**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2023-2024**

**Reisterstown United Methodist Nursery School**

246 Main Street

Reisterstown, Maryland 21136

\*\*Please read this handbook in its entirety\*\*

**Philosophy**

We are happy that you and your child have decided to be a part of our exciting preschool program. We will help your child to develop a strong sense of self and positive feelings about school. Our goal is to help each child experience the joy of learning and the wonders of his or her world. Our program is a developmentally appropriate, language based integrated curriculum. We provide a loving, nurturing and child-centered environment. Since our preschool is set in a Christian environment, religious stories, songs, and prayers will be included in the curriculum.

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

Admissions to Reisterstown United Methodist Nursery School are made without regard to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, or gender.

**School Hours**

Full Day 3’s and 4’s Program: 7:30am-5:30pm (Be sure to drop off by 8:20am if your child is having

 breakfast with us.)
Half Day Program 2’s, 3’s or 4’s Program: 9:00am-12:00pm. Doors open at 8:50am for half day drop off

**School Phone**

443-546-0585

**School Personnel**

Ms. Kirstyn Hutchinson – Director/ 3’s Teacher- RUMNSDirector@hotmail.com

Mrs. Lani Hoffmann – Registrar/ 4’s Teacher- RUMNS234@gmail.com

Mrs. Nicole Brennan-2’s Teacher- ladybugg82@gmail.com

Assistant teacher- Mrs. Jennifer Mangum

Classroom Aides- Mrs. Liliya Loginova, Mrs. Anna Cook, Ms Megan Diener

**Arrival/Departure**

**Please note that there is 1 drop-off and 1 pick-up permitted per day. You may not pick your child up and return later as this can change staffing requirements and put us out of compliance.**

**Children may not be dropped off for the day after 11:30am. Keep in mind we are a school, with extended day-care. Your child must come to school (9am-12pm) to take advantage of the aftercare portion of the day.**

**ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

 Families will wait in line at the red door for drop off. Keep your child with you and do not allow them to run around or to play on the playground. Line up on the driveway side of the shed. We have drop off at the door where you will sign your child in for the day. A teacher will be waiting to escort your child to the classroom. Through the pandemic, we noticed that door drop-off is much less stressful on the child, and allows for a quicker adjustment time once inside.

**FULL DAY EARLY DROP OFF**: ADULTS ring the buzzer one time and wait patiently for someone to come to the door. Do not allow children to ring the bell. Repeatedly ringing the bell may delay staff in getting to the door as we will need to go back and turn it off before coming to the door. You may drop off your child anytime from 7:30am-8:45am. After that, you must wait in line with others for the doors to be opened at 8:50am. It does not give you a ticket to the front of the line. **\*\*Be sure to drop off by 8:20am if your child is having breakfast with us. All children must still be in school by 9am.**

**HALF DAY PRESCHOOL**: Doors will be opened from 8:50-9:00 am for drop off. CLASS STARTS AT 9AM and teachers will be in rooms. Leaving the room to answer the door puts us out of compliance with childcare ratios. If your child is arriving late, please let us know in advance. Children will only be admitted after 9 with a note from a doctor, dentist, or physical, mental health, or behavioral service provider.

**DISMISSAL PROCEDURES:**

Children may only go home with a parent or other designated person listed on the Emergency Information Card. If your child is to go home with someone other than those listed (such as a playdate), we are required to be notified in writing of the change. Your child’s pick-up person must have a valid PHOTO ID to present at the door each time. No child will be released to any person under the age of 16. Please be sure they understand that it is not always the same person at the door for dismissal and it may be necessary to show your ID at any time.

Maryland licensing requires that all children be signed-in and signed-out every day. If your child is coming to school with carpool, grandparent, etc, please be sure to instruct them on drop off and dismissal procedures. On rainy or windy days, the staff member at the door may sign your child in or out.

**PRESCHOOL 12:00pm Dismissal:** Please wait in line as at drop off. Start line at the red door, and line up in the alley. Please be courteous and patient. Children will be called in the order of the pick-up person in line. Please be on time. Late fees will be assessed if someone is not there when the line is finished or 12pm, whichever is later. (See LATE POLICY below) There is no need to ring the bell unless you are late. We will open the doors when the children and staff are in their assigned places.

