



PARENT HANDBOOK 2025-26

“Building a foundation for lifelong learning”

Floris UMC Preschool

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1. Philosophy

Floris United Methodist Church Preschool (Floris UMC Preschool) offers a program that fosters the wholesome development of each individual child. Using basic principles of early childhood and Christian education we provide a safe, friendly environment where children experience and learn love and acceptance. Much of this experience is accomplished through play situations and social interaction. Close rapport between parents and teachers allows the child to develop to his/her potential and satisfy his/her basic needs, including social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Our program accepts children without regard to race, color, creed, or religion.

1.1 Learning through Play

We believe that play is an effective method of learning. Play is a child's way of exploring, experimenting, and learning cooperative behavior. The teachers and assistants use play situations to provide beginnings in language, science, social studies, music, and creative arts. The program is developed through curriculum themes such as seasons, community helpers, holidays, and through stories and discussions. Each child is recognized as a productive individual as he/she develops self-confidence and feelings of self-worth.

1.2. Religious Affiliation

Floris UMC Preschool is operated as a ministry of Floris United Methodist Church and is subject to all church policies. Our mission at Floris UMC Preschool is to build a Christian foundation for lifelong learning. Through positive experiences and Christian values, the children appreciate God's love, which stays with them throughout their lives. Children of all faiths are accepted into the program. Staff are hired on an equal opportunity basis.

2. Organizational Structure

Following the Virginia State Licensing standards, any parent has the right to contact persons on the organization structure in the order listed below.

- Teachers/Assistants
- Assistant Director, Floris UMC Preschool
- Director, Floris UMC Preschool
- Director of GROW Ministries, Floris UMC
- Executive Pastor, Floris UMC
- Lead Pastor, Floris UMC

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a compliment or complaint, please contact the Fairfax Regional Office of School Services listed below.

**Fairfax Licensing Office
3959 Pender Drive, Suite 320
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(703) 934-1505**

3. Typical Preschool Class Day

3.1. Typical Two's Day

Good Morning!
Table Activities
Art Activities
Clean-Up Time
Hand Washing, Grace, and Snack
Circle Time
Outside Play
Center Time
Hand Washing, Grace, and Lunch
Clean-Up Time
Closing
Dismissal

3.2. Typical Three's and Four's Day

Welcome Children
Discuss Day's Activities
Children-Directed Activities & Center Times Including:
 Dramatic Play
 Large Motor Activities
 Blocks
 Manipulatives/Small Motor Activities
 Housekeeping
 Books
 Art Activities
Clean-Up Time
Hand Washing, Grace, and Lunch
Group Activities
Story
Songs and Finger plays
Auditory Perception and Memory Skills
Outside Play
Dismissal

Each preschool class has Music once a week with a dedicated Music teacher.

Each three-year-old and four-year-old class has Chapel time once a week. The two-year-old classes join Chapel in the spring.

Our four-year-old classes have Science each week with a dedicated Science teacher and Library time each month with a dedicated Librarian.

4. Record Keeping Policies

4.1. General

All children's records and personnel records are treated confidentially. Access to children's records is restricted to the Director, Assistant Director, and other specific staff, as situations warrant, at their discretion. Access to personnel records is restricted to the Preschool Director, the Preschool Assistant Director, the Floris UMC Director of GROW Ministries, the Floris UMC Executive Pastor, the Floris UMC Lead Pastor, and officials under the authority of the Code of Virginia.

Records, logs, and reports are kept current. Records and reports on children and staff shall be maintained and accessible to authorized persons for two years after termination of enrollment or employment, unless the current Fairfax County Department of Health Code requires a longer time span.

The main office of Floris United Methodist Church maintains files of reports of all fire and safety inspections done by Fairfax County, and records of inspections of asbestos containing material.

The Floris UMC Preschool Director shall maintain reports of inspection by the Fairfax County Health Department and/or Virginia Department of Education, Division of Licensing and always keep the current Certificate of Approval on display.

4.2. Children's Records

A separate file is maintained for each child for the current school year in the preschool's office. Each spring several links are emailed to the parents to provide the following information:

Enrollment Form Information

- The name, nickname (if any), sex, and birth date of the child
- Name, home address, and phone number of each custodial parent
- Work phone number and place of employment of each custodial parent
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of two local designated people to call in an emergency if the parent cannot be reached.
- Persons authorized to pick up the child. Appropriate legal paperwork shall be on file when the custodial parent requests the program not to release the child to the other parent.
- Doctor's name and phone number, child's allergies and intolerance to food, medicine, and other substance(s).
- Permission to photograph child and use them on social media.
- Permission to list child's name on class emails. (Distribution of child's name, parent emails and phone numbers on Floris UMC Preschool class lists is restricted to those in our program and church staff. Any other distribution is forbidden.)

Family Information Form

- Toilet habits and specific details, which assist the child in adjusting to the classroom.
- Information relating to referrals for special services for the child
- Identification of any additional programs or schools the child is concurrently attending.

Parent/School Contract

- Parent/guardian must read and check understanding and/or agree to each school policy.

Current Standard Health Form

- Authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, completed and signed by a physician.
- A physical is required for each new student enrolled in the preschool and must be in the preschool office by the middle of August or before the child's first day of school. Returning students do not need a new physical **if nothing medically** has changed for the child.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

- Parent/guardian agrees that he/she has received the handbook and will read and understand the policies and procedures of Floris UMC Preschool.

The student's file may also contain, but is not limited to:

- **Accident Reports** documenting any accidents or injuries, including minor ones, sustained by children at school and any first aid administered by the staff.
- **Authorization to Administer Medication** documenting medications necessary for life-threatening situations and signed by parent/guardian and physician.
- **Reports of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect** and the required notification procedures, if necessary.

The file may also contain reports of a missing child when local authorities have been contacted for help. In the unlikely event that a death occurs while a child attends Floris UMC Preschool, this is reported to the Virginia State Licensing Office within 24 hours and is included in the office files.

