**UPPS Parent Handbook**

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**University Presbyterian Preschool**

**Parent Handbook**

**I. History, Mission, and Oversight of UPPS**

 University Presbyterian Preschool and Kindergarten (UPPK) was established in 1972 to provide a half day kindergarten experience for five year old children at a time when public kindergarten did not exist in North Carolina. The church acted as a sponsor, with the program supporting teacher salaries with tuition fees. Enrollment was open to the entire community with UPC members receiving priority and a Session appointed committee was responsible for the business of the program. Eventually UPPK offered classes for three age groups.

 My Morning Out (MMO) was started in September 1977 as a baby-sitting cooperative for children ages nine months to five years old under the auspices of the Presbyterian Missions Committee which provided the church nursery room rent free. In order to meet the growing needs of the community, MMO gradually expanded into a five morning program serving two separate age groups in two rooms. In March 1996 the name was changed again, to MMO

Early Childhood Cooperative.This change in name was made to show that MMO had evolved from its original mission as a baby-sitting cooperative to become a cooperative preschool.

 In March of 2003 the Session of University Presbyterian Church appointed a task force to review the two preschool programs. The Session, which is the elected ruling body of the church, asked the task force to review My Morning Out (MMO) and University Presbyterian Preschool and Kindergarten (UPPK) with “particular emphasis of the review to include the relationship of the programs to the mission of UPC, the financial and administrative relationship with UPC and the childcare needs of the community.”

 After six months of intensive study, the Task Force concluded that it is the responsibility and mission of University Presbyterian Church to continue to support families in their efforts to provide their children with early childhood experiences that take place in an atmosphere conducive to meeting children’s needs for wholesome mental, emotional and spiritual development. The Task Force also concluded that while University Presbyterian Church should no longer sponsor a private kindergarten, a half day preschool remains relevant to many of University Presbyterian Church’s own members and provides an expression of pastoral care and nurture. Along with this service to church members, a half day preschool continues to be greatly needed in this community, especially when it is one that is church based and is an inclusive ministry without regard for religious belief, gender, class, race or national origin.

 In September of 2003 the Session approved unanimously the recommendation of the Task Force to replace the two existing programs with one preschool program serving children ages 2 - 4, with one director, and rename the program University Presbyterian Preschool (UPPS). The Session approved this recommendation effective for the 2004-2005 school year. UPPS is under the direction of the Session, through the Session’s UPPS Committee, with the director and teachers as employees of University Presbyterian Church.

The UPPS Committee composition is as follows:

 1. All voting members of the Committee shall be UPC members.

 2. The committee will have nine members, including the Preschool Director and Staff Associate for Education, who serve as non-voting ex-officio members of the committee.

 3. All members, except those serving in an ex-officio capacity, will serve no more than two three-year rotating terms.

 4. The UPPS Committee will include the following members:

 a. A member of the UPC Session, who shall serve as the chairperson

 b. A member of the UPC Personnel Committee

 c. Two at-large members appointed by the chair of the UPPS Committee

 d. Two UPC parents of preschoolers enrolled in UPPS

 e. One teacher, who is a UPC member. However, if no teacher who is also a UPC member is available to serve, a non-member teacher shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member.

The UPPS Committee will support and assist the UPPS Director and program by:

 1. Serving as a liaison and public relations representative to UPC and the community.

 2. Recommending to the UPC Session approval of appropriate expenditures from UPPS reserves.

 3. Developing and maintaining policies for: admissions and enrollment, personnel, fiscal and finance, health and safety, tuition and scholarships, fund raising and curriculum and program.

 4. Providing oversight for shared space, equipment, and supplies.

 5. Conducting annual evaluations of the director and program.

 6. Developing the annual budget and recommending its approval to the UPC Session, providing accounting support through the UPC finance office, providing oversight of the UPPS finances by the UPC treasurer, and providing an annual audit by the UPC auditor.

 7. Planning and implementing long term capital improvements.

 Approved by the UPPS Committee and the Session, March 2008

**II. Curriculum**

**Goals:**

* To promote development of the complete child: emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically.
* To provide opportunities to develop each child's uniqueness while providing an opportunity for the child to function well in a group.
* To engender excitement about participating in school and learning.

**Philosophy on the Value of Play and Social Learning:** It is UPPS’s belief that meaningful play is an essential part of the natural life of children and is how they learn. Current play research and theory emphasize the value of play for the development of cognition, language, intellectual, personal, social, motor coordination, emotional and cultural functions. We incorporate the philosophy of play into our classroom situation, setting the stage so that children can experiment, explore, imitate, question, and expand their thinking and problem solving skills. We work to engender a love of learning and to support the development of the whole child, integrating their social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and self-help skills. While supporting and nurturing each child individually, teachers provide guidance to help children develop internalization of self-control and a positive pattern of interaction with others both one-on-one and in a group. We strive to encourage a sense of community and a sense of being a valued participating member of the class. In this safe and supportive environment, children feel safe to take the risks that lead to new skill development.