**AFTERCARE PICK UP:** Pick up person must come to the door and ring the buzzer (one time) for pick up. **Do not allow children to push the button to ring the bell!** Please give a few minutes for coats, backpacks, etc. to be gathered. Children will be brought to the door for pick up and someone is required to sign the child out. The time you wrote on your Registration Form is your pickup time. We are staffed according to that registration form and contract and cannot hold children later than the contracted pickup time.

Please do not attempt to pull the door open. We are unable to see who is on the other side, and someone opening the door to enter is seen as a threat. For safety, the door will be pulled closed until we can verify who is on the other side.

Parents must park in the large main parking lot. Do not park in the alleyway by our classroom door as we are using this for drop off and pick up and it is otherwise reserved for maintenance vehicles and the owners of the building next door. Likewise, do not park in the small lot behind the playground. It is owned by the salon and for their customers.  **If you park here to pick up, you will be asked to move your vehicle before we release your child, possibly incurring late fees.**

**Late Policy**

Please make every attempt to be on time picking up your child. While our day is extended, our staffing is based on enrollment for each portion of our day. If you know you are going to be late, a call is appreciated so that we can make sure we are properly staffed. This means staff will be missing lunch or leaving late and since we must compensate staff for their time, we will pass those fees on to you. Be aware that our license ends at 5:30 and we are not to have children in the building. If you are more than 15 minutes late, CPS will be notified. Please also note that a call does not negate fees, it simply tells us to rearrange staff and is a courtesy to us. With that in mind, late fees are as follows: **Families will be charged $3 per minute, per child, after your scheduled pickup time (not the time you called us). This is a cash fee, due the next class day.**

**Inclement Weather Closings**

If we must close unexpectedly, for weather or any other reason, messages will be sent through the Class Dojo App. Please make sure you have it downloaded on your phone and notifications are turned on. Be sure your teacher has any contact information that is needed (daycare, grandparents, etc.). An email or text may also be sent.

**Communication:**

Use your smartphone to download the CLASS DOJO app and **set up a FREE account** for Parents. You will use this app for communication with your teacher, the Treasurer/Registrar and Director. Messages about school closings, individual messages for your child, and school-wide messages will be sent through this app. A calendar is also posted there and reminders are automatically sent from the app. You will receive invite codes from each person for communication purposes. You may either use this app or the teacher’s email to communicate. Phone and texting should be reserved for IMMEDIATE EMERGENCIES ONLY. Teachers will respond to emails/app messages within 24 hours unless the message is received on a weekend and then a Monday reply can be expected. During the day, except for photo opportunities, staff will only be checking apps/emails before dismissal, at naptime, and mid-afternoon. Emergency calls can be made to our school phone at: (TBA at Parent Meeting)

Sometimes things at home affect a child in school. It is helpful for teachers and staff to know if there are any changes at home so that we can understand if there are behavior changes in the classroom. Please notify your child’s teacher if there are any major changes at home (new baby, visitors, death of a family member or pet, parent traveling, divorce, moving, new bedroom). If you cannot find time to talk with the teacher, just send a text, a note to pass to the teacher, or send an email. The school email is RUMNS234@gmail.com for general information or RUMNSdirector@hotmail.com to reach the director. Emails and questions may be sent at any time. Please allow a 24-hour window for a response.

It is important that you check and EMPTY, your child’s backpack *every day*. If there are any changes to our schedule, field trips, parties, homework, etc. it will be on a notice in your backpack. This information is typically also conveyed in an email or by app. There will be newsletters or emails from the teachers.

If there is someone, such as a grandparent or babysitter, that you would like included on CLASS or SCHOOL emails/messages, please let your teacher know, and provide an email and cell number. Information specific to your child may not be shared with anyone other than parents or guardians without expressed written consent.

**What to Bring**

**Materials**

We ask that each child have a **full adult-sized** backpack, not the cute, child-size backpacks as their hard work and art will get crushed and their things will not fit.

**Clothing**

Each child will also need a complete change of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks). It is helpful if the clothes are put inside a 2-gallon plastic bag with your child’s name on it. All children need this change of clothes, as they can get messy, wet from play, and spills can happen in class. **Full day 2s and 3s should have 2 full sets of clothing**. Clothing should be loose fitting so children need as little assistance in the restroom as possible. \*\*PLEASE NO OVERALLS or BELTS- they are a hinderance to toilet use and children are learning independence. We cannot always stop an activity to help a child with overalls in time to avoid accidents.

