

Bakerstown United Methodist Church Day School

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Parent Handbook 2023-2024

**The contents of this handbook are subject to change based on the CDC guidelines
and regulations.**

**Bakerstown United Methodist Church Day School
Parent Handbook**

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**The Staff of the
Bakerstown United Methodist Church
Day School Program
Welcomes You!**

We feel privileged that you have chosen our program as a part of your life-long investment into your child's mind, body, heart, soul, and future! We believe that your child will gain a meaningful educational foundation in the context of Christian faith and values. At our school your child will grow in a well-rounded environment. We will provide activities and curriculum that allow each child to express his or herself, experience freedom of choice, and develop self-reliance. We are excited to have your family a part of our Day School family!

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OUR PURPOSE—WHY We're Here

The purpose of the Bakerstown United Methodist Church Day School Program is to partner with parents in providing education in a way that reflects the love of God and respects the educational and social needs of each child.

OUR PHILOSOPHY—WHAT We Value

Our distinctive philosophy of early childhood education is summarized by the following attitudes and values:

- **FAITH:** We believe in the truth of the Christian faith and that it is a necessary component of life. Therefore, we gladly provide a caring, encouraging atmosphere where each child can experience and live out Christian faith and values. As you peruse our Program Goals, you will see that our faith is not just a part of our program; rather, it influences everything that we do.
- **ACCEPTANCE:** We open the doors of our program to all people and we will happily welcome any child without regard for race or religious creed. We encourage parents to schedule visits, to ask questions, and to sign up for volunteer activities. Our staff is willing to meet with parents to discuss any aspect of our program.
- **GROWTH:** We understand that children have many diverse educational and developmental needs: cognitive, emotional, physical, and social. The content of our curriculum is relevant in addressing these diverse needs, and our style of teaching is geared to creatively stimulate in each child a passion for learning and growth.
- **EXCELLENCE:** We have set the highest standards for our program in choosing staff with professional training, personal integrity, and vocational passion for nurturing young children.

OUR PROGRAM GOALS—HOW We Teach

1. **SELF-ESTEEM:** We believe that each child is uniquely created in God's image and has a dignity and worth beyond measure. Therefore, we will:
 - Create an atmosphere in which each child is accepted and loved unconditionally.
 - Provide a loving, nurturing environment where the child may reach his or her potential and develop a sense of confidence and self-worth.
 - Provide individual, special attention for a child when needed or requested by the child's parents.
 - Help the child deal with separation and dependence issues, that he or she can become secure in his or her own person.
 - Help each child feel special by acknowledging his or her accomplishments and the special events in his or her life.
 - Honor and respect the differences in each child.
2. **COGNITIVE:** We believe that God created the natural world and that He has called us to use our minds to understand and shape the world. Therefore, we will:
 - Inspire in each child a sense of wonder and discovery with respect to all of the world's beauty and possibilities.
 - Provide opportunities and scientific experiments in which the child may use all five senses in learning about the world.
 - Encourage the child to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and basic mathematical skills.
 - Help the child learn skills of sorting, classifying, sequencing, and measuring.
 - Instill in the child the importance of caring for the environment.

3. **CREATIVE: We believe that God has given human beings the ability and the passion for creative expression. Therefore, we will:**
 - Encourage each child to use his or her imagination through dramatic play and the freedom to choose activities.
 - Creatively present the religious significance of various holidays.
 - Provide activities using different textures, blocks, songs, stories, and art that emphasize the process of creating.
 - Encourage individuality and creativity through chalk, colors, collage materials, and various paints.

4. **VERBAL/LINGUISTIC: We believe that God has blessed humans with the capacity for speech and language for communication with Him and with others. Therefore, we will:**
 - Engage the child in conversations, encouraging him or her to use words and names.
 - Encourage the child to speak in complete sentences.
 - Assist the child in responding to open-ended questions.
 - Utilize nursery rhymes, songs, finger plays, poems, and stories to develop in each child a love of language.
 - Begin the process of reading by assisting the child in comprehending the look and sound of letters.
 - Provide opportunities for the child to follow simple directions.
 - Express our thankfulness to God through prayer.
 - Utilize story times, songs, and creative expression to help the child understand basic biblical truths.