4.3. Financial Records

The Director maintains individual financial records for each family enrolled in Floris UMC Preschool. These records shall be kept confidential. Access to financial records is restricted to the Preschool Director, the Preschool Assistant Director, the Preschool Bookkeeper, and the Church Treasurer. The Preschool Director and Preschool Assistant Director have responsibility for the collection of overdue funds.

5. Health and Safety Policies

5.1. Health Regulation

According to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the County of Fairfax, each child must have a current Health Form on file. This form must be signed by his/her physician or a Health Department Official verifying adequate immunization and general good health. The Health Form is due mid-August of each year OR prior to the *first* day of school attendance. **The child is not permitted to attend until the Health Form is on file.**

If any child is found to carry long-term infectious disease that can be a threat to other children or adults in the program, the child is considered for dismissal.

5.2. Illness

If a child becomes ill during his/her preschool day, the staff determines the severity of the illness. If necessary, the parent or guardian is notified to pick up the child immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact persons listed as emergency contacts under the Medical/Emergency Information on the Preschool Enrollment are called to take the sick child home. If none of the contacts can be reached, the child is removed from the class to avoid spreading any contagious illness and remains with the director or the assistant director until a parent or emergency contact responds to the voice messages and/or emails. If a child is seriously ill, the director or assistant director calls 911 as needed and then notifies the parent. The child's well-being and safety are of primary concern. Please do not bring sick children to school.

The definition of a sick child includes but is not limited to any of the following:

- A cold accompanied by runny nose, coughing and sneezing.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher - please do not give your child Tylenol or Motrin and send him/her to school. You will be called to pick up your child after the medication wears off and the fever returns.
- Rash.

Please keep your child home from school for twenty-four hours after the last episode of any of the above conditions.

Remember, the best place for a sick child is at home in his/her own bed!

5.3 Medications

Floris UMC Preschool does not allow the use of medication including vitamins, aspirin, Tylenol, and cough drops during school hours. School personnel may be inexperienced in administering medicine. **Any necessary medication that can be taken before or after school should be administered by a parent or guardian.** Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the director. Exceptions are made for life-threatening situations (such as asthma or severe allergies). When an exception

is made, the child's parent/guardian and physician must complete and sign an Authorization to Administer Medication Form. Parents must hand deliver medication to the school office in the original container with the label intact. Expiration dates must be clearly indicated. Within one week after expiration date of the effective date of the medication, the parent or guardian must personally collect any unused portion. (The director destroys medications not claimed within that period.) A written record of the administration of the medication is maintained. The medication and the record of administration is kept in a locked cabinet in the preschool administrative office where access is limited to staff members.

5.4 Allergies

Prior to the start of school, parents are responsible for notifying the school of any allergies or other medical conditions pertaining to their child. This information must be listed on all pertinent enrollment forms required for registration. The director or assistant director is responsible for noting this information and passing it along to the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is responsible for posting a list of students' allergies in the classroom.

If a child has a severe allergy and the child's physician has written a prescription for EpiPen, one must be provided by the parent/guardian to Floris UMC Preschool so that it is always available for the child. This medication must be documented on the "Authorization to Administer Medication" Form. If a physician's orders include a repeat EpiPen injection, then the parent/guardian must supply the school with two EpiPens. Emergency injections are facilitated at Floris UMC Preschool by non-health professionals who have completed Medication Administration Training (MAT). Only pre-measured doses of Epinephrine may be given.

If there is a food allergy which can cause extreme reactions or requires special medication, the parent is asked to supply food from home each day for their child. The child then only consumes the food that comes from home. This is to ensure that the child does not consume any food that may cause an allergic reaction. In the event of special occasions that may be celebrated in the classroom, for example a birthday, the parent may be asked to provide snacks that can be stored in the school's freezer for those special occasions. It is the parent's responsibility to consult with the teacher and the director to determine if an allergy warrant restricting certain foods from coming into the classroom. Only upon verification of an allergy by a physician, may a particular food be banned from the classroom. In such a case, information is communicated to that child's class via email stating that, *"A child with a (type of) allergy is in this class. Please refrain from sending in the following items for lunch: (specifically list items)."* Although the child with the allergy may not be consuming the food, some allergies are so severe that the smell or residue of certain foods can cause a severe reaction. Floris UMC Preschool strives to be a nut free facility. **Due to severe nut allergies, nut products have been banned from Floris UMC Preschool.** However, due to the nature of the building, and the many groups that use the space, we cannot guarantee that all areas are in fact free from nut products. We appreciate the support and cooperation from parents and ask that any concerns regarding food allergies be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher and director. The health and safety of each child is paramount, and our current lunch procedure requires the cooperation of all.

Parents should notify the classroom teacher if they do not see the appropriate information concerning their child's allergies posted in the classroom. Parents should notify the director and teacher if an allergy is discovered during the school year.

5.5 Injured Child

If a child is injured during his/her preschool day, staff administers first aid.

The following procedure is followed in the event of a serious illness or injury:

1	The parent/guardian is contacted, or the person authorized to be called in case the parents cannot be reached.	
2	In an extreme emergency, 911 is called and asked to respond.	
3	If the child is transported to an emergency room:	
	3.1	The child is accompanied by the director or a staff member, at the parent's/guardian's expense. The child's file (which includes the Authorization for Emergency Treatment Form) is given to the paramedics on duty and accompanies the child to the hospital.
	3.2	The parents are notified and asked to meet the ambulance at the hospital if they cannot get to the school before the child is transported.

In an emergency, staff members from other classrooms may be called on to help with the class where the emergency occurred. A staff member always stays with the affected child for the child's comfort. The Director is also available to help the child if needed.

5.6 Head Lice

If there is a reported case of head lice in any classroom, the teacher notifies the director immediately. A child who is found to have head lice is isolated from the rest of the class and sent home immediately.

A notice from the office is sent home to the parents of each child who used the classroom. Every child is checked carefully. The room is stripped of all cloth materials. These items are sealed in plastic bags for 2 weeks. The carpeting is vacuumed at the beginning and end of each class.

Once the child identified as having head lice has been treated, they may return to school whereupon, they are checked for any residual lice nits. A child must be nit free before returning to the classroom.