**Forms to Bring to School**

\*\*If you have a custody order in place, you are required to submit that with your child’s information. If custody is shared and the child/children will be picked up on a schedule by different custodians/parents, you are responsible for providing a calendar with the drop off/pick up schedule.

(These can be found on our website [www.rumns.com](http://www.rumns.com) for download)

**\*Please note-Children will not be permitted to attend school until outstanding forms are turned in. Parents are responsible for tuition during missed time.**

Emergency Form (Complete physician information, signature, VALID phone number, and at least ONE

emergency pickup person is required)

Health Inventory (including Blood Lead Test form)-must be dated within one calendar year of registration and updated at your child’s annual exam

Immunization Certificate

Information Form

Field Trip Permission Slip

Pick Up Permission

Photo Release

Wallet size photo of your child to attach to his/her records

Verification of receipt of Handbook

**The following forms are AS NEEDED:**

[Medication Administration Authorization Form](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ1216-medicationadministrationauthorization.pdf)

[Asthma Action Plan And Medication Administration Authorization Form](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ1216a-seizuremedicationadministrationauthorizationform.pdf)

[Allergy and Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Authorization Form](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ_1216b-medicationincidentreportingform.pdf)

[Topical Basic Care Product Application Approval](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ_1216e_-_topical_product_application_approval.september_2022.pdf) (for sunscreen, bug spray or lotion)

[Seizure/Convulsion/Epilepsy Disorder Medication Administration Authorization Form](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/occ_1216c_seizure_emergency_medication_form_may_2022_final.pdf)

\*\*If your child has already had a developmental screening, please include a doctor’s copy of a VALIDATED screening scoresheet for your child’s records.

**Clothing Policy**

Please dress your children in comfortable play clothes. We do use paint and other messy materials. On class/school picture day, we will not do anything messy and you can safely dress your child in nice clothes. Make sure your child can take down his/her pants independently. Overalls and belts make it difficult for children to use the toilet and often cause accidents.

For playground and classroom safety, sneakers are required for school. **Crocs, boots, flip flops and sandals are not good school shoes** and **will prevent children from participating in many outdoor activities**. \*Children not in sneakers will only be allowed to use the stairs to ascend the playground as other shoes can slip on the rock wall and climbing bars. The same rule applies to children in skirts below the knee. Knees and feet get caught up in clothing and cause a fall hazard.

Maryland guidelines state that we must have a balance of indoor and outdoor play for children. As long as the temperature with wind chill is above 32 degrees, the playground is safe, and there is no measurable precipitation at play time, we will be going outside. Be sure your children have appropriate outdoor clothing. Please check the weather daily and dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. If your child is prone to getting chilly and you would like to send a sweater or hoodie to be left in the classroom for the week, you may do so.

In cold weather, children should have winter coats that zip, hats, and **mittens.** Do not send gloves unless your child can put them on completely by themselves. **Please do not send your child with scarves, umbrellas, rain boots, or winter/snow boots to school.**

**What Not to Bring**

Children should not have toys, games, videos, juice cups, water bottles, food, etc. in their backpack. It is difficult to fit work into a backpack that is already full. We have plenty of access to food and water should they be needed.

To reduce transmission of germs, personal items are not to be brought from home. Teachers and staff will NOT be responsible for theft, breakage, destruction, or loss of these personal items. Children will not be allowed to play with items from home.

**After Care Families**

Parents are expected to provide a blanket and a cot sheet for children staying for the *aftercare program*. You may purchase a cot sheet from us for $10. Blankets should cover the child from shoulder to toe without the child curling up. They must not be so thick they cannot fit in a tote with the sheet and change of clothes. They should be no thicker than a one-layer, simple fleece throw. (Hint: If it does not fit in a 2-gallon Ziploc, it will not fit in our totes and will be sent home.) Blankets and cot sheets will be sent home on Fridays to be washed, and should be returned on Mondays. Stuffed animals and pillows must be kept at home.