**Reading Goals:** Emergent literacy skills begin in social situations by learning to listen to others and express one's own thoughts. Verbal expression is encouraged early in the UPPS experience. Allowing children to retell familiar personal or group happenings, describe a piece of art (and have his/her words written) or act out roles in the various centers, promotes self-esteem as well as verbal skills. Listening skills develop as friends have the same chances to speak before the group and as interesting stories are read. Readiness to read is determined by the individual development of each child and is signaled by the child's ability to recognize colors, shapes, likenesses, differences, opposites, sequences; it also includes the ability to match, categorize, rhyme, follow directions, discriminate visually, conceptualize left to right, discriminate letter sounds, and to utilize memory skills. UPPS guides emergent readers by integrating these skills into thematic units of study. Through these units phonemic awareness and beginning reading skills are introduced. The rooms are labeled to demonstrate the use of language. Language is made fun, comfortable, and purposeful.

**Math Goals:** Children need time with concrete operations in math before moving into abstract operations. Multiple counting experiences with objects precede any discussions of numerals. Number meaning comes from this manipulation and is developed by additional concepts such as size comparisons, one-to-one correspondence, classification of objects by common attributes, measurements, pattern recognition, ordinals, clock awareness, telephone awareness, calendar awareness, inclusion and conservation theories and unit counting. Daily practice in math comes in a variety of presentations. For example, having the napkin helper place one napkin for every chair at the snack table is practicing one-to-one correspondence in a concrete manner. In examples such as these children can feel and practice math.

**Philosophy of Children's Art:** An extremely important area in early education is art. Art materials provide a way for children to express thoughts and feelings that they are not prepared to verbalize. Therefore, adults must not judge the work as this judgment tends to channel energies toward adult standards rather than his/her own. It is important for adults to be positive and supportive by allowing children (within reason) to freely take from the art cart and create. Several media forms are provided which stimulate many senses. The process is the important part of the art work. The product will develop over time and will be more meaningful to children if it is something that has come from within. It also will have come from an active participation in the art as opposed to a passive one. Teachers observe children and help them to retell the happenings in art, either with dictations or words to parents in the car pool line. UPPS maintains: I hear--I forget; I see--I learn; I do--I understand. It is the doing that is the true essence of art.

**Philosophy of Music:** Music is an important form of self-expression. It is spontaneous within the classrooms at any point in the morning. Short, catchy, rhythmic songs are the most successful and will generally go home with the children. UPPS employs two music and movement teachers who work with each class three times during a month to teach the children in groups of 9 to12 for approximately 30 minutes. Tone matching, tuning up, rhythm instruments, marching, clapping rhythms, and dramatizing songs with costumes help develop interest in music. Movement is also incorporated in this time by having the children engage gross motor skills.

**Philosophy of Discipline:** UPPS interprets discipline as a continuum of behaviors that develop over time and are influenced through feedback from peers and caring adults. The teachers demonstrate respect for the children and children understand that they are appreciated and will be cared for at school. UPPS stresses positive approaches to all interactions with children. The first step in setting the proper tone for the classroom is to set limits with the children. The children help form a few basic rules that encompass several behaviors. There are just a few so that the children are able to remember and adhere to the rules. The rules are reviewed often at the beginning of the year and sporadically throughout the year. The children know that there are consequences for breaking the rules and what the consequences are (i.e., if unable to follow rules in the block center, will need to leave that area and play in another center.) In general, rules focus on two main ideas: safety and treating our classmates with care and respect. Safety issues pertain to each child as an individual and for the group as a whole, so we have rules such as “we use walking feet inside the building” and “we stay with a teacher when in the car pool line”. Examples of rules pertaining to care and respect of our classmates: we do not hit or in any way hurt a classmate. Teachers model techniques in conflict resolution for the children and teach them to be problem solvers using their words versus physical action.

 Teachers will never use corporal punishment. Children will not be isolated as a means of discipline. Instead, teachers will talk-out a problem with any child/children involved, teaching them age appropriate strategies for problem solving. We maintain low teacher-student ratios, and teachers are always close by to positively redirect any potential problems, so discipline problems are usually averted. The foundation for developing self-discipline is helping children on a daily basis in all interactions to grow in self-esteem. Children given positive attention often "caught being good" and find it less necessary to receive attention from the group in negative ways. Preventive techniques prove more successful than reactions. Positive interactions with children include body language as well as verbal expressions.

