CARMEL UMC
preschool

Parent Handbook
2027-2028

Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool
621 South Rangeline
Carmel, IN 46032

317-844-1958

*Please refer to our website (www.carmelumc.org under the preschool tab) for additional information including registration information, calendar, and upcoming events.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents Pg. 1–2

Director's Letter Pg. 2

Philosophy and Goals Pg. 3

Curriculum

Developmental/Christian Education Pg. 3
Field Trips Pg. 4

Parent-Teacher Communication

Parent-Teacher Conferences Pg. 4

Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures/Safety Pg. 5
Absences Pg. 5
Programming fee/Tuition Pg. 5
Withdrawal Pg. 6

Your Child's Health

Illness Pg. 6
Head Lice Pg. 6
Medical Record Pg. 6
Medications Pg. 6
Food Allergies, Peanut Allergies, and Dietary Restrictions Pg. 7-8

Your Child's Safety

General/Staff Preparedness Pg. 8-9
Discipline Pg. 8-9
Severe Weather Pg. 9
Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse Pg. 9

Table of Contents (continued)

Miscellaneous Information

School Closings—Weather Related	Pg. 9
Potty-Training	Pg. 10
School Dress	Pg. 10
School Bags	Pg. 10
Lunches and Snacks	Pg. 10-11
Fundraisers	Pg. 11

From the Preschool Office …

Welcome to the start of another great year! Thank you for choosing Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool for your child's early education. We are confident that you and your child are going to enjoy your preschool experience.

Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool was established in 1972 as a ministry to the young children and families of CUMC and the community. We offer a program consistent with the highest standards of quality early childhood education in an atmosphere of Christian love. We have a developmentally appropriate curriculum which follows the Indiana Early Learning Foundations and a qualified, caring staff. Opportunities for social, emotional, cognitive, language, motor, and spiritual growth are provided in every class.

Your support and involvement in your child's education will be important throughout his or her school years. We look forward to working with you to ensure the most successful school experience possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us if questions or concerns arise.

Thank you for allowing us to spend time fostering a positive school experience with your child!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Holl
Director of Preschool
sholl@carmelumc.org

Paula Foster
Assistant Director of Preschool
pfoster@carmelumc.org

Philosophy and Goals

The philosophy of Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool guides us in our short- and long-term planning:

The Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool is a ministry to young children and families of the church and community. We believe that each child is a child of God, and we implement a curriculum that nurtures each child's emotional, cognitive, social, spiritual, and physical development.

Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool strives to help prepare each child for kindergarten and beyond by…

…encouraging a positive sense of self;
…encouraging personal creativity;
…fostering respect, compromise, and generosity;
…developing fine and gross motor skills;
…enjoying various forms of music;
…exploring language arts, mathematics, and science through a hands-on sensory approach;
…making learning FUN!

Our goal is to provide a child-centered Christian environment that excites, pleases, and inspires children to enjoy both play and learning about God's world.

Curriculum

Developmental and Christian Education

Carmel United Methodist Preschool follows closely the curriculum guidelines recommended by the Indiana Early Learning Foundations, Pinnacle Curriculum, and the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. Our curriculum choices are based on sound educational philosophy and are designed to give your children an enriching Christian preschool experience that will create a firm and relevant foundation for the rest of their educational years.

The concept of prayer and its various forms will be introduced. Prayers will be led before snacks and lunch. Various Bible stories and music will be introduced throughout the year. Christian values and behaviors will be encouraged through modeling and reinforcement. Our school will participate in various mission and service projects with the church throughout the year. Member and non-member families are always welcomed to participate in these and other programs of our church.

Field Trips

Our time in school is very short and full of activities. We often seek to enrich the program through “reverse field trips” such as on-site visits from local firefighters, police officers, and other professionals in the community and the church.

Occasionally, in the Pre-K (4’s) and Alt. K classes, we will organize an outside field trip that enhances a particular unit or theme. All children are required to have a Field Trip Permission Slip signed by a parent or guardian and in our files to attend field trips. “Emergency bags” accompany teachers on all field trips. These bags hold every child’s emergency release cards, first aid equipment and prescribed medication.

Parent volunteers who participate on the field trip are asked to find alternative arrangements for younger siblings. This gives the parent the ability to give his/her full attention to the students on the field trip.