Lunches will be kept with your child’s backpack. Parents should provide a healthy, non-perishable lunch for their child. Your child should be able to feed himself or herself each item in the lunch. Please do not send soda, candy, peanut butter, or nuts in your child’s lunch. (**See section on Allergens**) WE CANNOT HEAT FOOD. Do not send food that must be cooked or heated as we are not able to do so. Hot food that you want kept hot should be in a thermal container. Cold food (lunchmeat, yogurt, cheese) must have an ice pack so it does not spoil. (Hot=thermal food container, cold food=ice pack next to it!) Lunch must be packed in a bag or lunch box that closes securely and contains all components of the lunch. PLEASE DO NOT SEND LUNCHABLES! Be sure your child will eat what you send. Foods to be eaten with a fork or spoon must be cut into bite-size pieces. NO BONES. A list of suggestions will be sent with your information packet. at the beginning of the year.

\*Morning and afternoon snack are provided, as is water. There is no need to send water.

\*\*Uneaten food that is saliva-contaminated (they ate from it but did not finish) will not be sent home. Unopened snacks and desserts will be returned. Children are encouraged to eat healthy choices first from lunches.

\*\***By law, we are not permitted to force a child to eat or drink.\*\***

**Allergens**

**Reisterstown United Methodist Church, the Nursery School, buildings and classrooms are PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE AT ALL TIMES.** According to <http://www.allergyexpert.us/food/treenut.html> and other reliable sources: Up to half of individuals allergic to peanuts will also be allergic to tree nuts. Tree nuts are nuts that grow on trees. They include almonds, cashews, hazelnuts (also called filberts), pecans, pistachios, and walnuts. Please avoid sending anything with your child that includes these or traces of these (along with items made on equipment that also processes these) including peanut butter and peanut butter products as these will be removed and sent home. Any food we cannot identify that is in question will also be returned. We may message to ask you to send an ingredient list photo via Class Dojo. Lunches are thoroughly checked every morning. A jelly sandwich or crackers with applesauce will be substituted for any main dish that is removed. We reserve the right to restrict other foods as health permits for the safety of children in the church and preschool/nursery school program. To reduce exposure to unknown allergens in foods, we do not allow homemade items to be brought in for celebrations, snack, or other occasions. **(Some restaurants we know are not peanut free include: Chick-fila, McDonald’s, Dunkin, Krispy Kreme, and most sit-down restaurants. Do not send those foods for lunch, and do not attempt to repackage food to get it by us as it is a life threatening situation for a child with severe allergies)**

**Health and Wellness**

In all cases, a child must be symptom and fever-free **without medication** for 24 hours prior to attending school. This means if your child is sent home vomiting, with diarrhea, or with a fever, *your child may NOT return the next day.* A fever is a temperature of 100.1 degrees Fahrenheit or more. **If a child becomes ill at school, the child’s parent/guardian or someone on the emergency call list will be notified and arrangements will need to be made to pick up the child within 45 minutes.** Any child missing 3 or more consecutive days without prior notice of travel or absence will require a doctor’s note to return. (Maryland law)

Any child diagnosed with a rash or communicable illness (including, but not limited to: strep throat, head lice, pink eye, bacterial meningitis, chicken pox, diphtheria, HFMD (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease), hepatitis, measles, mumps, pneumonia, viral illness, rubella) must have a doctor’s note to return and report it to the school immediately. **If the child’s illness requires antibiotics, s/he must be treated with those for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school**.

\*\*If your child requires medication to ease symptoms to get through the school day, your child is SICK and needs to be kept home!

See below for policies regarding specific illnesses:

Strep Throat: Treatment with antibiotics for a minimum of 48 hours, must have stamped Doctor’s note

Head Lice: Child may not return if nits or lice are present

Pink Eye: 24-48 hours of treatment, must have stamped Doctor’s note

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: Minimum of 7 days exclusion from onset of symptoms, AND stamped Doctor’s note

COVID: Minimum 5 days exclusion regardless of vaccination status, then mask for 5 days

\*\*Guidelines are subject to change at any time. **Childcare does not always follow the same guidelines as the public school system. Debates will not be entertained about the guidelines we are required to follow.** While we know this may be inconvenient, it is how we keep outbreaks from happening.