5. **PHYSICAL: We believe God desires that we strengthen and care for our bodies. Therefore, we will:**
 - Ensure that our facilities and equipment provide a safe environment for learning and play.
 - Teach each child clear rules of safety and behavior.
 - Assist the child in developing personal hygiene and healthy behaviors.
 - Provide activities which enable the child to develop large motor skills: climbing, walking, running, jumping, dancing, creative movement, pushing and pulling various objects.
 - Provide fine motor development by engaging the child in art activities, pouring/sifting/filling/dumping activities, using scissors, gluing, shape sorting, puzzles, peg boards, beads, and blocks.

6. **SOCIAL: We believe that God is just and holds us accountable for our actions. Therefore, we will:**
 - Provide the child with role models for positive social interactions.
 - Encourage the child to take turns, to get along with peers, to respect the rights of others and the authority of adults, to wait patiently, and to begin to understand the feelings of others.
 - Encourage kindness, caring, cooperation, and good manners.
 - Reveal God's grace by showing graciousness and love to each child and guiding him or her to make good choices in the classroom.

***Our curriculum follows PA State Standards for Early Childhood Education. We have relationships with the local school districts that we filter into, keeping up to date on all that is expected in Kindergarten and First Grade, ensuring a smooth transition into Kindergarten and life beyond. Education is ever changing, and it is our priority that our program remain current and relevant for today.**

OUR PROGRAMS

2 YEAR OLD CLASSES

This program is available to children who have reached the age of 2 by September 1st. Our two year old program is designed to provide a loving environment in which your child can begin to develop independence as well as socialization and communication skills. Children enrolled in this class do not need to be potty trained.

3 YEAR-OLD CLASSES

This program is available to children who have reached the age of three by September 1st and are potty-trained. While the primary focus of the program will be on fostering the child's social and emotional development, our activities and games will include the mastery of basic, age appropriate cognitive skills.

3 Day Pre-K CLASSES

This program is available to children who have reached the age of four before September 1st. There will be a much more defined emphasis on cognitive development, including age-appropriate literacy and mathematical skills, with the ultimate goal of kindergarten readiness. Activities will continue to address the child's social and emotional development as well.

4 Day PRE-K CLASSES

This program is available to children who have reached the age of four before September 1st. The Pre-K program is a kindergarten readiness program with an emphasis on social, emotional as well as academic development. Following state standards for Pre-Kindergarten, this program prepares children for a smooth transition into Kindergarten. Reading and math readiness, hands on science exploration, art and music appreciation, writing and journaling are all a part of the daily routine.

Full Day Kindergarten

Our Full Day Kindergarten offers a faith based, back to basics curriculum. Our little school has the perfect combination of amazing teachers, a curriculum in line with PA state standards for Kindergarten, and a supportive and praying church congregation. The Kindergarten is the next step in our unique, excellent day school program. Our small class size allows us to form bonds with each child and their family. Because we are an all-day program, teachers can guide the children through hands on learning at a relaxed pace. This guided interaction with peers promotes positive social and life skills that will go with them in their educational journey. We use a hands-on, back to basics approach promoting creative thinking and greater retention. This coupled with daily outdoor or indoor large motor time allows the children time to interact with each other as well as refresh their minds and stretch their muscles allowing them to focus.

Our program will focus on a healthy balance of faith, academics, social, and emotional opportunities and growth. We love to create with our hands from building to painting and everything in between. We look forward to participating in service and outreach projects both locally and globally. Families will have an opportunity to participate with us as we make a positive impact on our neighbors in need.