The director or assistant director checks all the children's heads in the affected classroom until it is deemed unnecessary to do so (Usually one week).

6. General Policies

6.1 Communication

Each teacher communicates information about classroom activities and lessons to parents through a weekly newsletter sent via email.

As always, please feel welcome to check in at the preschool office and then proceed to visit your child's classroom. We encourage parents to come in and talk to the director or schedule an appointment as needed. The director is generally available by telephone on Mondays through Thursdays between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., and on Fridays between 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If the director is not available, please leave a phone message and your call is returned as promptly as possible.

Parents may also email the director or teacher requesting that the director or teacher phone them to answer questions or discuss concerns.

6.2 Prayer

Prayer is said during chapel time with the preschoolers. All classes say a prayer before snack and lunch is eaten.

6.3. Daily Class Schedule

Each classroom posts a general daily schedule. (This is a Virginia Commonwealth Licensing requirement).

6.4 Ratios

During the annual budget discussions, the Floris UMC Preschool class ratios (student-to-teacher) are determined. The ratios comply with the Virginia Commonwealth Standards.

6.5 Hand Washing

The Virginia Commonwealth Licensing guidelines require staff to wash their hands with soap and water prior to the start of class, before handling any food, after toileting, after wiping a child's nose, as well as other times during the day. These guidelines shall be the standard for Floris UMC Preschool.

6.6. Supervision of Children

The Floris UMC Preschool staff assumes responsibility for children when they enter the classroom or are escorted by a staff member on Floris UMC Preschool property. During designated class time, the staff members in charge of the class supervise the children. The staff is responsible for the class during music, chapel time, science, outdoor or indoor playtime, as well as during any special activities.

Children must always be within the hearing and vision range of the staff. The exception to this is when a child is in the bathroom. (If a prolonged period of time has passed, a teacher checks on the child.) If a child is being evaluated or tutored by Child Find personnel or another private resource person that has been prearranged by the parents, the teacher knows the child's whereabouts during the entire session. The director is notified of any person who is working with any of the children at Floris UMC Preschool.

6.7 Absences

Refunds in tuition are not granted for student absences, but we would appreciate it if parents would call or email the preschool office before the start of the school day to notify us that your child will be absent. The director or assistant director then notifies the child's classroom teacher of the absence.

6.8 Attendance Sheets

Each class shall have a class attendance sheet posted by the door to the classroom. It is the teacher's responsibility to take roll each day at the beginning of the class period. In the event of an evacuation (fire drill or otherwise), the teacher and assistant must bring the attendance sheet out with the class. The teacher checks to make sure that all children are accounted for during the evacuation.

6.9 Book Bags

Floris UMC Preschool provides each child with one open topped book bag during his/her tenure at the school. Additional bags may be purchased. The teacher puts a pin, folder, or envelope, on/in each child's bag for any communication that is to be sent home. Parents can also use the pin, folder, or envelope, to send communication back to the school. Floris UMC Preschool can only distribute items in book bags related to the Floris Preschool and/or Church (not for other schools, etc.)

The use of backpacks is strongly discouraged for two reasons: they are harder to get materials in and out of and are more difficult for young children to carry.

6.10 Clothing

School activities involve painting, outdoor play, active and on the floor play. Therefore, children's clothing should be durable, casual, and washable. Rubber soled shoes are required for school. For your child's safety, please do not send your child to school in clothing with drawstrings, or in sandals or party shoes. To aid in the development of self-help skills, it is important that your child wear clothing that is easily managed by the child at bathroom time, e.g., elastic waist vs. belts or overalls.

Each child needs to have a complete change of clothes (including socks, underpants, shorts, or pants, and a top) in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name stored at school at all times.

Two-year-old students also need two extra diapers, Pull-Ups® or pairs of underpants.

Appropriate outerwear should be worn depending on the weather. These items may include hats, hooded jackets, mittens, and boots. Please label all extra clothing with your child's first and last name.

6.11 Diaper Policy

Diaper changing is done in the two-year-old classes. Diapers are changed as needed. The diaper changing is done on the diaper-changing table. The staff person shall wear gloves when a diaper is being changed. Dirty diapers are placed in a plastic bag and the bag is tied and put into a trash can with a lid. The staff member changes gloves and uses a disinfectant solution to clean off the entire diaper changing area before changing another diaper.

Please do not dress your child in difficult clothing such as: overalls, belts, and complicated outfits. Changing diapers of twelve children with these items can become difficult and time consuming.

The two-year-old class staff work with you in assisting to toilet train your child when he or she reaches the stage that he/she is physically able to take care of bodily needs. We encourage the use of Pull-Up® diapers when toilet training at school, until the time that your child is reliably toilet trained. If it becomes necessary to change a Pull-Up®, the two-year-old class staff may put a child in a regular diaper because of the time involved in continuing to change Pull-Ups®.

Children need to be toilet trained for the three and four-year-old classes. Diaper changing is not done at preschool for these children. If a child has a urine accident more than once in a session, the parent or guardian will be called to come and change the child. If a child has a bowel movement accident, the parent or guardian are called immediately. The child is taken into the preschool office to wait with books, toys, and adult supervision until someone arrives. Parents of a child who is not toilet trained or regresses during the school year are consulted to explore the possibility of delaying enrollment.

6.12 Snack for Two-Year-Old Classes ONLY

Parents are asked to send snacks into their child's classroom on a rotating basis throughout the year. Teachers send home monthly snack calendars. We serve water as a beverage to all children during snack time. Parents provide **nutritious** snacks for the class. On your assigned day, please send enough snacks for the whole class.

Suggested preschool snacks include:

- Various vegetables with dip (a favorite!)
- Fresh fruit
- Fruit slices with dip
- Applesauce
- Cheese squares and pretzel sticks for skewers
- Crackers and cheese
- Bread with jam or honey to spread (cut bread with cookie cutter shapes!)
- Mini muffins
- Celery with cream cheese to spread
- Banana, zucchini, pumpkin, or apple bread
- Yogurt
- Animal crackers
- Teddy Grahams®
- Goldfish® crackers
- Graham crackers and milk

- Granola
- Cereal
- Finger Jell'O®
- Pudding
- Rice cakes
- Pretzels

To assist in preventing choking, please do not send popcorn, nuts, seeds, uncut grapes, or uncut raw carrot if food is to be served to children three years of age or younger.

