



Parent Handbook 2023-2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome From Our Pastor	3
Soapstone Preschool Staff	4
General Preschool Information	5
Tuition Information	6
Arrival & Dismissal Procedures	8
Parking Procedures	11
Carpool Procedures	12
What To Bring	13
Snack & Lunch Bunch Suggestions	14
Conscious Discipline	15
Health Policy	16
Potty-Training Expectations	18
Procure	19
Inclement Weather/Closure Policy	20
Safety Protocols	21
You Can Help By...	23
Preschooler Basics	24
ADDENDUM: Parent Acknowledgement	27

Welcome from Our Pastor

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Soapstone UMC Preschool, a vital ministry that seeks to guide, educate, and nurture children in a Christian environment. Your family and your children are valued by God, our clergy, staff, and congregation.

We'd love for you to join our worshiping community on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am or 11 am. Sensory bags with fidget toys and activity binders are available in the sanctuary, on the left as you enter. Danny Peck, our Director of Family Ministries who also leads Preschool Chapel, provides a special message for children during worship. Afterward, children five or under are welcome to stay or go the church nursery.

Church member, Blair Roberts (bbroberts218@gmail.com), leads a Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group that supports women through their parenthood journeys. Your child is welcome to attend any event at SUMC such as VBS, the Strawberry Festival, Live Nativity, Christmas Eve Family Service, and more. You can learn about all of these ministries at soapstoneumc.org.

On Thursdays, adults are invited to attend our free Pilates classes which begin at 9:45 upstairs in Room 200. Bring a mat!

I continue to pray for you, your preschoolers, and our Preschool. May this year be one of blessing in our life together.

Grace and Peace,
Mitzi

SOAPSTONE PRESCHOOL STAFF

2023-24

Toddlers

Room #131 Lead Teacher Peg Feely
 Assistant Teacher Jill Fitzpatrick

2 Year Old Classes

Room #133 Lead Teacher Karen Sazani
 Assistant Teacher Rebecca Myers

Room #132 Lead Teacher Val Moser
 Assistant Teacher Katie Bigler (M/W)
 Assistant Teacher Brooke Barksdale (T/TH)

3 Year Old Classes

Room #134	Lead Teacher	Linda Schwarz	Room #135	Lead Teacher	Jennifer Schudlik
	Assistant Teacher	Cindy Marsh		Assistant Teacher	Kim Sauls

4 Year Old Classes

Room #136	Lead Teacher	Elizabeth Uniacke	Room #137	Lead Teacher	Vicky Fouse
	Assistant Teacher	Cheryl McNeil		Assistant Teacher	Dana Bannan