Parent – Teacher Communication

Communication is an important aspect of preschool. You will receive communications from your child’s teachers and administration in the following ways:

- Daily parent-teacher questions, comments, and pictures will be posted on our preschool management software app
- Monthly newsletters and calendars will be shared by your child’s teachers and administration
- Email and phone calls to/from the teachers and staff can be received as needed

Parent-Teacher Conferences/Reports

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in February for the Pre-K (4’s) and Alt. K students. 4’s/ALT K students will NOT REPORT to school on conference day and there is no childcare available. All other age levels will be in session. At parent’s or teacher’s request, conferences may occur for younger students. Mid-year reports will be sent home to all other students in January as well. The director and teachers are always available for conferencing.

Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal

Procedures for drop off and pick up will be provided before the start of the school year. **Failure to pick up your child by the scheduled pick up time will result in a $20 fee.**

Absences

If your child will be late or absent, please send a message to your child's teachers through the preschool's management app.

Programming Fee and Tuition

Programming Fee is paid per child and is due at the time of registration. It is non-refundable (unless there is not an open spot for your child/children).

In order to secure the child's placement, the May 2028 tuition is due by April 21, 2027. This tuition is non-refundable upon withdrawal and will be paid through the preschool's management software (unless already paid with programming fee at registration).

Tuition is due by the first day of each month (September through May). If your child is out of school for illness, snow days, vacation or other reasons, your tuition payment will not change. If you know that you cannot make a payment please contact the office so we can make arrangements. AUTOPAY is required for ALL tuition payments.

Past Due Payments will have a fee of $10.00 added to the invoice (Payments are considered late after the 10th of the month).

Tuition payments are to be made through the preschool's management software.. One member of the family will be responsible for tuition payments. This parent will have access to all invoices through the management software. If you are new to the program a staff member will send a link so you can access the portal. There will be two options for tuition payment in the payment details section. **Checks will not be accepted.**

1. **Direct debit/ACH**- This method of payment is FREE and encouraged.

2. **Credit Card**- If you are going to pay by credit card please know that there is a processing/transaction fee of 2.95% + $0.30 which will be added to your invoice.

If your account is delinquent for more than one month, you may be asked to withdraw your child until your account is made current. The school cannot guarantee a child's spot will be held when a child is withdrawn due to non-payment of tuition.

Withdrawal

Withdrawals create a financial liability to the ministry. Written notification is required **before the 15th of the month** for withdrawing a child from the school in order to avoid paying the subsequent month's tuition. **Programming Fee** and **May tuition will not be refunded.**

Your Child's Health

Children who have a communicable disease are asked to stay home until their health returns. A parent (or whomever is listed as emergency contact) whose child becomes ill at school will be -called to pick up the child.

Immediate reasons for keeping a child at home:

- fever (less than 24 hours prior to school)
- vomiting (less than 24 hours prior to school)
- diarrhea (less than 24 hours prior to school)
- unidentified rash
- discharge from eyes and/or pinkish color in the white part of the eyes
- Uncontrolled cough
- Positive Covid 19 may return per CDC guidelines as long as above symptoms are not present

After any illness, the child must be free from all systems for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child is sent home from school for an illness, they cannot return to school the following 24 hours. Please report all cases of highly contagious diseases (e.g. Covid 19, chicken pox, strep, pink eye, etc.) to the Director. Notification of a communicable disease will be emailed to the class. The child's name will not be used.

Head Lice

Head lice are a common occurrence in schools. Any child having active head lice or nits will be required to stay home to undergo treatments until the child is lice/nit free. All families in classes where head lice were found will be notified. The child's name who contracted the lice will not be published.

Medical Record

Only children with complete Physician-signed medical and Immunization forms on file will be admitted into a classroom. Students must have the proper vaccinations unless otherwise specified by a doctor's consent for medical reasons. Exemptions due to religious beliefs will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep all records updated (yearly physical). We must have current information in the event of a medical or other emergency. **New students to Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool are required to have a medical and immunization form on file with the office prior to the first day of school. Returning students are required to have a medical and immunization form on file with the office within 30 days of their birthday.**

Medications

Legal implications prohibit teachers or staff members from administering certain medications to children. If your child has a life-threatening allergy requiring an epipen or inhaler, please speak to the director to obtain a special allergen action form. We must have the form (signed by a physician) and the appropriate prescription label attached to the medication. **Forms and medication must be in our office PRIOR to your child's first day of school.**

Food Allergies, Peanut Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Children's allergies are becoming more pervasive and severe. Schools are facing difficult decisions regarding how to help children with food allergies, in particular. It is important to note that we cannot guarantee a completely allergy free environment and cannot be held liable for allergic reactions that occur in spite of the policies and procedures outlined below. At this time, we do not feel we need to impose a campus-wide ban on any food products. However, we are deeply committed to working with the families in our preschool to support children with allergies when at all possible.