**Major Emergencies**: In the event of a life-threatening or major medical emergency to a child at school, one staff member will remain with the injured or ill child. The parent will be notified as soon as medical care has been obtained. Transportation to the hospital will be arranged by rescue personnel or the child’s parent. A staff member will accompany your child until you are physically present with your child.

MEDICATION

If your child has allergies or requires medication, please communicate directly with your teacher and list on all emergency/medical forms. Children who require medication such as the Epi-pen, AuviQ, or asthma inhalers must have the proper MSDE medical form completed by the child’s pediatrician. The first dose of any new medication must be given at home at least 24 hours before the child returns to school so parents can monitor for adverse effects.

Any medication that is required to be given at school, including asthma and allergy medication, must:

 Have a pharmacy label including child’s name and prescribing doctor’s name.

 Be in original packaging

 Not be expired

 Be accompanied by a photograph of your child

\*Medication sent to school that is to travel from drop off person to pick-up person must also be handed to staff. Medication cannot be left in lunchboxes or backpacks that may be accessible to other children.

HYGIENE

Please note to prevent the spread of germs/illness, children and staff are asked to bathe daily and come to school in clean clothing.

**Conferences**

Part of the preschool curriculum includes observation of children, developmental assessment and conferences with parents. The teachers will hold individual parent/teacher conferences in the spring to update the parents on the child’s progress and make recommendations for the upcoming year. Conferences are done in person, and there is one conference per child. If parents are separate custodians, parents may ask for a separate conference. No more than 2 conferences will be scheduled for any child on spring conference day. Any issues that need to be addressed mid-year will be dealt with on a one-to-one basis. The teachers are available by app and email to answer questions that you might have about your child. Please contact the teacher by phone, note or email with your questions. You may request a conference at any time during the year and may schedule those with your child’s teacher. Teachers will be in classroom at drop off and pick up time and unavailable for comment in person at that time.

**Safe Gatherings**

Your child’s safety is of utmost importance to us. The United Methodist Church has a Safe Gatherings policy that affects all groups in the building that have contact with children. This policy is a United Methodist policy that promotes the safety of all children on our church grounds. This means all people in direct contact with the children are background checked on a regular basis. This includes all teachers, aides, substitutes, office staff, cleaning staff, etc. Each person cannot be Safe Gatherings approved without completing a background check, including references, and a training course.

**Safety on Property**

* Parents/guardians should not leave siblings unattended in automobiles in our parking lot. Please have another adult that you know wait with your car and child while you walk your child in to class if you are not able to bring your child with you.
* Please make sure that you hold your child’s hand from the time you leave the building all the way to your car. Our parking lot is a very busy place and the alley way next to the red building is a public thru street. Do not park in that alleyway. For safety, you should enter the parking lot either through Dreamers or the main church driveway.
* Remember: Maryland's child safety seat law requires that all children under 8 years old be secured in a federally approved child safety seat according to the safety seat and vehicle manufacturers' instructions, unless the child is 4 feet, 9 inches or taller. The child restraint must be right for the child's size, age, and weight. (<https://www.dmv.org/md-maryland/safety-laws.php>) As of October 2023, all children under 2 must be in a rear facing seat.

**Abuse and Neglect Reporting**

Our policy on reporting abuse and neglect is mandated by State Law. We are all considered Mandated Reporters. This means if we suspect abuse or neglect, we must report it to Child Protective Services. We are not required to notify parents or caregivers if we are making a report.

From http://dhr.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-or-neglect/mandated-reporters/

**Mandated Reporters**

**You are a mandated reporter if you are one of the following:**

* Health Practitioner
* Educator
* Human Service Worker
* Police Officer

Reporting does NOT require PROOF that child abuse or neglect has occurred. Incidents are to be reported as soon as they are suspected. Waiting for proof may involve grave risk to the child and impede services to the family. Witnesses to child abuse and neglect are rare. Professional judgment and knowledge should be used to evaluate any suspicion.

Please refer to the link above for more information on abuse and neglect. Understand that not reporting makes us, as childcare staff, liable for unreported incidences if we are found to have been informed or know about them.

**Maryland State Department of Education Developmental Screening**

Maryland State Department of Education has implemented a new State regulation for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. Beginning July 1, 2016, all children up to kindergarten entry attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs need to have a developmental screening conducted.