Room #138 Lead Teacher Nancy Landis
 Assistant Teacher Diane Dorfner

Transition Kindergarten Class

Room #118 Lead Teacher Doreen Zanella
 Assistant Teacher Blair Gooding

Music and Movement Lisa Moser

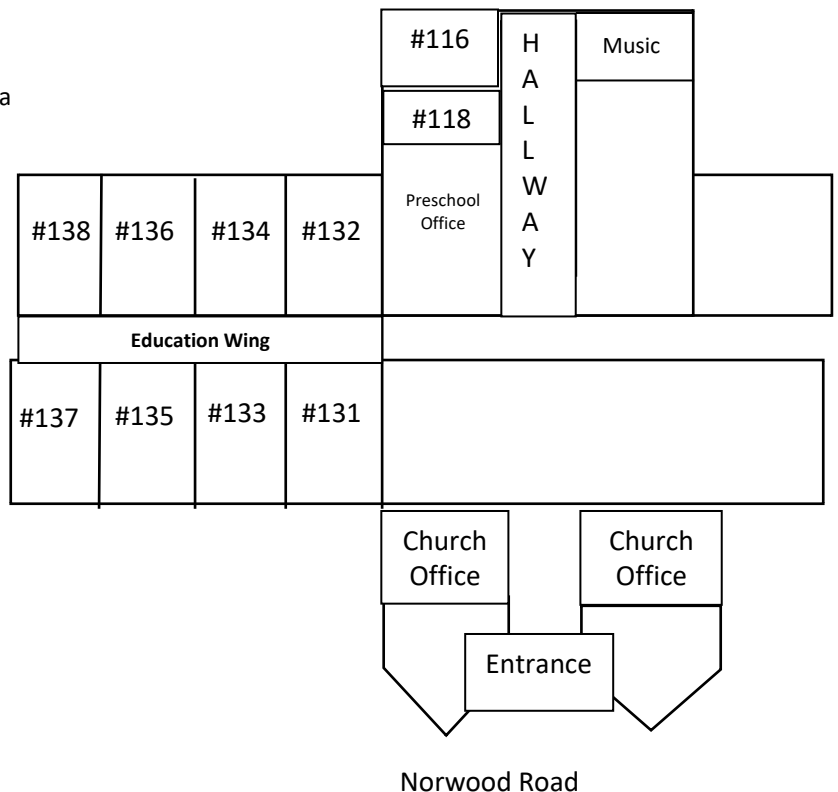
Chapel Danny Peck

Yoga Tanya Pomkoski

Science Julie Allyn

Preschool Office Administrator Mika Scarlett

Preschool Director Jessica Slessman



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SOAPSTONE PRESCHOOL

Mailing Address: Soapstone Preschool
12837 Norwood Road
Raleigh, NC 27613

Phone Number: 919-870-7727

Website: soapstoneumc.org/preschool

Email Address: **Office:** preschooloffice@soapstoneumc.org
Director (Jessica Slessman): jslessman@soapstoneumc.org

School Hours

9:15am – 12:45pm

9:15am – 12:15pm (**Toddlers Only – No Lunch**)

Late Fees

\$5 for the first minute, \$1/minute after

Late fees assessed as follows: 12:20pm (Toddlers), 12:50pm (2's), 12:55pm (Carpool)

About Soapstone Preschool

Soapstone Preschool is a ministry of Soapstone United Methodist Church offering genuine love and care to children and families in a safe, nurturing Christian environment. We believe, as Fred Roger's once said, that "play is really the work of childhood". At Soapstone, every child is special, and we strive to teach to the whole child, by helping them grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally. Learning is fostered through age-appropriate learning centers and hands-on activities that encourage positive socialization with teachers and peers. Parent involvement and partnership is welcome and vital to our preschool family.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Our mission is to guide, educate and nurture children in a creative Christian environment. Children will confidently engage in enthusiastic, play-based learning and build meaningful relationships and skills within a loving, joyful, and educational space, filled with Christian love.

TUITION

- The registration fee is equal to, but not replacing, one month's tuition. This is a non-refundable fee.
- Tuition is based upon yearly costs determined by the number of days a child attends classes weekly, which are then divided into nine equal payments.

Number of Days per Week	Registration Fee	Monthly Tuition
2 Days (Toddlers)	\$225	\$225
2 Days	\$240	\$240
3 Days	\$305	\$305
4 Days	\$345	\$345
5 Days	\$380	\$380
Transitional Kindergarten	\$385	\$385

- **Tuition Schedule:** Tuition will be due on the monthly schedule as indicated below. You also have the option of making a bulk payment for the First Semester (September – December) that will be due on August 10, 2023, and for the Second Semester (January – April) that will be due on December 10, 2023. **ALL May 2024 Tuition must be paid in May 2023, or, if you register after May 2023, at time of registration.**

SOAPSTONE PRESCHOOL TUITION SCHEDULE 2023-24

Tuition Due Date:	Tuition for the Month of:
May 10, 2023	May 2024
August 10, 2023	September 2023
September 10, 2023	October 2023
October 10, 2023	November 2023
November 10, 2023	December 2023
December 10, 2023	January 2024
January 10, 2024	February 2024
February 10, 2024	March 2024
March 10, 2024	April 2024

- **Late Tuition Fee:** The preschool will send a friendly reminder if you are late paying your tuition; however, a \$10 late fee will be charged for any tuition payment not received by the 20th of each month. Another \$10 fee will be charged for any tuition payment not received by the 1st of the following month. *If you miss 2 monthly tuition payments, your child will be unable to return to school until payment is received or a payment program is set up with the director.*

- **Returned Check Fee:** A \$25 fee will be charged for any returned check.