Please check food labels for their ingredients and remember that we do not serve any foods at Floris UMC Preschool containing nut products. Also, please do not send candy, cookies, donuts, cake, or brownies.

6.13 Birthday Snacks

Floris UMC Preschool realizes that birthdays are very special to preschoolers. Please talk with your child's teacher to find out when the appropriate time is to celebrate in the classroom. Most teachers ask that you send a simple snack (cookies, mini-cupcakes, ice cream sandwiches) to celebrate your child. Typically, the celebration is as close as possible to your child's actual birthday. We ask that you do not send full-size cupcakes.

6.14 Room Parent(s)

Each class shall have at least one designated room parent. This parent or parents are the coordinators for the class activities that involve volunteers (Fall Festival, class parties, etc.). It is up to each teacher to designate the room parent(s) and pass on the duties that are expected for the parent(s) in that position. The director is given a list of all classroom parents. The teacher also notifies all the parents of children in his/her class the name of the classroom parent(s), so that if a parent has a question about any volunteer events, they know who to contact for the proper information.

6.15 Photographs

Photographs may only be taken of those children whose parents have given permission for photos to be taken. The permission consent is located on the Enrollment Form and is kept in the child's file. It is the responsibility of the staff to check each child's file prior to the start of school and to identify anyone who is **NOT** to have their picture taken in the class. If there is a need to take a child's picture for a classroom job chart, those parents who have requested that their child NOT be photographed may be contacted by the teacher for that specific purpose. Photographs may also be displayed on the preschool's website, Facebook page, Instagram account and/or any other social media outlet. Each class has a

Dojo account that is accessible only to that class. Teachers post pictures throughout the week, so you can see what your child is doing during the day.

A professional photographer takes both individual and group photographs during the school year. The photo package information is distributed to parents in advance.

6.16 Fundraising Activities

Fundraising activities are conducted in accordance with Floris United Methodist Church fundraising policies. The proceeds are used for specific needs as deemed necessary by the Preschool.

6.17 Chapel Time

Once a week the three-year-old and four-year-old preschool classes go into the chapel for chapel time. Beginning in the spring, the two-year-old classes join the rest of the school. Chapel time combines Bible stories and songs that affirm God's love for each child. Church staff lead each lesson. Chapel time themes work in conjunction with the themes taught in the classroom. Activities are kept simple and appropriate for the children's ages. It is the staff's responsibility to stay with the children and to monitor behavior.

7. Classroom Accommodations

7.1 Probationary Period

All enrollments are under a 4 week of school probationary period to ensure compatibility between the student and the program. For example, if the child begins school on September 1, the probationary period runs until October 1. Difficulties are communicated to the parent from the teacher and/or Director as early as possible, to aid in the adjustment/compatibility process. The Director has sole discretion to make the final determination on program compatibility.

7.2 Transition Policy

The beginning of school is an exciting time for everyone - teachers, mom, dad, and especially the child! Floris UMC Preschool realizes that for many students, preschool is their first experience with other children and adults. It is a new, fun adventure; but sometimes, school can be a difficult and challenging transition.

For this reason, Floris UMC Preschool developed the following policy to help the parents and teachers manage this transition:

If a child cries or is inconsolable for the first hour of school, the preschool administration calls the parent and asks that the child be picked up for the day. When the child is picked up, the teacher and/or the director speaks to parents about how to best manage the transition and make it easier for the child to function and participate in the classroom.

In most cases, the preschool follows these procedures to help the child ease into the classroom routine:

- When called at 10:00, the child needs to be picked up by 10:30.

- The child's pick-up time is kept at 10:30 for the rest of the week.
- The next week the child's pick-up time is extended if the child is adapting to the classroom.
- The teacher and/or director, with the help of the parents, continue to increase the time in school until the child is comfortable and can make it through the entire day without being upset.
- If after four weeks of school, the child is not making progress and is not adjusting to his/her time in school, the Director may ask the parent to withdraw the child from Floris UMC Preschool for the current school year.

Why do we have this policy?

Sometimes children are not socially or emotionally prepared for preschool, and they need a gradual introduction into the classroom setting. Even with this gradual step, a few children still need another year to mature and be able to manage a classroom situation. Research and practical experience show that a gradual introduction plan like the one above helps most children adapt in a short amount of time. The Director also has other approaches that can be discussed with parents as needed to help the child have a successful year!

7.3 Recognizing Developmental Concerns

Floris UMC Preschool staff are required to seek training in the field of child development. Based on this knowledge, if a teacher observes a behavior concern, the teacher follows the following procedures. When deemed necessary, the director and/or teacher pass on information about Fairfax County's Child Find program to parents. With the parents' permission, the staff cooperates with outside service professionals who may be serving the child's needs.

7.4 Children with Special Needs

The parent of a student with special needs must inform the Preschool Director that classroom accommodation is requested. If a child's special needs can be accommodated at Floris UMC Preschool, then the child is considered for enrollment. Parents of any child with special needs are informed that the Floris UMC Preschool staff is not trained in Special Education. Any accommodation takes into consideration the needs of all children in the classroom.

Although many individuals with special needs can be successful in the preschool setting without any additional accommodations, there are times barriers that keep some children from participating in the preschool setting. These barriers may be physical obstacles (such as inaccessible facilities or equipment), or they may be procedures or rules by our Licensing Agency, the Virginia Department of Education (such as rules concerning the safety of all children). The duty to provide

accommodation is a fundamental statutory requirement, within the school's limitations, because of the nature of discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities. As with any enrollment, there is a 4 weeks of school probation.

7.5 Classroom Accommodations Overview

In general, accommodation is any change in the preschool environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables a child with a unique need to enjoy equal access to the preschool environment. Floris UMC Preschool teachers are well-trained, and many minor accommodations are implemented throughout the school day to meet the developmental needs of all preschool students. Some examples of children who need classroom accommodations are those who cry excessively, have food allergies, are learning English as their second language, have a special educational need, or experience a physical disability. All children are unique, and Floris UMC Preschool strives to meet the needs of each of its students.

