailbox located at the entrance of the preschool. Cash payments should be placed in an envelope with the child's name on the front and can be placed in the locked preschool mailbox.

Parents also have the automatic payment option. Payments by credit card or debit card will be charged the 1st of the month. An automatic payment authorization form must be completed in order for payments to be processed.

A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged if tuition is not received by the 5th of each month. If an unusual situation arises concerning your tuition, please share this information with the Director as soon as possible. Please do not discuss these situations with the teachers.

Please make checks payable to FHCP. Be sure to include your child's first and last name on the memo line of your check. Fees/policy for returned checks are listed below:

- 1st returned check = \$10.00
- 2nd returned check = \$20.00
- After 2nd offense, we will only accept cash or money order.

Withdrawal Notice

If your child must leave the Preschool, please notify the Director at least two weeks prior to his or her withdrawal. We will not be able to give any partial refunds for tuition payments that have already been paid.

Immunization Policy

Each child attending Forest Hill Christian Preschool must have all age-appropriate, state-required immunizations

The North Carolina General Statutes (G.S. 130-A-152(a)) require immunizations for every child present in this state. Every parent, guardian or person in loco parentis are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) receive required immunizations. If you have specific questions regarding your child, please contact your child's health care provider or your local health department.

Parent, guardian or responsible person must present a certificate of immunization on the child's first day of attendance to the child care facility. If a certificate of immunization is not presented on the first day, the child care operator must present a notice of deficiency to the parent, guardian or responsible person. The parent, guardian or responsible person has 30 calendar days from the first day of attendance to obtain the required immunizations. Additional days, upon certification by a physician, may be allowed to obtain the required immunizations if the approved intervals require a period in excess of 30 calendar days. Upon termination of 30 calendar days or the extended period, the child care operator shall not permit the child to attend the child care facility unless the required immunization has been obtained.

Exemptions

There are two exemptions to required immunizations:

- **Medical Exemptions** - *An exemption is permitted for medical reasons when a physician determines that an immunization is or may be harmful to a student for a specific reason. Valid medical exemptions must be written and signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in North Carolina. The medical exemption must correspond to those medical contraindications specified in the N.C. Immunization Rules or an approved Rules' exception approved by the State Health Director. These physician statements must be maintained in the student's permanent record and at minimum must indicate the following - basis of the exemption; specific vaccine(s) the child should not receive; and length of time the exemption will apply for the child.*
- **Religious Exemptions** - *Parent(s), guardian or person in loco parentis who have a bona fide religious objection to immunization requirements must place a signed statement on file in the student's permanent record. An objection based upon a "scientific" belief (i.e. a foreign substance or chemical may be harmful) or non-religious personal belief or philosophy (i.e. clean living, fresh air, and pure water) is **not considered to be a religious exemption and is not allowed under North Carolina law.***

**** Failure to supply the Preschool Office a current copy of a child's Immunization Record within 30 days will result in the child being unable to attend preschool until a current form has been submitted ****

Illnesses

Any child who arrives noticeably ill will not be admitted to school. Children who have any of the following symptoms should remain at home: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, infectious discharge (yellow or green), sore throat with fever or skin problems (rash or sores), or a persistent cough. Children may return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours and being fever free. Children should not return until symptom-free for a full 24 hours.

A courtesy call is appreciated if your child will be out sick. Parents need to notify the Preschool within 24 hours if your child contracts a communicable or highly contagious disease/illness.

If a child becomes sick during the day the parent or guardian will be contacted to pick the child up immediately.

The following is a quick reference guide to aid in last-minute judgment calls. Let's be conscientious about having a healthy program.

Symptom

Recommendation

Coughing	If your child has a mild, intermittent cough (can go at least 15 minutes without a cough) and no fever, he/she is safe to attend. If the cough is persistent, this indicates infection, and the child should stay home.
Runny Nose	Basic Rule - If discharge is clear, child is safe. If discharge is thick and discolored, it is considered infectious. However, children with continual runny noses (needs to be wiped every 10-15 minutes), can be very demanding for the teachers. Please use your discretion.
Fever	Child needs to be fever-free for a full 24 hours in order to be free from infection, not contagious, and safe to return (i.e., a child who has had any fever on Sunday should not come on Monday).
Sore Throat	If not accompanied by any other symptoms, consider the child safe and simply judge by how he/she feels.
Ear Infection	Not considered infectious in itself, but the cold/congestion that set it up is, so go by those symptoms.
Diarrhea	More than two loose stools in a single day should be considered infectious and given a 24-hour waiting period.

Medications

Teachers are not allowed to administer any medication(s) to children. If your child needs medication(s) during the school day, a parent or guardian must administer.