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OUR PROCEDURES—HOW We Operate

REGISTRATION FEE

There is a yearly, registration fee of \$50.00. This fee—along with the last month's tuition payment—must be paid to the Preschool at the time of registration. **The registration fee AND the tuition payment are non-refundable.** This tuition payment is applied to May.

ENRICHMENT FEE

The enrichment fee of \$25.00 is a one time fee for children enrolled in the 3 Day Pre-k classes, 4 Day Pre-K classes and Kindergarten. This is paid at the time of registration. **The enrichment fee is non-refundable.**

TUITION PAYMENTS

The calculated tuition is an annual fee, divided into nine equal payments, which must be paid by the first day of each month. Your monthly payment remains constant, regardless of your child's attendance. Please enroll in your bank's automatic payments to be payable by the first of the months September through April.

LATE PAYMENT OF TUITION FEE

Tuition is due no later than the first day of each month. A fee of \$15.00 will be assessed every seven days the tuition is late. If payments are habitually late, the student may be dismissed from the program, at the discretion of the Preschool Director.

RETURNED CHECK CHARGE

If a check is returned to us, any and all charges by the bank will be passed on to the check writer.

TUITION SCHOLARSHIP

Please speak with the Director if you have need of financial assistance in the form of tuition scholarships. The Director will keep in the strictest confidence any conversations in this regard.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

To ensure your child's comfort in the preschool setting, please be prompt in picking him or her up at dismissal time. Parents who fail to pick up their child at the regular dismissal time will be assessed a \$10.00 fee for the first fifteen minutes (or less), and \$1.00 for every additional minute late. Frequent late pick-ups may be cause for dismissal from the program.

SNACK

Parents are to provide a small, healthy snack and drink for their child each day in a lunch box or bag with your child's name on it. Please remember, we are a nut free school; do not send in anything with peanut butter or nuts of any kind.

BIRTHDAYS

We look forward to celebrating your child's birthday. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher if you wish to send in a treat on that special day. From our experience, simple cookies and donut holes are always a hit. We ask that you do not send in cupcakes or cake. Also, please check with your child's teacher for any potential food allergies.

ABSENCES

Please report all absences to the Director prior to the beginning of class on the day of the absence, so the teacher can begin class on time instead of waiting for your child to arrive. Please give the teacher or director 1 week advance notice for all vacations.

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VISITORS

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, the church building is locked during the school day. If you need access to the building, please call the day school phone at 724-272-6032.

HEALTH

Upon enrollment of your child, you must submit a health form signed by a physician, as well as an immunization record, OR an exemption letter signed and dated. You must also sign a consent form agreeing to medical care of your child by a physician in the event of an injury or other health emergency.

If your child shows symptoms of illness while in our care, he or she will be removed from activity with other children, made comfortable, and parents will immediately be contacted.

Please show consideration for your child, as well as others in the program, by keeping your child home from school if he or she has, or has had within the past 24 hours, obvious symptoms such as fever, nasal discharge, cough, headache, diarrhea, upset stomach, or lack of sleep.

ILLNESS

A child must be kept home if he/she has had a fever over 99 degrees in the past 24 hours, a rash, diarrhea, vomiting, heavy nasal discharge or has a communicable disease. The parent or guardian must notify the school office if their child has a communicable disease or has been exposed to one. A written note from a doctor stating they are cleared to return to school must be provided before returning.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES**Drop off**

Please park in the main parking lot and bring your child door of their classroom.

Pick up

Two year old students will be dismissed from their classroom. Three year old and PreK students will be escorted to the Narthex for dismissal. Kindergarten students will be dismissed from the Kindergarten door. The first few weeks of school, please come to dismissal with your child's pickup sign. Please notify your child's teacher if someone different will be picking your child up at the end of the day. We will require the person picking up to show their driver's license to verify.

FIRE DRILLS

There will be fire drills for children during school hours as required by State regulations.

EMERGENCIES

In the case of an emergency, a first-aid qualified staff member will administer first aid to the child, as appropriate to the injury. Upon a life-threatening situation, 911 will be called and parents will be notified immediately.