7.5.1 Two Categories of Accommodations

- Accommodation to the preschool class environment or to the manner/circumstance in which student perform the essential functions within the school routine.
- Accommodations to the class curriculum and activities that enable a preschooler with a special need to enjoy equal benefits as enjoyed by the children without a special need.

The limitation on the preschool's obligation to provide accommodation is that no such change is implemented if it would cause undue hardship to the preschool. Undue hardship refers to financial difficulty, as well as to changes that would fundamentally alter the philosophy or operation of the preschool. The preschool assesses on a case-by-case basis whether a particular accommodation would cause undue hardship.

7.6 Procedures

Using basic principles of early childhood and Christian education, when it becomes evident that a child in the program requires extra care in the context of the classroom, the follow procedures are implemented:

7.6.1 Known Accommodation at Time of Registration

- The director contacts the parents and requests more information regarding services that the child may already be receiving. The director decides whether there are any accommodations needed. If the scope of the accommodations cannot be met, the parents of the child are guided toward other alternatives that may better meet the needs of the child.
If the accommodations are within the scope of the preschool ability, the parent meets with the director and the teacher prior to the start

of school. At that time, the team develops a clear outline of accommodations. The teacher documents the progress and communicates the findings to the director and parents within the first two weeks of school.

The team (director, teacher, and parents) determines if further accommodations or another meeting is necessary. Accommodations can be altered or added to as needed. If preschool documentation indicates a lack of significant progress, the parents of the child are guided toward other alternatives that may better meet the needs of the child.

7.6.2 Accommodation Needed after the Start of School

- A staff member documents and notifies the director as soon as possible (within 2-3 weeks) that there exists the possibility of a child needing classroom accommodation. This accommodation could be due to, but not limited to, the child's difficulty transitioning to the educational setting, i.e., excessive crying, vomiting, exhibiting other signs of stress; behavior that compromises the safety of other children or staff or having additional special needs beyond the scope of what is traditionally provided.
- The director observes in the classroom and has the teacher document the findings. The director, with input from the child's teacher, decides whether accommodations are needed. The director contacts the parents to communicate the findings.
- The team (director, teacher, and parents) meets to develop a clear outline of accommodations. The teacher documents the progress and communicates the findings to the director and parents for two weeks.
- The team (director, teacher, and parents) determines if further accommodations or another meeting is necessary. Accommodations can be altered or added to as needed. If preschool documentation indicates a lack of significant progress, the parents of the child are guided toward other alternatives that may better meet the needs of the child.

8. Preschool Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies

8.1 Drop-Off and Pick-Up in Preschool Lobby

If a parent chooses not to participate in carpool, please observe the following procedures for both drop-off and pick-up.

Park your car in the church's upper parking lot. Enter through the church's main entrance and either take the stairs or the elevator to the first floor and wait in the preschool lobby.

8.2 Carpool Tags

The assistant director makes a name tag to be used by all carpool parents. If you develop a carpool with other families, each family is given the names of all individuals in the carpool. A visor clip is given to each family, so you can display the name tags on the passenger side visor. Utilizing this clip makes it easier for the preschool staff to see the child's name.

8.3 Carpool Arrival

Carpool Arrival begins at 9:00am each morning. During arrival, staff members are outside unloading 3-4 cars at a time. A teacher will take your child out of your car. Then your child is escorted to the playground gate and then he/she walks across the playground to their classroom doors where one of their teachers is waiting. Arrival is over at 9:15 and the preschool doors are closed at that time. If a child arrives after the carpool arrival finishes, the parent must park their vehicle, and then escort the child to the classroom. Dropping children off when a staff member is not present in the carpool line or carpool lobby is prohibited.

NOTE: Parents are NOT TO LEAVE their children until a teacher has acknowledged that she is responsible for your child. Children are not to be left in a preschool classroom without a teacher present or in the preschool lobby prior to the start of carpool.

8.4 Carpool Dismissal

Staff members line up under the preschool awning to put children into their cars. The preschool director is halfway down the sidewalk and radios to the assistant director the names of the next preschoolers in the carpool line. Those children walk to the teachers under the awning. Each child is then escorted to his/her car by a teacher.

If there is an unfamiliar car or driver, identification is requested. If the name is not on the carpool list, the director or assistant director looks in the student's file to see if the driver is listed on the Pick-Up Authorization Form. A child is only released with proper parent permission.

In cases where children are going home with a schoolmate after class, parents of each child need to send in a signed and dated note indicating the arrangements.

All children and parents are requested to depart the premises in a timely manner after class, so that staff can clean up at the end of the day.

All preschool staff members rotate the carpool duties.

Staff members put a child into the car, but it is the carpool driver's responsibility to buckle each preschooler into a car seat or seatbelt.

8.5 Late Pick-Up

Dismissal ends at 1:15pm each afternoon. If you arrive one to fifteen minutes late after 1:15pm to pick up your child, you receive a written warning for this first-time offense. You are given a 15-minute grace period (1:15-1:30) for your first late pick-up. During this first offense, if you are more than 30 minutes late, you are charged the fee of \$10 for the next five minutes (minutes 31-35) and \$5 for each additional 5-minute increment (minutes 36-40, 41-45, and so forth).