Withdrawal from Preschool

If a child is withdrawn from the preschool for any reason, the family will be charged tuition through the month in which they withdraw.

- In the case of withdrawal, registration fees are not refundable.
- In the case of withdrawal, pre-paid May tuition will be reimbursed if the family withdraws prior the first of school. Once school begins, pre-paid May tuition is non-refundable.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

Morning Arrival

Arrival procedures begin between 9:10-9:15 am. The time prior to this is for teacher preparation and our morning meeting and devotion.

Parent Drop-Off

Parents can walk their child to their classroom in the mornings. Parking is available at the front of the church (on the Norwood Road side) or in the back of the church. No parking is allowed near the entrances off Norwood Road on the grassy or concrete areas. Adults may enter the lobby doors and walk their child to the classroom.

- *We do ask parents to not cluster around the classroom doors during morning drop-off, as our hallways fill quickly with children.*

Carpool Drop-Off

Carpool drop-off (located on the Old Creedmoor Road side of the church) is used for children in the 3's, 4's, and TK. Please follow the map on page 11 to ensure that the traffic will flow smoothly.

Note: 2's are also welcome to use carpool if they have an older sibling.

- Use the Norwood Road entrance closest to Old Creedmoor Road. Loop around to back of church to get into line.
- Teachers will unload children on the **passenger** side of the car. Parents are not allowed to exit their vehicle to assist with unloading, as this creates a safety hazard with cars that are entering the carpool lane.
- Children must remain safely in their cars until preschool staff unloads them. We ask that children do not hang out of cars or stand through sunroofs while in the carpool lane.
- Parents may not pull around other cars in the carpool lane to leave the line early.

Arrival Notes

- It is important that your child arrive on time each day. This will help your child adjust more quickly to the routine and develop a habit that will carry into the formal school years.
- Goodbyes are sometimes difficult for both parents and children. Our teachers try to make this a smooth transition for everyone involved. Children usually adjust to the morning separation with a cheerful kiss and confident assurance that you will see them in a little while. If your child is still having a difficult time adjusting after 30 minutes, we will let you know.

Afternoon Departure

Toddler Classes (12:15pm): Parents will pick children up by the gate of the Busy Bee Garden in front of the church. In case of inclement weather, parents will pick their Toddlers up in the preschool lobby. Inclement weather dismissals will be communicated to parents by their teachers. In the beginning of the school year, teachers may communicate an earlier pickup time with parents based on the needs of the child.

Toddler Late Fee (\$5 for the first minute, \$1/minute after) will be assessed beginning at 12:20pm.

2's Classes (12:45pm):

Parents will pick children up by the gate of the Toddler's and 2's playground in the front of the church. In case of inclement weather, parents will pick their 2's up in the preschool lobby. Inclement weather dismissals will be communicated to parents by their teachers. In the beginning of the school year, teachers may communicate an earlier pickup time with parents based on the needs of the child.

2's Late Fee (\$5 for the first minute, \$1/minute after) will be assessed beginning at 12:50pm.

3's/4's/TK Classes (12:45pm):

Carpool is **mandatory** for all 3's, 4's, and TK children for dismissal. **If you have children in both the Toddlers/2's and an older class, please pick up your younger child first.** You may then walk over to the carpool line and pick your child up directly from their teacher.

- Use the Norwood Road entrance closest to Old Creedmoor Road. Loop around to back of church to get into line.
- Please hang your family carpool tag from the rearview mirror.
- Teachers will load children on the passenger side of the car. Preschool children are required to have a car seat. Staff is unable to load children into a car that does not have a car seat or booster seat present. We will wait with your child at preschool until an appropriate seat is provided for transport.
- Please do your best to stay in your cars. We ask parents to turn around to strap their child into the carseat. If you need to get out to buckle, we ask you do it very quickly and carefully. For liability reasons, preschool staff is unable to strap children into their car seats/boosters during dismissal.