**Philosophy on Outside Play:** Outdoor play is essential to children’s health and well-being. Children need to run, climb, jump, and play outdoors. The time children spend outdoors each day is just as important to learning as the time they spend in their classrooms. The outdoors offers many ways to enrich the curriculum and support children’s learning and development. It is our goal to take children outside each day, weather permitting. Conditions taken into consideration when determining the length of time spent outside are: wind chill, rain, snow and temperature. Flexibility in the schedule also allows us to extend our outdoor play on fair weather days. Children should be dressed appropriately for weather conditions.

**III. Class Overviews**

**TWO-YEAR-OLD CLASS INFORMATION**

 There are two Two-Year-Old classes which meet Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday from 8:45am-11:45am. There are 10 children in the class with 2 teachers. The Two’s Class provides a loving, safe, developmentally appropriate, and positive first group experience for the youngest class of children at UPPS. We help children to successfully handle separation from parents; provide opportunities to develop language, fine and gross motor, social and independent self-help skills; offer a variety of materials to encourage and stimulate creativity; assist children in understanding and following basic classroom rules, and help children to feel that school is a fun and safe place to be.

**Approximate Class Schedule:**

**8:45 *Drop Off and Playground***- Children are greeted in the car pool line by a teacher or the director and taken to the playground

**9:25 *Walk to the Playroom***, singing the whole way!

**9:30 *Morning Meeting-*** Children sit in their cubby spaces for a morning greeting and a description of the art/craft activity

**9:45**  ***Snack Time:*** Hands are washed before eating snack

### **10:05** ***Center play***: Children move freely from one activity to another. Art, craft, dramatic play, floor toys, manipulatives, blocks, books, etc. Potty break for those who are toilet trained.

### **11:10 *Room Clean Up*:** This is an ongoing process throughout the morning with children being encouraged to help as much as possible by putting a toy away before getting out a different one. During our scheduled clean up times children are motivated to participate by being asked to pick up a specific type or number of toys.

**11:15** ***Circle or “Turtle Time”*:** In addition to providing an opportunity for an organized group activity, it also serves as a “transition” or “winding down” time between parts of the day. During this time we may dance or exercise to a CD, enjoy well known or curriculum related songs and finger plays, or tell stories through books or puppets.

**11:25** ***Playground***: Children enjoy the last part of the morning on the playground.

**11:45*****Pick up:*** As the parents arrive in the car pool line, a teacher or the director will take children from the playground to their car and hand them to the person picking them up.

***Snack Time***

Snack time is a wonderful occasion for socialization and provides an opportunity to learn about washing hands, eating healthy foods, and using polite manners. They clean up after snack by clearing their leftover food and plates, cups and placemat.

***Diapering***

 Children should be changed at home just before leaving for school. While at school, teachers change children if soiled or if parents specifically request a mid-morning change. Diapered children should wear disposable diapers whenever possible. If your child wears diapers, please bring in a labeled resealable bag of five diapers during visit week. Teachers will give you a written reminder when you need to bring in more diapers. To facilitate diapering, please make sure any one-piece suits unsnap all the way down the legs; the ones with non-snapping bands at the ankles are really difficult to take off when diapering since the child must be completely undressed.

***Toilet Training***

Children who are toilet trained are taken after playground time to the restroom and then will be taken once more during the later part of the morning. Boys and girls will use the same bathroom. We use anatomically correct names for body parts.

For children who are beginning toilet training, it may be helpful for a caregiver to come in to school in the early stages to take the child to use the restroom before school; please contact the teacher or director to make arrangements. During the training process your child may wear diapers or Velcro sided pull ups, but we ask that you do not put them in regular underwear until they are accident free. Also please avoid putting your child in coveralls with straps unless they also have snap fasteners down the legs.

**THREE-YEAR-OLD CLASS INFORMATION**

There are two Three’s classes, meeting Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Tuesday/Thursday/Friday from 9am-noon. Each class has 13 children and 2 teachers. Social skill development is a fundamental objective in the three-year-old class. If a child is attending a 4th day, his/her primary class will still remain either the MWF or TThF class. Children learn best through play. Social skills such as sharing, peer interactions, taking turns and solving conflicts are taught and modeled in an educationally rich environment. *Children must be toilet trained for the Three’s class.* If a child has not completed toilet-training by August 1st, the director should be notified. The parents and the Director will make a plan concerning the child attending school

**Approximate Class Schedule:**

9:00-9:45 **Drop Off/Playground** Children are greeted in carpool line and taken to the playground by a teacher or the director

9:45-9:55 **Restrooms/Walk to Classroom** The class is divided by boys/girls for a visit to the restroom to wash hands. All children will be encouraged to use the potty.