On the second and subsequent late pick-up offenses, you are charged a late pick-up fee for each child that you are picking up. Here are the specifics:

- There is a five-minute grace period (1:15-1:20pm). If you continually come during the grace period, you are given a written warning.
- A fee of **\$10.00 PER CHILD** for the first five minutes after the grace period is charged.
- The fee continues to accrue at a rate of \$5.00 PER CHILD for each additional five-minute increment that you are late. EXAMPLE: You pick up two children and arrive twenty minutes after the class dismissal time. The late pick-up charge would be \$20.00 PER CHILD and is assessed to the carpool driver. If, in this example, carpool ends at 1:15 p.m. and you arrived at 1:35 p.m., the late charges are assessed as follows:

1:15 - 1:20	<i>No Charge for this first five-minute grace period</i>
1:20 - 1:25	<i>\$10.00 fee assessed per child</i>
1:25 - 1:30	<i>\$ 5.00 fee assessed per child</i>
1:30 - 1:35	<i>\$ 5.00 fee assessed per child</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$20.00 fee assessed per child</i>

- Please call if you know you will be late. If this is the second time you are late you ARE charged the late pick-up fee. However, your call helps us communicate with your child.
- Late pick-up fees must be paid before the child's next school day. The driver's child cannot return to class until the fee is paid.
- This policy is also in effect when Fairfax County Public Schools close early. Please make the necessary arrangements to ensure adequate transportation is available.

After the fourth late pick-up offense, your child is considered for dismissal from the program. Please remember that being late can be upsetting to your child and might prevent our staff from getting home on time for their own children.

9. Tuition, School Fees, and Tuition Assistance Policies

9.1 Tuition and School Fees

Tuition amount and due dates as well as **non-refundable** Registration and Supply Fees are specified in your Parent/School Contract.

A past due payment fee of \$25.00 is assessed if your tuition payment is not received by the 5th of the month. After the third violation your child is withdrawn from the program unless arrangements have been set up with the Preschool Director and the Director of the Floris UMC GROW Ministries.

A returned check fee of \$15.00 is assessed for all returned checks.

If the school is closed temporarily due to a health precaution, weather conditions or any other reason beyond the control of the school, normal tuition fees shall accrue.

9.2 Extended Leave and Withdrawal Policy

If a child takes Extended Leave from the preschool program for **ANY** reason, the family is still responsible for paying all tuition fees due during the child's period of absence. These fees must be paid to hold your child's position in the preschool. For example: If your child is gone during the months of November and December, you must pay the November and December tuition for your child to return to school in January. If tuition is not paid on time, the vacancy is filled. If there is a vacancy when the child wishes to return to the preschool, the family needs to re-register; another registration fee is charged; and all unpaid tuition must be paid.

For the child to be eligible for re-enrollment for the remainder of the current year and/or subsequent school years, the family must be in good financial standing with the Preschool. To be in good financial standing, you must pay all owed monthly tuition and other fees that may be due.

Thirty (30) days written notice must be given to Floris UMC Preschool before withdrawing a child. If the preschool is given less than thirty (30) days written notice, you are responsible for paying for the next month's tuition.

Written notification of withdrawal prior to the start of school must be received by **JULY 25, 2025**, to receive a refund of the prepaid May tuition. After this date, the May tuition is nonrefundable and cannot be applied to your last month's tuition.

If you withdraw your child from the preschool after **JANUARY 1, 2026**, you are responsible for the tuition for all remaining months of the school year - **January, February, March, and April 2026**.

NO exceptions are made to this policy.

Any/all non-payment of the monthly tuition may result in a child's permanent dismissal from preschool.

9.3 Tuition Assistance

Full and partial tuition assistance is available for families in temporary or ongoing need. Floris UMC Preschool provides the funds for financial aid. Donations for the Tuition Assistance Fund are appreciated and accepted at any time and are fully tax deductible.

Temporary assistance is defined as financial aid required for one to three months. Temporary assistance may consist of Floris UMC Preschool waiving the full amount or a percentage of the monthly tuition.

Ongoing assistance is defined as financial aid required for four or more months. Ongoing assistance most often consists of full or partial tuition assistance for an entire school year. Tuition assistance for an entire school year can include registration and supply fees.

9.4 Tuition Assistance Philosophy

Floris UMC Preschool is operated as an outreach of Floris United Methodist Church. In keeping with the church's desire to provide services to the community, it is the goal of Floris UMC Preschool to provide space and tuition funds for at least one child in each of the three class levels (2's, 3's and 4's). These spaces allow a child who would otherwise be unable to benefit from a preschool educational experience to attend Floris UMC Preschool. It is the goal of Floris UMC Preschool and Floris UMC to nurture a child through three full years of early childhood education and Christian education.

9.5 Procedure for Tuition Assistance

The Tuition Assistance Subcommittee oversees the procedures for tuition assistance. This subcommittee consists of the Preschool Director, the Floris UMC Treasurer, and the Floris UMC Director of GROW Ministries.

A family may verbally request tuition assistance, or a family may be identified by: the director's observation, the Floris UMC Pastor, a church member, or another Floris UMC Preschool family. The director discusses the tuition assistance policy with the parent or guardian. The director and treasurer have the discretion to waive a portion of or the full amount of one to three months' tuition cost. The director removes personal names from the form to provide confidentiality. When the subcommittee has decided, the director notifies the family.

It is the goal of Floris UMC Preschool to identify students receiving full tuition assistance prior to the start of the school year to facilitate budgetary considerations. The Floris UMC Preschool staff shall maintain confidentiality of the children and families receiving tuition assistance.

10. Fire and Safety Policies

10.1 Fire and Emergency Plans

Instructions for Staff on Fire Alarm Activation

When the fire alarm is activated, the staff follows the following procedure:

1	Stop all activities and start evacuation.
2	One staff member directs the children toward the exit and leads them out of the building using the specified escape route. Another staff member checks the bathroom to make sure no child is left behind, carries the attendance record, turns off lights, closes the door and follows the group.
3	All occupants remain outside where a head count is taken. The Director is informed of this count immediately.
4	Occupants must remain outside until on-site fire personnel determine that they can safely return to the building.

Instructions for Staff upon Discovery of an Emergency

Upon discovery of an emergency, the following procedure is followed:

1	A staff member initiates evacuation by activating the fire alarm system on any manual pull station throughout the building. The locations of the stations are clearly marked on the Emergency Evacuation Plan posted in every classroom.
2	Staff informs the Director, who then calls 911.
3	Staff, whenever possible, returns to his/her assigned position and help with the evacuation.

Emergency Information

Emergency information and contacts are posted in a prominent location in the preschool office.