If your child has a dietary allergy, this needs to be documented by the child's physician with specific restrictions, an indication of what the known reaction could be, possible treatment, and information regarding who is to administer any aid needed. **(You should have completed the allergy section of the registration form). Please note that only those allergies that are documented by medical professionals will result in changes in the class restrictions.**

At Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool, any child with a food allergy that necessitates having an EpiPen, and/or Inhaler must fill out an Allergy Alert form, an EpiPen Administer Form/or Inhaler Form, and a Plan of Action Form. All student snacks and lunches are provided by their own family. In addition, the classroom teachers will do special food related activities periodically. For an allergic child to eat or touch these foods, the child's parent must either be present during the food activity, or provide the allergy free ingredients for their child, OR approve in writing the ingredient(s) to be used.

The classroom teacher will make every effort to exclude a food that any child in her class is allergic to during classroom activities. A list of students with allergies will be posted in each classroom to avoid potential exposure by visitors to the classroom or substitute teachers. If you do not want your child's information posted, please notify the office in writing.
Because parents are ultimately responsible for monitoring the food their children eat when the results could be serious, parents ***must complete*** the forms appropriate for their child's situation.

SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY:

- Inform teachers of children in their class with allergies/medical conditions.
- Provide a copy of all forms to teachers.
- Inform parents of classmates of the presence of an allergy in the classroom.
- Have an emergency action plan in place in which the child's teachers and the office staff know where the child's medication is stored and how it is to be administered.
- Enforce a "no trading food" rule at snack and lunch.
- Include children with allergies/medical conditions in all regular classroom activities, making reasonable accommodations to ensure their safety.
- Post a list of all children with allergies.

TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITY:

- Make every effort to eliminate the allergen from the classroom in the case of serious/life-threatening airborne or contact allergies.
- Have the parent approve in writing all items used for cooking projects, STEM, and sensory bins.
- Never serve a school provided food item (including cooking projects) to a child with a serious/life-threatening allergy. Cooking projects will be sent home.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY:

- Inform the school of their child's allergy/medical condition in the child's history form.
- Parents must keep medical information and action plan current by communicating with the preschool when there are any changes to the child's condition.
- Complete required forms specifying allergy/medical information and action plan.
- Provide or approve all food to be consumed or used by their child including lunch, snacks, or classroom food related projects.

We will discuss any food allergies with parents to determine the severity of the allergy and reaction. We will then determine if restrictions on specific foods need to be made. All of the above options will apply also. Parents will be asked not to send the restricted items in lunch boxes.

Examples: Your child may be in a "peanut restricted" classroom, due to a classmate's severe peanut allergy. This will mean no peanut butter, nuts, or product items made in a factory at lunch time or snack time. Check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies in their class.

Please keep in mind that there are other programs running at both the church and preschool. We cannot control the food that is brought in by other programs, but will do our best to ensure that your child has limited exposure to potential allergens. Despite all the best efforts to be Allergy Aware, we recognize that this policy cannot totally guarantee that products with allergens will not be present.

Your Child's Safety

General/Staff Preparedness

Children are under the supervision of experienced and trained staff members. No other persons will have contact with the children unless authorized by the director.

- Staff members receive training in First-Aid/CPR and AED every 2 years, as required by the American Heart Assoc.
- Children are directly supervised in the church building and on the playground.
- In the interest of emergency preparedness, all teachers carry a bag with emergency cards, first aid equipment, and prescription medications whenever the class leaves their room.
- The building uses a perimeter security system during preschool hours to ensure the identification of all who enter. In case of an emergency teachers and staff are trained for a full lockdown.

Discipline

Our teachers and staff believe in positive experiences. Behavior is fostered through modeling, coaching, encouragement, and helping children use words to solve problems. Most situations of conflict or misbehavior can be redirected and teachers will do so in a loving and positive manner. Consistent routines and clear guidelines usually help children learn to become independent and positive in their choices during class time.

If your child is experiencing a significant change in the home environment, it is important for the Director and the teacher to be notified so that we may be sensitive to extraordinary needs of the child. Your privacy will be respected – such changes will be kept confidential by the staff.

Severe Weather

During severe storms/tornados, children will be in the disaster positions in the safe care of their teachers in the lower level. We ask that parents wait until severe weather passes before attempting to pick up their children. (Your child needs you to stay safe until the storm passes!) Emergency bags and cell phones will be carried to the lower level.