Carpool Late Fee (\$5 for the first minute, \$1/minute after) will be assessed beginning at 12:55pm.

Alternate Person Picking up Child

We **MUST** be made aware if someone other than the parent or authorized adult (as stated on the enrollment form) will be picking up your child. Please give this written information to the teacher. We will not allow your child to leave with another person unless we have this information. If the person picking up your child is unfamiliar to our staff, we will ask for ID to verify their name matches the name we were given. Please make sure the person you ask to pick up your child is aware of this requirement.

Should you fail to put this information in writing, you must call and leave a message with the Director so they can inform the teachers. These measures are very important to the safety and security of every child, as well your child's sense of security.

Alternate Student Drop-Off/Pick-Up Times

If you need to drop your child off at preschool after the school day has started, or plan to pick your child up earlier than normal dismissal hours, please follow the steps below:

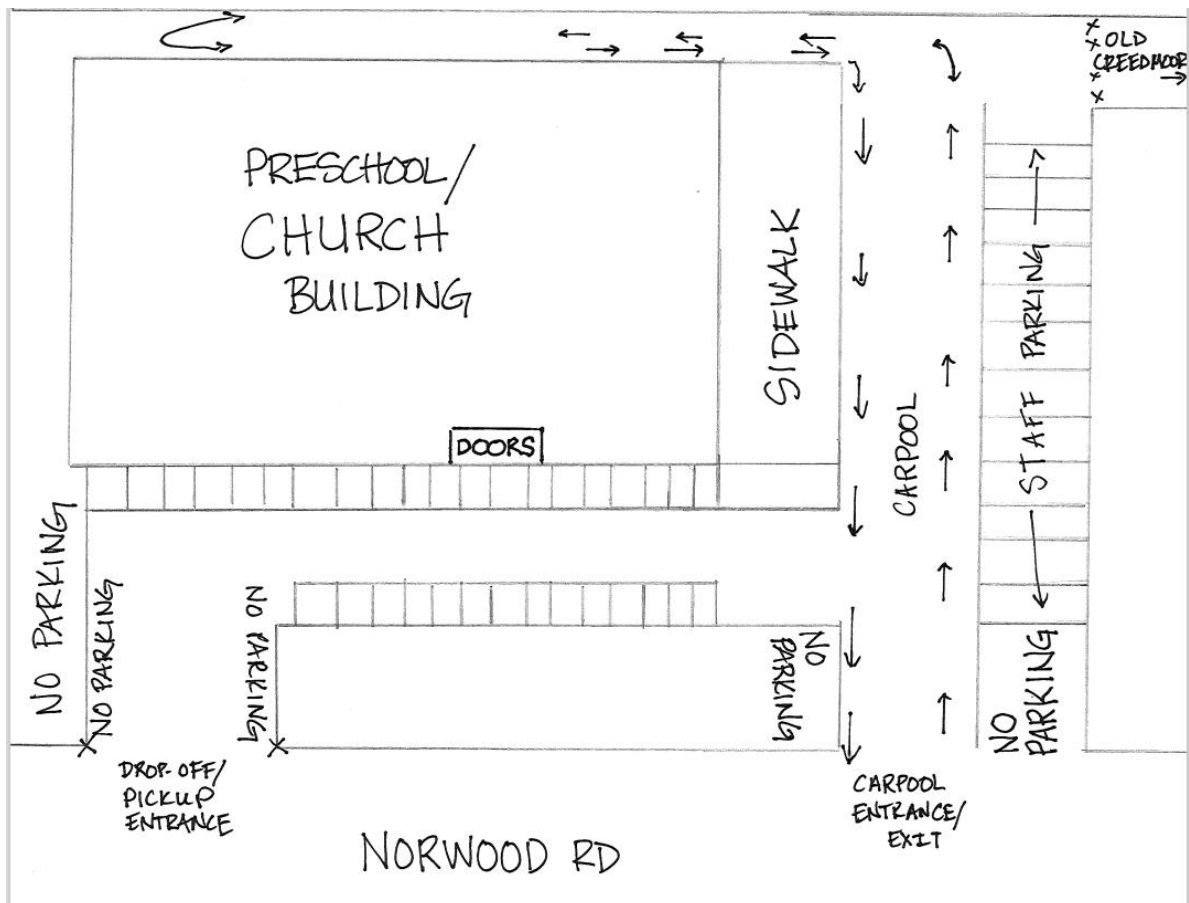
1. Ring the doorbell at the preschool entrance. Display your “Soapstone Preschool Family Card” in the camera monitor.
2. Stop at the Parent & Visitor Kiosk in the lobby
3. Scan the QR Code directly from your Procure app or using the Camera on your mobile device. Select your child and then enter your signature.
4. Next, check into the preschool office. A staff member will escort you down to your child’s classroom.
5. If a staff member is not in the preschool office, please check in with the church front office. They will find a preschool staff member to assist you.