Fire Drill Information

Fire drills are conducted once a month and shall be held at different hours of the school day. The director informs teachers of the approximate time. The actual activation of the fire alarm system is used to start the evacuation. Occupants are expected to follow the same procedures that would be followed in case of actual fire. A record is kept with the following information: date, time of day, evacuation time, number of children and their ages, and observations like weather conditions and how well the procedures were followed.

Bomb Threat

Upon receiving a bomb threat, staff should initiate evacuation by blowing a whistle; then notify the director who calls the police. Occupants should remain outside until the on-site police person determines it is safe to occupy the building.

Natural Disaster

Upon discovery of an impending natural disaster, occupants seek refuge in an indoor room, preferably away from doors and windows. A battery-operated radio and flashlight are available in the office. The director monitors the progress of the situation on the radio to determine when it is safe to return to the normal routine.

10.2 General Safety Plan

Floris UMC Preschool seeks to provide a safe and protected environment for the children, parents, and staff.

10.2.1 Classroom and Playroom

- Staff are always alert to the activity of all children.
- Toys and learning activities are age-appropriate, kept clean and in safe working conditions.
- Children are not allowed to climb on top of tables, furniture, or counters.

10.2.2 Playground Safety

- Two adults are in the play area with each class.
- One adult is next to the climbing apparatus any time a child is on that piece of equipment.
- The gate is closed and latched when any children are in the play area.
- Throwing mulch, sand or toys is not tolerated.
- Staff are attentive to children while in the play area.
- Climbing the fence is not permitted, nor is improper use of any of the play equipment tolerated.
- Going up stairs to the small slide is done one child at a time, in single file.
- Going down the slide is done in a sitting position with only one child going down the slide at a time.
- Children are encouraged to walk, not run, when entering and leaving the play area.
- Broken or unsafe equipment in the play area is reported to the director immediately.
- The depth of the protective ground cover in the play area will be monitored periodically to ensure that it is in accordance with Virginia State Licensing requirements.

10.2.3 General Policies

- A telephone is available to the staff.
- The furnace and air conditioning equipment are isolated from the children.
- Carpets are flame retardant.
- Windows have adequate protection - sturdy screens and safety locks.

- Children are always supervised.
- The outdoor playground is fenced and has gates that latch closed.
- All paint and art supplies are non-toxic.
- Cleaning supplies for classrooms are out of reach of children and storage rooms are locked.
- Electrical outlets are covered by childproof covers when the outlets are accessible to children. There are no power cords or extension cords exposed to children.
- Burned-out light bulbs are reported immediately. There is a working flashlight available.
- Batteries & flashlights are located in the preschool teacher work room.
- Floris UMC Preschool is equipped with a sprinkler system.
- A battery-operated radio is located in the director's office.

11. Weather Emergencies

11.1 Inclement Weather

If you feel road conditions are dangerous and want to pick your child up early, please feel free to do so at any time. The Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) policy is our guideline, but YOU are the best judge of what you think is safe for you and your child.

It is your responsibility to know when the county schools are closed.

Announcements of school closings are communicated via television on Channel 21 or on radio stations like WTOP at AM 1500 / FM 107.7. The preschool also participates in SlickText (SMS and MMS Marketing Service) and sends text messages regarding delays and/or closings. You are always welcome to email us, and we will pass on closing information. We follow FCPS for closings due to inclement weather. School may also be closed or have a delayed opening at the director's discretion. If the director closes school and Fairfax County Public Schools have not done so, parents are notified by email and/or text message. **Days the school is closed due to inclement weather are not made-up.**

Late Openings

Two hour delayed opening	• Morning classes begin two hours late (11:00) and end one hour (2:00) after the regular dismissal time
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Early Closings

If FCPS announces an early closing **BEFORE 11:00 am**, classes **end at 12:00 noon**.

REMEMBER: You may pick your child up early at any time.

12. Policies on Staff-Parent Interaction

12.1 Assessments

Student assessments are conducted at least once during the school year by the teacher to communicate the child's progress and well-being. The parent, teacher or director may request a conference at any time.

All questions of policy and procedure, school schedules, and finances should be referred to the director.

12.2 Visitation

Parents are WELCOME to visit the school at any time, from the end of September through May. September is a time for children to become familiar with one another and to become comfortable being separated from their parents. We want you to look into our busy, happy, creative classrooms and see your children in action as often as you like. It is not necessary to call ahead; however, it is required to check with the director or assistant director prior to entering any classroom. The teacher is not able to have individual discussions during class sessions but is available by appointment. If any visitor is disruptive to a class in any way, the visitor is asked to leave.

12.3 Confidentiality

Floris UMC Preschool stresses the importance of protecting the rights of privacy of children, their families, and our staff members. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our program. It is critical that the confidences of children and their parents and those of Floris UMC Preschool staff members are not repeated to other parents, staff members, friends, family members or other students. The identity of children and their families should be revealed only in cases of professional necessity. Staff members' rights are likewise protected.

13. Policy for Discipline and Guidance of Children

13.1 General

The concept of developmental appropriateness shall be applied to the discipline and guidance of children. Guidance and discipline are age appropriate and appropriate for the individual.

13.2 Procedures

Staff members of Floris UMC Preschool treat all children with respect and acceptance regardless of race, religion, or culture. Children of both sexes have equal opportunities to engage in all activities.

Understanding the behavior of children in the age range we serve (2 through 5 years) is the basis for appropriate guidance and discipline. Young children are occasionally messy, show interest in body parts, experiment with new words that

may not be acceptable in the classroom, cry, resist guidance, occasionally be aggressive and disregard rules. Staff members understand this and respond with love and patience.

Our goal is to facilitate the development of self-control in children. Some techniques to achieve this goal are:

- to set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom and playground behavior.
- redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activities.
- listen to the children talk about their feelings.
- guide the children to solve their own problems and resolve their own conflicts.
- remind children of rules only as necessary, and with patience.
- use the word NO only when safety is at issue.
- use positively worded direction (ex. "Use indoor voices." instead of "Don't shout.").
- encourage expected behavior and MODEL expected behavior; and
- arrange classrooms in a way that promotes desirable behavior.