9:45-10:05 **Circle Time** Children meet together for a welcome song and to learn about job assignments for the day. As the year progresses, we do more sharing of ideas during this time. Activities available in the centers are discussed and a story is read. The main art project for the day is presented.

10:05-11:00 **Center Time** Children may move freely from center to center, (i.e., books and

 games, art, blocks and housekeeping), choosing the activities in

 which they would like to participate. Materials available will enhance the curriculum

 of the unit currently being studied.

11:00-11:00 **Clean-up** Children help to clean up in the center where they were last playing.

11:00-11:10 **Second Circle** Children come to the circle to sing songs, play games, or read stories

11:10-11:30 **Wash Hands/Snack** Children wash hands before eating snack.

11:30-11:40 **Quiet Time** Children may choose a book to look at alone or with a friend.

11:40-12:00 **Outdoor play** Children return to the playground

12:00 **Dismissal**

**FOUR-YEAR-OLD CLASS INFORMATION**

UPPS has one Four-Year-Old classroom that meets Monday-Thursday from 9am-12pm; there is an option to sign up for Bonus Day Friday which meets 8:45am-11:45am. There are 16 students and 2 teachers (8:1 ratio)

**Class schedule for the Fours**:

8:55-9:35 Gather from car pool line, sign in, wash hands, Free Choice Centers

9:35-10:00 Small group lesson or Show and Tell with children divided into 3 small groups

10-10:35 Playground

10:35 Restrooms, hand washing

10:40 Snack- brought from home

10:55 Library time, story read by teacher

11:10 Class Meeting: calendar, weather, story, letter & number activities

11:30 Large Group Activities- games, movement, music

12:00 Dismissal or Lunch Bunch which is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays

 **Friday Bonus Day for the Fours Class**

The Bonus Day will not be connected with the Fours curriculum; instead, the day's theme will be centered around a specially selected story followed by enrichment activities inspired by the story so that the concepts can be explored at a deeper level. The activities may include art, drama, science, or cooking and the leaders will encourage creativity, cooperation, and problem-solving. The children will also have time to eat snack, play on the playground, and engage in some other unstructured fun as well. Bonus Day teachers will rotate throughout the year

The cost of Bonus Day is $100/month. Parents can sign up children before the school year starts. Students can also join the program during the year at the beginning of a month assuming parents have signed up by the 15th of the previous month. Cancellation of participation needs to be done prior to the 15th of the previous month otherwise the Bonus Day fee will still be due to cover the cost of staffing.

**AFTER SCHOOL LUNCH BUNCH FOR THREES AND FOURS**

Lunch Bunch will be offered starting the second week of school from 12:00 to 1:00pm for the Threes and Fours Class each day except for Wednesdays; it also may not be offered on certain special event days before Thanksgiving and Winter Holidays. Each child is responsible for bringing his/her own lunch and drink. There is no refrigeration, so the lunch must be safe to stay in the child's cubby during the morning. A ratio of 7:1 will be maintained. Lunch Bunch staffing will be covered by UPPS teachers and regular substitutes.

 Parents can sign children up for Lunch Bunch before the school year starts. For pricing, please contact the director. Students can also join the program during the year at the beginning of a month assuming parents have signed up by the 15th of the previous month. Cancellation of participation needs to be done prior to the 15th of the month otherwise the Lunch Bunch fee will still be due to cover the cost of staffing.

**TRANSITIONAL FIVES CLASS INFORMATION**

The Transitional Five’s class meets Monday-Friday from 8:45am-12:15pm. There is room for up to 18 students; there are 2 teachers (9:1 ratio).

**Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule**:

8:45 – 9:10 Check in, exploration stations

9:10 – 9:35 Morning meeting (morning news, calendar, weather etc.)