*For detailed assistance, please refer to the “Parents: Checking Children In/Out of Soapstone Preschool” document posted on our website here: [Checking Children In/Out of Soapstone Preschool](#)

PARKING PROCEDURES

Safety is our top priority at the preschool - for children, adults, and your vehicles. Our front parking lot does get busy (particularly in the beginning of the school year). Here are a few guidelines to make morning drop-off easier and safer.

- If you are parking in the front lot to walk your child into the school, please park **only in marked parking spots**. Do NOT park on the sides of the entrance to the front parking lot or on grassy surfaces. This blocks our entrances and does not allow for two lanes for cars to enter or exit.
- If you cannot find a parking spot right away, please use the carpool exit to circle around on Norwood Road and come back into the drop-off entrance.
- Carpool families – please exit straight out of the parking lot in the morning to allow the front lot to be used by those who are parking and walking their children into the school building.
- Do **NOT** use your cell phone when you are trying to park in the front lot.
- We encourage 3's, 4's, and TK families to use carpool in the morning when you can.



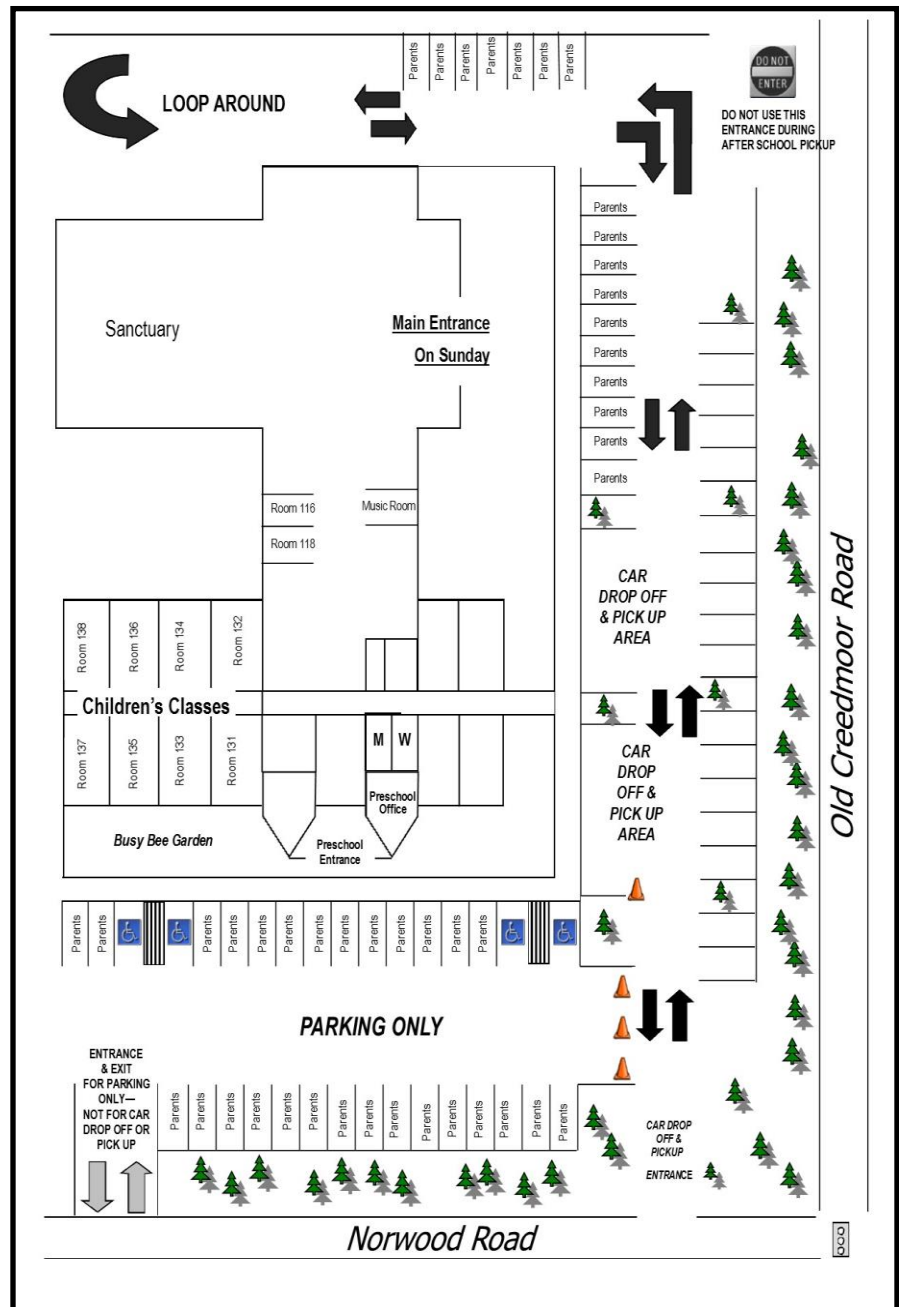
CARPOOL LINE PROCEDURES

For Morning Drop off

- Staff will unload children from the **passenger** side of the vehicle only. For safety reasons, please stay in your car and keep the doors closed.
- Please don't allow children to stand in sunroofs and or hang out of windows.
- Cell phone use is not permitted in the carpool line!
- Wait until the cars in front of you have moved. **DO NOT PULL AROUND!**

For After School Pick up

- Hang your family carpool tag from the rearview mirror.