The Virginia Department of Social Services requires that a list of unacceptable methods of discipline be available to parents.

Unacceptable Methods of Discipline

- A staff member shall not shake a child at any time.
- A staff member shall neither force nor withhold food from a child.
- A child shall not be punished for a toileting accident.
- Verbal abuse of a child or the child's family is not acceptable.
- Physical punishment or disciplinary action to the child's body such as, but not limited to the following actions are prohibited: spanking; forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position; standing on one foot; keeping arms raised above or horizontal to the body; restraining to restrict movement through binding or tying; using exercise as punishment.

Unacceptable Adult Behavior toward Children

The following are adult behaviors that are never acceptable toward children:

- Screaming
- Neglect
- Inflicting physical or emotional pain
- Blaming, teasing, insulting, name-calling, threatening
- Using frightening or humiliating punishment
- Laughing at children's behavior
- Discussing children's behavior with other staff members in the presence of children

Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma

Our staff is trained to recognize any abuse and to help to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma. Staff will be trained to recognize the potential signs and symptoms and learning strategies for coping including a crying or distraught child. As part of our licensing requirements, our staff are trained annually in child abuse and neglect reporting. The school staff

has a moral and legal responsibility to protect children from suspected abuse.

13.3 Policies and Procedures Relating to Behavioral Issues

13.3.1 Aggressive Behavior

It is recognized that incidents of aggressive behavior occur in the childcare setting. This negative behavior may be one way a toddler or older non-verbal child expresses negative feelings. These behaviors may include kicking, hitting (with hand or objects), and biting.

When an incident of aggressive behavior occurs, the following procedure are followed:

1	A staff member notifies the director as soon as possible when an incident of aggressive behavior occurs.	
2	When a child deliberately hurts or bites another child or an adult, the adult response is as follows:	
	2.1	Talk to the aggressor. Explain calmly, but firmly, that inappropriate behavior is not allowed. Encourage an apology.
	2.2	Calm the child who has been hurt. If there is a wound, take appropriate actions and administer first aid.
	2.3	Examine the environment to see if external factors might have contributed to the aggressive response. Document the circumstances surrounding the incident.
	2.4	The teacher or assistant records the incident and files it appropriately.
	2.5	A written Incident Report is given to the parent. The name of the aggressor must be kept confidential and is not included in the report. If the injury is serious, or looks serious, contact the victim's parents to notify them of the injury as soon as possible.
3	The teacher and/or the director talks to the parent of the aggressor. The parent needs to understand that the faculty and staff are firm about setting limits and encourage the parent to also be firm. Work with the parent to try to understand what might be causing the aggressive behavior.	
4	The second offense by the aggressor is managed by calling the parents and having them take their child home from school immediately. A time of suspension could be imposed for multiple offenses. The parent is responsible for tuition payments during the time of suspension.	
5	If a child's behavior is continually aggressive or endangers the safety of others in the class, the parent receives written notification that the child is removed from the program. NO REFUNDS are given for the month that the child is removed.	

13.3.2 Disruptive Behavior

Using basic principles of early childhood and Christian education, we strive to provide a safe, friendly environment where children experience and learn love and acceptance. Every effort is made to teach acceptable behavior choices. However, some behaviors cannot be accepted. Examples of unacceptable behavior can include disruptive behaviors, ongoing separation issues, sensory integration, and safety issues. Considerations are based on appropriate developmental stages.

When ongoing unacceptable behavior(s) occurs, your child's preschool team, which may consist of the teacher, the director, and parent(s), meet. Together they determine the appropriate action to be taken.

If a child's behavior is continually disruptive or endangers the safety of others in the class, the parent receives written notification that the child is removed from the program. NO REFUNDS are given for the month that the child is removed.

14. Child Abuse and Neglect

Floris UMC Preschool follows the child abuse and neglect policies and procedures established in the Floris United Methodist Church's "Child and Student Protection Policy and Procedures." You may see the policy in its entirety here:

<http://www.florisumc.org/policies-child-safety/>.

- Staff are made aware of the definition of an abused or neglected child and the signs of child abuse or neglect.
- When a child is checked for illness or injury, two staff members are present.
- Doors to the bathrooms are always open when an adult is in the bathroom with a child. Staff and adult visitors are to only use the public restrooms in the main hallway. Staff assisting children with toileting or who are diapering children, are always in sight of other staff or children.
- Written records are kept of any complaint from a child or any eyewitness accounts of abuse or neglect.

Criminal Record checks are required for all staff members who work directly with the children on a part-time or full-time basis. Volunteer parents who work occasionally with the children and who are never left alone to supervise the children do not require Criminal Record checks.

14.1 Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Repeated injuries such as bruises, welts, or burns. Angry, depressed, aggressive, or withdrawn child, or a child who is afraid to go home.
- A malnourished, unhappy child, inadequately dressed, physically dirty, tired, left alone frequently.
- A child whose health needs are ignored.
- A child who is 12 years old or younger who has a venereal disease. (This is a sign that may not be detected by a preschool teacher; however, pain at

urination, verbal reports by the child or sex play may indicate the need for reporting.)

If any staff member of Floris UMC Preschool suspects that a child is being neglected or abused, the incident is documented and reported to the Social Service Department of the State of Virginia. The staff is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

The following procedure is followed:

1	If a child tells a staff member that someone has hurt him/her, the staff member immediately reports to the director and writes a report to put in the child's file.
2	The director talks calmly and confidentially to the child.
3	The director may consult with the Director of the GROW Ministries and/or the Pastor.
4	The director may, if advisable, consult with the involved parent.
5	If deemed necessary and there is true suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the director contacts the Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services in Fairfax County as required by law.

15. Missing Child

In the event a child is missing from Floris UMC Preschool the following procedures are followed:

1	The director and the assistant teacher of the class that has reported a missing child makes an immediate search of the area.
2	The teacher remains with the class.
3	The parents or guardians are notified.
4	The church staff are notified of the situation if it is applicable.
5	The director or person in charge notifies the proper authorities and report all information upon their arrival.
6	The state Social Services Department notified within 24 hours.