LOST AND FOUND

BUMC Day School is not responsible for any lost articles especially when they are not clearly labeled with your child's name.

TECHNOLOGY AND "SCREENS"

Our school is a "screen-free zone". Children spend an abundance of time on "screens" such as i-pads, computers, Leap Pads, watching television, etc. We feel it is important to spend the time we are together here at preschool and kindergarten participating in hands- on activities as well as strengthening our social and life skills. Electronic devices of any kind are not permitted at school.

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DISCIPLINE

Most of our rules and limitations pertain to the children's safety:

- Children are not permitted to hurt themselves
- Children are not permitted to hurt others
- Children are not permitted to break or abuse the materials/equipment in their environment.

If a child does hurt another child or is doing something that is harmful to oneself, they will be removed from the situation and placed with an adult for the amount of time needed for the child to gain control of themselves. Some of the other techniques we use to foster self-control are:

Positive Direction (instead of saying "Don't stand on the chair," say "Floors are to stand on," or "Chairs are for sitting.")

Positive Reinforcement (compliment the behavior or act, not the child)

Redirection (direct the child to a more appropriate behavior)

The Day school holds the right to un-enroll any student who cannot adhere to the discipline code and/or any student whose behavior and needs we cannot accommodate.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES AND SERVICES

Any student who requires an IEP/treatment plan should have a meeting prior to the start of school (or prior to the implementation of IEP/treatment plan) with the Director and teacher of the class. The IEP/treatment plan should not include treatments or methods that conflict with the purpose, philosophy and goals on the Bakerstown United Methodist Day School. If your child qualifies for a TSS or assistant, the child can only attend when the TSS is present. If the TSS is unable to come, it is the responsibility of the outside agency to supply a substitute TSS. If a TSS is unable to come, the child is not permitted to attend that day(s).

The Day school holds the right to un-enroll any student who cannot adhere to the discipline code and/or any student whose behavior and needs we cannot accommodate.

PARENTAL INVOLVMENT

Parents will be invited to participate in various school related activities throughout the year such as field trips, class parties, guest reader opportunities, and school programs.

DRESS CODE

A typical school day will include active games and "messy" projects. Therefore, play clothes and sneakers are most appropriate for preschool. Be sensitive to the weather as needed. Be sure to clearly label all of your child's belongings. Please pack an extra set of clothing (clearly labeled) for accidents in a labeled plastic bag.

INCLEMENT WEATHER SCHEDULE

When Pine-Richland Schools cancel due to inclement weather, we are automatically cancelled.

If we decide to cancel our school when Pine-Richland does not, you will receive an email and phone message from the Preschool Director or the staff of Bakerstown United Methodist Church Day School as soon as possible.

When Pine-Richland Schools have delays, morning preschool classes will begin class at 10:00 a.m. and dismiss at noon. Afternoon classes will begin at 1:00 p.m. and dismiss at 3:00 p.m. Kindergarten classes will begin at 11:00 a.m. and dismiss at 3:00 p.m.

All parents are notified of cancellations and delays via email. The preschool does not makeup days missed due to inclement weather.

GRIEVANCES

If you have a specific grievance that you feel you need to address, we ask that you write a formal letter to your child's teacher first, describing your grievance and requesting a personal consultation. The Preschool Director will be present at this meeting and will determine if a further meeting is required to resolve the issue.

If this process does not bring the issue to resolution, the Director is required to contact the Day School Committee Chairman and the Senior Pastor of Bakerstown UMC, who will address the issue in consultation with the appropriate church committee(s) and make a final decision.

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Please print this page, sign, date and return to the Day School office.

I have read the Bakerstown United Methodist Church Day School Handbook; as well as the attached CDC guidelines for schools. I understand and will adhere to the contents of both the Bakerstown UMC Day School Handbook and the CDC guidelines.

Name: (Please Print) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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