Developmental screening is a brief method completed by a parent or caregiver to quickly identify a child’s progress through foundational early childhood developmental milestones. A child’s development can be measured by how a child learns, speaks, moves, behaves and relates. Skills such as smiling, waving, and talking are developmental milestones. Results from developmental screenings indicate which children would benefit from a full evaluation and assessment. Children who receive early intervention services generally do better in the long term than those identified later. Upon completion of the screening, we will meet with you to discuss the findings and whether a referral to another agency for further evaluation is necessary.

Children aged birth-36 months will be required to have two screenings per year. Children aged 37 months-kindergarten entry will be required to have one screening per year. Parents should consider this process as part of required documentation in order for the child to attend our or any other licensed child care program in the State.

**Discipline**

Discipline in the classroom will be handled through an environment that provides clear boundaries and interesting activities. Discipline is an integral part of our curriculum. Our teachers model caring behavior and help children build positive relationships with each other. Teachers also help children learn language so that they can express their feelings appropriately.

Effective Guidance techniques applied to all children include:

* Reinforcement of appropriate behavior – smiles, eye contact, verbal praise
* Modeling of appropriate behavior techniques
* Redirection of child to another activity
* Teaching the child to solve his own problems using social stories and dialogue to deal with frustration

In the unlikely event that a child’s negative behavior becomes chronic, parents will be asked to meet with the teacher and director for a conference in order to more effectively help the child.

**Discharge Policy**

Reisterstown United Methodist Nursery School reserves the right to drop or terminate service when the welfare of the child or group would make this advisable. Reasons may include but not be limited to:

* Lack of parental cooperation
* Non-payment of fees (repeated payments more than 5 business days late, not adhering to more than 1 payment schedule)
* Inability of the child to adjust to the school
* Continual late pick up/drop off (without a doctor’s note or note from a service provider)
* Failure to inform the school of possible known communicable disease/illness diagnosis or symptoms thereof, including sending a medicated child to school
* Inability to meet the needs of the child without hiring additional staff

**Payment Policy**

Payments are due the month prior to service (ex. October is due in September). Families will be given the option of 2 payment plans indicated on Financial Contract of which families receive a copy once signed. We are not permitted to take payment more than 3 months in advance. Please contact Lani Hoffmann immediately if there is some concern about payment. We are willing to work with you.

If you are paying by check, please be sure to include the child’s name on the check. If you are paying by cash, make sure your payment is in an envelope with the child’s name on it. Please put payment in designated envelope in the main pocket of your child’s backpack and let staff at the door know. If you pay online, please send a screenshot of your payment receipt with date and payment amount to Mrs. Hoffmann or Ms. Hutchinson with a note to that effect. You must also add the online payment fee when you submit online payment.

There will be a $10 late fee assessed every 5 business days for payments not received on time. There will be a $35 fee assessed for returned checks. If a check is returned more than once, payments will be permitted online or cash or money order only.

Once a child is 2 weeks behind in tuition, they will not be allowed to come to school until payment is up to date. If a child’s tuition is not up to date at enrollment time, his/her place for next year will not be guaranteed. Recommendation letters for kindergarten and enrollment for the upcoming year will not be honored for those who are behind in their payments.

Tax receipts will be given upon request starting the second week in January each year. Send request to Lani Hoffmann RUMNS234@gmail.com. Please allow 7-10 days for processing. It will be in your child’s backpack unless otherwise requested.

If you need to terminate your child’s enrollment, a two-week notice is to be given to the school director(s); otherwise you will continue to be charged your monthly tuition. (No reimbursement of tuition will be granted).

All tuition is due regardless of attendance due to sickness, quarantine, behavioral/disciplinary removal, vacations, weather-related closings or holidays (including Thanksgiving, Christmas, snow days, and Spring Break). Please see Public Health Emergencies section for further information.

**Scholarships**

Scholarship applications are included with each child’s enrollment packet. All families may apply. Scholarship application deadline is June 1 for the next year. Applications are collected and information without identifying information to our scholarship committee. Committee members meet in July to determine how our fixed scholarship amount will be distributed. Priority is given based on demonstrated need. Applications that are not complete will not be considered for scholarships. Recipients will be notified by mail in July. RUMNS does not give full scholarships.