9:35 – 10:35 Reading/Writing Workshop

10:35 – 10:55 Wash hands, snack\*\* on Wednesday snack and playground are reversed

10:55 – 11:25 Playground, wash hands

11:25 – 11:40 Story, special person

11:40 – 12:15 Centers, child choice of activities

12:15 – 12:45 Clean-up, wash hands and have lunch

12:45 Dismissal

**Tuesday-Thursday Schedule**:

8:45 – 9:05 Exploration Stations

9:10 – 9:30 Morning meeting and skill streaming

9:30 – 10:20 Music/Creative movement for 25 minutes with half of the class, the other group will have instruction group (math, science, art) activity then groups switch for the next 25 minutes

10:20 – 10:45 Wash hands, story, snack

10:45 – 11:15 Playground, wash hands

11:15 – 11:35 Story and Special Person

11:35 – 12:05 Assigned centers–unit activities

12:05 – 12:15 Clean-up and dismissal on Tuesdays at 12:15pm, on Thursdays Lunch then Dismissal at 12:45pm

**IV. Arrival and Departure**

**SCHOOL HOURS:** Because we are a carpool line school, we ask that you arrive and pick up using the 10 minute window surrounding your child’s class times. The start and ending times have been staggered so that we don’t have too many cars arriving at the same time, so we do ask that you adhere to the following times:

* ***Transitional Fives***- drop off between 8:45-8:55am and pick up between 12:45-12:55pm
* ***Two’s*** drop off between 8:45-8:55am and pick up between 11:45-11:55am
* ***Three’s*** drop off between 9-9:10 and pick up between 11:55-12:05 (1:00-1:10pm if they stay for Lunch Bunch)
* ***Four’s*** drop off between 8:55-9:05am and pick up between 12:05-12:15pm (1:00-1:10pm if they stay for Lunch Bunch) \*\*Bonus Day Fours drop off will be between 8:45am-8:55am on Fridays and pick up between 11:45-11:55am.
* **If your car pool has children from multiple age groups, please speak with the Director to plan for one drop-off time.**

**Car pool line late fee policy**

 “Late pick up” means that a parent has arrived after their 10 minute pick-up window: The first time you are late to pick up your child, you will be given a reminder to be on time. The second and any subsequent times you will be assessed a $10.00 late fee.

**Some tips for a smooth carpool line experience:**

* Parents should not arrive in the car pool line more than 5 minutes prior to the designated drop off/pick up time so that the road leading to the parking lot is not blocked and so other classes are not delayed for their drop offs and pick ups. If you arrive too early, please circle the block and come back (or you may be asked to do so by the director)
* Please be prompt to pick up your child. There is a $10 late fee for late pick ups after the 10 minute window.
* If a non-parent will regularly be picking up a child, please fill out a Car Pool Permission form with the names of those people (nannies, grandparents, carpool ride, etc)
* If a parent wishes their child to go home with someone who does not regularly pick up the child, as would happen for a play date, we still need a written permission note or an email.
* Please do not park in the church lot. All of the spaces are assigned and towing is enforced.
* Please pull all the way forward until a teacher signals that she is ready to get your child
* Upon arrival, please assist your child with getting out of the car and gathering their belongings. You can wait **holding your child’s hand beside your car until a teacher comes to pick them up. We request that children have their hands held by an adult at all carpool times.**
* At pick up time, the teacher will hand your child back over to you to for buckling into the car.
* Please refrain from cell phone use while picking up or dropping off your child. We need 100% of your attention on the safety of all children and teachers. And your child will benefit from your attention at the end of the day.

**V. Food and Drink**

**Snack:** Please send your child with a snack inside of some type of snack bag and a reusable water bottle each day. Snack bags and bottles should be labeled with names. What children eat does matter so we recommend items from two different food groups with one being a fruit or vegetable. Other good snack suggestions include granola bars, cheese, yogurt, crackers, pretzels, etc. *PLEASE DO NOT SEND CANDY! And please avoid sending high choking-hazard foods like popcorn, hard candy, marshmallows, whole grapes, hot dogs*. If your child has difficulty chewing and swallowing, please advise the teachers so they can be extra watchful. We will set food restrictions for each class as needed based on the presence or lack thereof of children with contact allergies. We need parent cooperation to make sure foods with restricted ingredients are not sent to school. If such foods are sent, the teacher will remove the item from the snack so that it doesn’t imperil students with allergies.

**Food Allergies**: Teachers will alert parents about any food allergies in their child’s class. We will ask all children with food allergies to have a completed Food Allergy Action Plan on file. If an action on the FAAP includes the use of an Epi-Pen, the family will need to supply the Epi-Pen. Our preference is to have the family keep an Epi-Pen at school for their child but if this is not possible, please contact the director to establish a plan for sending it back and forth.

**Birthday Snack:** Because of food allergies, we do not allow outside food to be served in the classroom. The teachers will make sure your little one is celebrated on their birthday/half birthday with their special classroom-specific traditions!