- Staff will bring children to the car on the **passenger** side.
- Please do your best to stay in your cars. We ask parents to turn around to strap their child into the carseat. If you need to get out to buckle, we ask you do it very quickly and carefully.
- Wait until the car in front leaves. **DO NOT PULL AROUND.**
- Cell phone use is not permitted in the carpool line!
- Carseats/booster seats must be used.
- If parents need to speak to a teacher, please pull around to the front parking lot to do so.



WHAT TO BRING/WEAR

Clothing

Clothing for preschool should be comfortable and appropriate for the weather. **We get messy at preschool!** Tennis shoes and approved closed-toe shoes are the most appropriate and safe footwear for children. **Flip-flops, clogs, boots with no tread, sandals, "crocs", and jellies are not allowed.**

Each child needs to keep a seasonal change of clothes in their tote bag in case of an accident. Please keep a complete change of clothes including underwear and socks in a Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. The clothing will need to be changed out according to each season. Please label everything —coats, gloves/mittens, hats, and face masks. Mittens are preferred for all children.

Disposable Diapers & Wipes

All children not potty trained should bring enough disposable diapers or disposable training pants and wipes for the day. Please label diapers. Parents of children in older classes are to communicate with teachers concerning the potty-training progress so that the child's needs are clearly understood.

Personal Items

We do not encourage bringing personal toys unless the teacher has requested them. Please make the teacher aware if there is an item your child wants to share. PLEASE LABEL it when it is brought to school.