If the Carmel Clay Schools announce early dismissal due to deteriorating weather conditions, we will also dismiss accordingly.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse

Indiana Code section 31-6-11(a) requires any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect to make a report to child protective services. This report is mandatory and there are no exceptions to the obligation in the statute. Moreover, section 3(b) requires any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect to notify the person in charge of the institution or school who also becomes responsible to cause a report to be made.

Miscellaneous Information

School Closings and Delays (Weather Related)

Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool will follow the decision of **Carmel Clay Schools** regarding the delay or cancellation of school due to severe weather and/or emergency conditions. Please look for announcements about Carmel Clay Schools **NOT** CUMC (There is a preschool in Indianapolis which uses these letters.).

****If there is a **two-hour** delay for Carmel Clay Schools, children should come to school at **10:30 am and dismiss at 1:00pm.**

If there is a **one-hour** delay for Carmel Clay Schools, children should come to school at **10:00am and dismiss at 1:00pm**

We do not provide refunds or make-up days for school cancellations due to inclement weather.

Potty-Training

Beginning with our 3-year old preschool classes, children are expected to be potty-trained in order to participate in the full spectrum of activities offered at Preschool. If your child is not fully potty-trained by the start of school depending on availability your child could attend the younger class. **Please reach out to the director if you feel as though your child will not be potty trained by the start of the year (3's and older).**

"Potty-trained" consists of the following:

1) Ability to understand when to use the bathroom: The 3-yr old classrooms have bathrooms within the rooms. The teachers will ask the entire class at regular intervals to "try"; however, a child may use the bathroom anytime he/she needs to, and should be able to identify that need.
2) Ability to undo clothing necessary to use the bathroom: Please dress your children in comfortable, easy-to-manage clothing for school. Children should be in underwear, not pull-ups at all times.
3) Ability to attend to hygiene matters: Children should understand how to and be able to clean themselves after toileting. They should also understand the need for hand-washing with soap and water after using the toilet.

*__Please know that teachers will help if asked and that we know that these are developing skills.__

School Dress

Your child's "work" during the day often consists of sensory, hands-on explorations. We try to protect clothing, but sometimes there are "oops" moments. We always have running and climbing time during the day, whether outdoors or in the gym**. Sneakers work best to prevent slips and falls.** We also request your sensitivity in the selection of clothing which may have inappropriate wording or logos for preschoolers.

Weather in Indiana is unpredictable! The classes try to go outside as often as possible. The guideline for staying in is a "feel like" 32 degrees and below. Send in winter coats, hats and gloves. Always dress appropriately, and label all items with your child's name.

School Bags

Please send your child with a full size backpack, if possible. The larger backpacks make it easy to transport all items easily, while allowing the teachers' hands to be free during the drop off/pick up process. Don't worry, we will help your little one carry it, if needed.

Lunches and Snacks

Lunch and snacks should be brought to school in lunch bags or boxes. Please provide an ice pack in your child's lunch, as we do not have refrigeration available. We ask you to assist your child in planning a well-balanced nutritious lunch. Teachers will assist your child in determining an eating order at lunchtime. ("Growing" foods first, desserts and snacks last).

Left-over food will be sent home so that you can see what and how your child is eating each day. If a drink is not in your child's lunch, water will be provided.

We will discuss any food allergies with parents to determine the severity of the allergy and reaction. We will then determine if restrictions on specific foods need to be made. Parents will be asked not to send the restricted items in lunch boxes.

Examples: Your child may be in a “peanut restricted” classroom, due to a classmate’s severe peanut allergy. This will mean no peanut butter, nuts, or product items made in a factory at lunch time or snack time. Check with your child’s teacher regarding any food allergies in their class.

Please keep in mind that there are other programs running at both the church and preschool. We cannot control the food that is brought in by other programs, but will do our best to ensure that your child has limited exposure to potential allergens. Despite all the best efforts to be Allergy Aware, we recognize that this policy cannot totally guarantee that products with allergens will not be present.

***All food must follow any allergy restrictions set for the class.**

Fundraisers

From time to time, CUMC participates in fundraisers designed to help finance major purchases and improvements to our school. We limit our fundraising contacts to those, which deal specifically, and solely with school organizations. Participation in fundraisers is voluntary.

The Carmel United Methodist Church Preschool Program operates as a non-profit organization sponsored by CUMC.