**VI. ITEMS THAT SHOULD/SHOULD NOT COME TO SCHOOL**

**Dress Guidelines**: Children need to wear shoes which allow for safe climbing. In general, slick soled shoes, such as girl’s dress shoes, crocks, flip-flops, and clogs have shown to be dangerous for climbing and allow sand to get in which bothers the children. Please dress them comfortably in clothes meant for messy fun. *All removable items (coats, sweaters, mittens, hats) need to be labeled.*

**Extra clothing:** At the beginning of the year, we will ask you to send in an extra set of clothes for your child in case he/she needs a change. This includes shirt, pants, socks and underwear. *Please label all clothing and put them in a large sealable bag with their name on it.*

**Toys:** It is requested that toys be left at home unless the class has specific instructions for a sharing item that allows it. There are many unique items at school that the child may not explore if a toy is brought. Toy guns are not allowed at school as they stimulate aggressive play and detract from the morning's activities.

**Tote Bags/Backpacks:** It will be important to send a bag that adequately holds the things they will be bringing to and from school. For our Twos and Threes, the backpack should be able to hold their snack bag and water bottle. For our Fours and Fives, they will have larger sized projects coming home so please avoid the small sized backpacks.

**Security Objects:** It helps some young children to bring along a special blanket, stuffed toy, or other "lovey." Please label any "lovey" with your child's name. Do not bring other toys, such as small cars or action figures; children usually do not want to share them with other children, and they easily get lost. Loveys may be brought onto the playground if needed, but for safety reasons, children will need to put them down when climbing, etc.

**Invitations to Birthday Parties:** Invitations can be sent using the school communication software or paper ones can be distributed by teachers. Please note that teachers are not allowed to attend student parties unless there was a relationship that pre-existed the student’s enrollment in their class.

**VII. Health procedures, policies, practices and records**

Parents are required to sign a PARENTAL MEDICAL CONSENT FORM which lists emergency phone numbers to be used by the school in case parents cannot be reached. This form also states the medical procedure which will be followed by the school in case of a medical emergency. A current record of all immunizations and a copy of the child’s last well child exam are required. UPPS requires all enrolled students to be current on their vaccinations. Vaccination records are requested prior to the first day of school; parents will be asked to submit current records each year of attendance. If a child applies who has a legal medical exemption from vaccination, the UPPS committee will review the application on a case by case basis, weighing the possible impact and risks of the child’s non-vaccination status on other students and staff. If the child’s application is accepted, the family will be asked to sign an agreement stating that they understand that the presence of a vaccine-preventable illness in the classroom would result on that student being excluded for the duration of the incubation period. Applications for students with legal exemptions from vaccinations for any non-medical reasons will not be considered.

**Illness**: Children should never come to school if they are sick; parents should carefully monitor

their children for any symptoms of illness (fever, chills, sore throat, shortness of breath/difficulty

breathing, cough, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, congestion, fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, pink

eye, rashes, stomach bugs.) The presence of any of these symptoms generally suggests a

person has an infectious illness and should not attend preschool. If symptoms appear, a child

should not come to school and should contact the pediatrician for guidance. Because of the

close contact that naturally occurs among children this age and between teachers & their young

students, our preschool will be more conservative in decisions about a child with symptoms

attending. While doctors’ notes provide some assurance, the preschool reserves the right to

refuse attendance to any child, if we remain concerned about the health of the teachers and

other students.

FEVER, VOMITING, DIARRHEA - Any child with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea within the past 24

hours should not come to school.

COUGH - If your child has a mild, intermittent cough (i.e. can go 15 minutes without a cough)

s/he is safe to attend school. Children that cough more consistently need to remain at home.

RUNNY NOSE - If your child has a runny nose with clear discharge, and there are no other

symptoms, then the child is safe to attend. However, if discharge is not clear, OR if the nose

needs to be wiped repeatedly, the child should remain at home.

PINK EYE - If your child’s eye is pink, swollen, or has any wet or dry discharge, please have him or her remain at home until the eyes are clear. It is recommended to be seen by the physician

before coming to school to determine if antibiotic drops are needed. If drops are prescribed,

then the child must be treated for at least 24 hours and the eyes should be clear of any

discharge before returning to school.

ANTIBIOTICS - Children on antibiotics should wait a full 24 hours after beginning treatment

before returning to school.

LAXATIVES - If you give your child a laxative, please do not send them to school until that

laxative has cleared the child’s system. (usually 24-48 hours)

HEAD LICE – Children may not attend preschool with head lice or nits.

COVID/RSV/Flu: If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID, Flu, or RSV, they will

need to stay out of school for at least 3 days following symptom onset. This is longer than CDC

recommendations because children are not always able to cover their coughs & sneezes and

they are often playing face-to-face in very close proximity with other children. After 3 days at

home, the person may return to preschool IF symptoms are improving overall, and the person

has been fever free for 24-hours without use of a fever-reducing medication. Please have your

child wear a mask at school until 5 days after symptom onset to protect classmates.