Emergency Procedures

If your child is injured or becomes severely ill and needs immediate medical attention, emergency assistance will be requested by 911. You will be notified immediately. It is very important that you provide a telephone number where you can be reached quickly in case of an emergency. For minor incidences, such as scrapes, cuts, bug bites, etc., first-aid kits are available for the teachers to use

If your child has any type of allergy, please let your child's teacher know immediately.

Parents of children with allergies must complete an Allergy Plan. If your child requires an Epi-pen please provide one to the school for emergency use.

Children's Dress and Belongings

Please dress children comfortably for play, and remember, our play may result in messy clothes. For safety reasons, we request closed-toed shoes, preferably tennis shoes. Please no flip-flops. Outside play can become dangerous with inappropriate shoes.

Please purchase a regular-sized backpack for your child. Be sure to write your child's name on his/her backpack, coat, jacket, lunchbox, and on anything else they may bring.

Please do not send toys or special belongings to school with your child. We are not responsible for any damaged or lost items. The exception is for Show and Tell. We encourage you to send in items that are not irreplaceable and cannot be easily broken.

Change of Clothes

Please place a change of clothes in a Ziploc bag in your child's backpack. The Ziploc bag will remain in your child's backpack each day and should only be changed out with the change in the seasons.

Snacks and Lunch

Children in our one year-old class will bring snacks/finger foods to school. These types of food are typically more manageable for this age group.

All other classes will bring lunch to school. Please try to send food that your child can easily manage. To reduce stains on the carpet, we request that you send in drinks that will not stain (i.e., clear juices, water, etc.).

Classroom Parties

You may provide a special snack for your child's birthday. Please plan this in advance with your child's teacher. Due to an increasing amount of children with life-threatening allergies to peanuts, etc., all food brought into the classroom for a party, must be purchased at a store and must have an ingredient label. All Classrooms are "peanut free".

Invitations to personal birthday parties may only be handed out by preschool staff if every child in the class is being invited.

The Preschool celebrates Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and the end of the school year with classroom parties. Parents will be notified when these parties are taking place and if any special items are needed.

Preschool Communications

A classroom calendar will be distributed by your child's teacher for each month. Letters are also sent home as needed in your child's folder. Email updates will also be sent out.

Field Trips

Classes will take field trips each school year to enrich their education. Field trips touch our senses in a way that books and discussions cannot. There is nothing like hands-on experience!

These trips take place during the school day. Parents will be asked to provide transportation for their child and remain with them for the entire trip. Children are encouraged but not required to attend field trips.

Daycare will be available for children not able to attend field trips. Parents must sign up for preschool prior to the day of the field trip to ensure we have enough teachers to care for your children. Early/Late pick-up will not be available on the day of field trips.

Fundraisers

FHCP has several fundraising opportunities throughout the school year. Fundraisers allow FHCP to provide affordable tuition, invest in new classroom equipment, and attract and retain experienced staff.

Programs

There will be 3 programs each year. One at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Graduation.

Disciplinary Actions for Chronic, Disruptive Behavior

This includes biting, hitting, kicking, throwing, and verbal abuse.

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties. The Director may require the parent of any child to meet for a conference. We are here to serve and protect all of our children. Children displaying chronic, disruptive behavior, which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of another child, will require the following actions:

Step 1*

An Incident Report will be filled out and signed by the teacher, the Director, and the parent. The parent may be required to meet with the Preschool Director. The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established, and the parent will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem. At the Director's discretion, a 2-4 week probationary period may be assigned.

Step 2*

If the aggressive behavior continues, an Aggressive Behavior Report will be filled out and signed by the teacher, the Preschool Director, and the parent. The parent will be called to pick-up the child. The parent will be required to meet with the Preschool Director. The Preschool Board Chair will be notified at this time. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences, if progress is not apparent. A 2-4 week probationary period will be assigned.

Step 3*

If the aggressive behavior continues, an Aggressive Behavior Report will be filled out and signed by the teacher, the Preschool Director, and the parent. The child will be removed from the classroom, and the parent will be called to pick-up the child immediately. The parent will be required to meet with the Preschool Director. The child may be suspended immediately and indefinitely. The Preschool Board Chair and Board Members will be notified. A temporary or permanent suspension may be necessary and would be determined by the Director and the Preschool Board.

- * Depending upon the severity of the behavior/action, the Preschool Director has the authority to go directly to Step 3.

Discharge Policy

Forest Hill Christian Preschool reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- **Non-payment or excessive late payment of tuition.**
- **Failure to observe Preschool policies as outlined in the Handbook.**
- **Child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.**
- **Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or other children by parent or child.**