**Birthdays, Celebrations and Snacks**

The preschool provides a snack each day for the children and often it will reinforce the lesson of the day. Please let us know if your child has any allergies or food restrictions so that we can make other arrangements. If you wish to provide a snack for the class, please arrange that with the classroom teacher. We will say a blessing before eating our snack. Keep in mind, as a Methodist church, we say a Christian blessing.

If you would like to bring or have a birthday snack for your child, please make arrangements with the teacher. Staff will give guidance as to what can be brought in as permitted. Homemade food is not permitted at any time. All food must be accompanied by the package with complete ingredient list. **Birthday snacks may be brownies, cookies, popsicles, crispy rice treats, gummies, fruit or child’s favorite chips.** Cupcakes are not allowed. **All food must be tree nut, peanut free at all times.**

**Electronics and Screen Time**

Screen time is reserved for educational material at special times. Electronics are not permitted at school. Watches, phones, iPads, tablets, video games, recording devices, and tracking devices are to be left at home.

**Chapel Time**

Children will have monthly Chapel as a school in the church sanctuary with Pastor Jen Eschliman, and her husband Dan.

**Records Retrieval/Confidentiality**

All records requests must be made in writing to the director. Only custodial parents/guardians will be permitted to request records from a child’s file. Health records and items that were provided by the parent can be copied on request. A flat fee of $25 per request will be charged for copying of records. Other information in the file will be made available at the discretion of the school. Non-custodial adults must obtain a court order to obtain records. Requests for children’s information requests in writing will not be refused to either parent unless a court-established Parenting Plan is in place and on file with us. It is the parents’ responsibility to furnish the center with the Parenting Plan. All information required by court order, including conversations, will be provided to the party named on the court order/subpoena.

Parents will be given a copy of their child’s conference form at the Parent Teacher Conference each spring.

Requests for **assessments and recommendations** may be made directly to the child’s teacher in writing. They must be requested with 14 days’ notice to complete. A release must be signed in order for us to complete recommendations either in writing or verbally to schools or other entities about any child.

**Pet Policy**

For safety and health reasons, pets are not permitted in the building. If you have a comfort animal, or other working animal, a certificate must be provided to staff to make a copy before your animal will be allowed to enter.

**Volunteer Policy**

COMAR requires that centers make clients aware of volunteer policies in place. Please note that while this is our normal Volunteer Policy, no one but staff and children are permitted in the building.

All church volunteers are required to complete Safe Sanctuaries Training and are background checked by the church before being permitted to begin.

Our volunteers are always under the supervision of staff members when children are present.

No person is permitted to volunteer if they would be prohibited from employment because they have received a conviction, a probation before judgment disposition, a not criminally responsible disposition, or a pending

charge for the commission or attempted commission of:

(1) A crime involving:

(a) A child;

(b) Cruelty to animals;

(c) Domestic violence; or

(d) A weapons or firearms violation of federal or state laws;

(2) A sex offense;

(3) A violent crime classified as a felony;

(4) Abduction or kidnapping;

(5) Abuse of a child or an adult;

(6) Confinement of an unattended child;

(7) Manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing a controlled dangerous substance;

(8) Perjury;

(9) Pornography;

(10) Possession with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense a controlled dangerous substance; or

(11) Reckless endangerment.

COMAR 13A.16.06 Reg. 3A

**Public Health Emergency/Forced Closure Policy**

In the event of an emergency closure, forced closure, closure due to pandemic, we will make every effort to keep everyone informed. We take our lead from the Office of Childcare, church leaders and public officials. If we are forced to close, every effort will be made to notify you as early as possible, and all belongings will be sent home in case of an extended closure. Emails with updates will come from teachers and/or the director as we are able to provide them.

If school is closed for UP TO TWO WEEKS: A packet will be given for at home learning and at least one session per full week of virtual learning will be provided. Full tuition is expected.

TWO to FOUR WEEKS: A packet will be provided for at home learning, at least one session of virtual learning per week, and 2/3 tuition will be due.

Greater than FOUR WEEKS: No tuition will be due and service will cease until further notice.

**Please email RUMNS234@gmail.com if you have questions regarding this handbook.**

**\*\*Please check the website as rules are subject to change with changes in policy or Child Care laws**