**VIII. Parent Involvement**

Teachers will reach out from time to time if they need assistance with a project, with chaperoning, or with a cut and paste project. For parents who are willing, we have other roles for volunteering including:

* **Class Representative-** Help teachers with tasks like playdoh sign ups. Class reps can also organize playdates with the class after school hours if interest allows
* **Scholastic Book Club Assistant**- helps prep the catalogs for distribution
* **Teacher Appreciation Committee**- Organize the sign ups for monthly lunches for teachers on their staff meeting day

**VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM**

Because of our low teacher: student ratios, UPPS does not rely on regular parent volunteering; however, we do welcome parents to visit the class but we do prefer for you to let us know in advance for our own planning. Teachers will be in touch regarding special opportunities to help with projects or field trips. If you are in the classroom, unless you have had a background check done by UPPS, you cannot accompany any child other than your own to the restroom. Siblings are not able to accompany parents when visiting the class.

**SUBSTITUTING**- We do appreciate having parents who are willing and able to be on our sub list. Please contact the director for more information.

**IX. Fees and Finances**

 1. Fees are set each year by the UPPS Committee and will be announced in January for the following year. The school requires a pre-payment of May tuition (the last month of school) and the annual supply fee. These payments will be due by early May and are non-refundable.

 2. All payments made to UPPS can be completed on Brightwheel or can be dropped off in carpool line or can be mailed to PO Box 509 Chapel Hill NC 27514.

 3. Tuition can be paid in a lump sum for the year or semester, or it can be divided into monthly payments.

 4. For our Fours, Lunch Bunch and Bonus Day payments are also due on the first of each month.

 5. Tuition is due on the first of every month and can be paid anytime before the 10th. There will be a $25 late fee assessed after the 10th. If the late payment is received after the 30th of the month, the Director has the authority to fill the child's space at the Preschool with another child and the deposit will be forfeited. Failure to pay tuition or fees may result in dismissal from the school. Checks or payments declined due to Insufficient Funds will be subject to additional charges to the family to cover bank fees.

 6. All fund-raisers must be approved by the UPC Session. The fund-raisers must be child

appropriate (t-shirts, tote bags, children’s art items). The only exception is grocery store

certificates. Children and parents will not be asked to “sell” items to their family members,

neighbors, and friends.

**X. Dismissal Policy**

It is our policy to work with parents and children to ensure a successful and safe preschool

experience. We acknowledge that the situation may arise where a child may be unable to adjust

to the expectations and structure of the UPPS setting. If such a situation arises the following

steps will be followed:

 1. The teacher will arrange for a conference with the parents.

 2. The teacher will request that the Director and parents observe in the classroom.

 3. The teacher, parents, and Director will develop a plan of intervention.

Progress will be evaluated and communicated to the parents. If the child does not respond to the

plan of intervention, is creating an unsafe environment for him/herself in the classroom, or is

creating a serious disruption in the classroom, the Director will dismiss the child from the

program.

Parents may be required to withdraw their child from the Preschool upon recommendation of the Director. Appeals can be directed to the UPPS Committee, and the Chairperson of the UPPS Committee will handle questions or problems concerning dismissals from the program. After an administrative dismissal the tuition portion of the child's deposit may be refunded pending determination by the UPPS Committee.

**XI. Safety**

**Playground Safety:** Teachers will be constantly monitoring the playground to make sure there are no concerns for safety. One teacher will be on each half of the playground. If a need arises for one teacher to leave the playground (emergency reasons only), she alerts the co-teacher so that teacher can move to the center of the playground and supervise both groups**.**

Rules that are important for safety include:

* A head should be higher than feet on all parts of the climbing equipment.
* Shovels, buckets, loveys, etc. must be put down when climbing on equipment.
* Walk on upper levels.
* Sand stays low, on the ground
* Slide down slide feet first, bottom touching the slide.
* For the protection of the Twos Class certain areas will be placed off limits

**Background Checks:** We conduct background checks on all teachers and workstudy students. If a parent will be substituting on a regular basis, then we will have a background check done on them as well. If a parent is volunteering in the classroom or substituting on a one-time basis and a background check is not done, then the parent will not be allowed to accompany any children other than their own to the bathroom.

**Facility Safety:** All entrance doors to UPPS are locked during the school morning. Only preschool and church staff and leadership will have access to the preschool wing during the morning. If a situation arises that calls into question the safety of the students at the preschool, the school may enact one of several protocols including lockdowns and the closure of carpool line. The protocols are reviewed regularly by staff, approved by local law enforcement, and are in line with recommendations made by School Safety experts. Communications will be made to parents as soon as the director can safely do so; information will be provided about what actions were taken and what adjustments might need to be made for families.

**Custodial Situations:** Please notify us immediately if there is any custodial arrangement of which we need to be aware. We must have an enforceable official legal document for our file stating who the legal guardian is before we can accept additional directives; non-legal notes are not acceptable.

**XII. Inclement Weather**

UPPS generally follows the schedule of the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Public School System; however parents should check the website or their emails to be sure that conditions do not necessitate a different decision for UPPS. It is ALWAYS important for each parent to evaluate the safety of driving conditions in their area. Communications about closures/delays/early pick up will be announced as soon as possible using the communication software.

**XIII. Admissions, Enrollment, Withdrawal**

**Applications**

 1. No discrimination is made because of race, color, national origin, or religion (except priority children as indicated below).

 2. Priority is given to UPC members, currently enrolled children, siblings of currently enrolled, and siblings of formerly enrolled children. Priority groups may register in January. Applications for two year olds must be postmarked no earlier than January 1; applications for three, four, and five-year-old children will be received at any time. A non-refundable application fee of $40.00 is required. A non-refundable deposit fee is required at the time a space is offered to a child. This deposit fee is credited toward tuition for the month of May of that school year.

 3. If a child is **withdrawn after August 1st, the family will be responsible for the remainder of the year’s tuition** until the vacancy can be filled.

 4. Children must be current on their vaccinations in order to attend UPPS.

5. Children must reach the appropriate class age by August 31. The cut-off date will be October 15th for children applying to the transitional five-year class. Children who are age inappropriate will be admitted only at the director's discretion. Enrollment of these students can be granted after May 1st of the previous school year.

**Lottery**

A lottery may be necessary in a variety of different circumstances as noted in the priority status list. When a lottery is necessary, three or more people should be present. The preschool director should be present to record the results of the lottery.

**Scholarship Applications**

 1. Scholarships are granted on a need basis based on a review of the Scholarship Application.

 2. Applications are available on the UPPS website (www.upps-ch.com). The information shared with the Scholarship Committee will be held in confidence by the members of UPC serving on the committee. The members of the committee do not have any direct connection to UPPS.

**XIV. Concerns, complaints and problems**

If a parent has a question, concern, or issue, these steps should be followed:

 1. The parent should speak directly to the child’s teacher(s) about the concern, complaint, or problem.

 2. If the parent feels unable to speak directly to the teacher(s) for any reason, then the parent could speak with the director about the concern.

 3. The director’s role will be to listen and assess the circumstances. The director will decide how to proceed.

 4. If the parent feels the concern is not solved, the concern may be brought to the UPPS Committee for review and resolution.

**XV. The first day of school**

The first day of school means leaving the security of home to begin coping with new routines, friends, and teachers. This transition can be made easier by using these guidelines:

* Emphasize that beginning school is a normal event for all children.
* Talk over the orientation activities in which the child and parent will participate.
* Discuss the schedule and routines of the class day. Parents will receive information about this at the Orientation/Open House Meeting. The class schedule is also printed in this handbook.
* Assure your child about transportation plans to and from school.
* Examine your own feelings. Children quickly sense the apprehension or fears of an adult.
* Establish your routines a few days ahead of time--going to bed a little earlier, deciding what to wear, and thinking through any other issues which are "hang-ups" to getting out the door on time. It is never comfortable having to rush in the morning.
* Don't panic at teary good-byes. Separation from parents is often the most difficult moment of the day for the child. Once you are out of sight, children become involved in their new surroundings and readily adjust. The teachers will be glad to help you with your good-byes and quickly involve a sad child.
* Remember a young child may need several weeks to adjust to a new school situation.
* Set aside a special time at home to listen to your child's stories about the school day. Remember to ask specific questions about the day, play time, friends, snack, stories read, games played, not just "what did you do today?'
* Feel free to call on us. We'll be glad to help with any problems that may arise.

**XVI. Private School Applications**

The UPPS staff is happy to help families with all of the paperwork involved in applying to private schools, including transcript requests and teacher recommendation forms. A few guidelines that we require in this process:

1. Please allow a two-week minimum lead time ahead of deadlines to get us the paperwork. We may not be able to rush the completion of forms at the last minute.
2. Fill out all portions of the form that you are able so as to reduce the work for the UPPS staff.
3. Please include addressed, stamped envelopes with your forms.
4. We ask for a $10 cash fee for each school for which you ask us to fill out forms. For example, if you are applying for 3 schools, please turn in $30 with the forms that you turn in to us.