Preschool Supplies

Your classroom teacher will provide a monthly sign-up for needed classroom supplies (baby wipes, paper towels, Chlorox wipes, etc.)

Tote Bags

Each child is required to purchase and bring a Soapstone Preschool tote bag to school daily. This bag is for them to carry a change of clothing, their artwork, etc. Please note that children will not necessarily bring home their work every day. Bookbags/Backpacks are not allowed. You'll find a communication clip hanging on their tote bag, which is a visible place to send notes to and from school.

Masks

Unless following an exposure or positive case of COVID (see Health Policy below), masks are optional at Soapstone Preschool.

SNACK & LUNCH INFORMATION

Children will have a snack and packed lunch each day. Each day, we ask that you please provide the following:

1. Small, simple snack in a labeled container **separate from lunch box.**
2. Nutritious lunch in a **labeled lunch box.**
3. A **labeled** water bottle.

Teacher will inform parents of food allergies within their classroom and we reserve the right to make a classroom “peanut-free” if there is a child in the classroom with an allergy.

SNACK & LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

MILK PRODUCTS

Milk – Plain or Chocolate
Yogurt - Plain or with Fruit
Cottage Cheese
Cheese cubes or slices
Pudding

DRINKS

Water

RAW VEGETABLES

Cucumber slices or sticks
Celery sticks
Cherry tomatoes - **cut in half**
Broccoli flowerets
Radishes

Note: No carrots

BREADS AND CEREALS

Dry cereal - not sugar coated
Trail mix of raisins and dry cereal, NO nuts
Crackers – saltine, round, whole grain
Vanilla wafers
Popcorn (**3, 4 & 5-year olds**)
Goldfish
Graham Crackers
Pretzels

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY SNACKS

Mini Cupcakes
Muffins
Doughnut holes
Cookies
Fruit Kabobs

PROTEIN

Turkey roll-ups (or other deli meat)
Hardboiled eggs
Cheese
Greek yogurt
Edamame

FRUITS

Apple wedges
Applesauce
Citrus – orange, clementine, etc.
Melon – cantaloupe, watermelon
Raisins
Grapes - **seedless and cut in half**
Pears
Peaches
Pineapple chunks
Berries
Banana

There are certain items not allowed in the preschool for snack/lunch for safety reasons.

Please do not send in the following:

- **Whole grapes or whole grape tomatoes**
- **Any variety of nut**
- **Carrots**
- **Hot Dogs**
- **Fruit Gummies**
- **Any form of candy**
- **Juice and Soda**

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

Conscious Discipline®

“Discipline is not something you do to children; it is something you develop within them.”
— Dr. Becky Bailey

Our first priority at Soapstone Preschool is to ensure that each child who walks through the doors feels SAFE and LOVED. Physical and emotional safety dictates the ways in which we positively guide children during the preschool day. At Soapstone Preschool, we follow the tenets of Conscious Discipline to proactively teach children self-regulation skills and to build their social-emotional skills, as they learn to navigate relationships with peers and adults.

Developed by Becky Bailey, Conscious Discipline is a social-emotional learning program for parents, educators, and mental health professionals that emphasizes behavior-modeling and problem-solving, rather than punishment for misbehavior.

Conscious Discipline starts with adults. When we pay attention to our own emotions and how we react to upsetting or triggering circumstances, we can learn to self-regulate and become conscious of the words and reactions we use with children. Only then can we proactively model and teach self-regulation and problem-solving strategies to children, focusing on the following skills:

- Anger management
- Helpfulness
- Assertiveness
- Impulse Control
- Cooperation
- Empathy
- Problem-Solving

In addition, at Soapstone, we work to build classroom and preschool “families” that emphasize connection, a sense of belonging, and a shared commitment for all children. We help achieve these goals by implementing strategies like the following:

- Wish You Wells
- Safe Spaces
- Morning Meetings
- I Love You Rituals

For more information on Conscious Discipline, including free podcasts and webinars, please visit www.consciousdiscipline.com.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

2023-2024 HEALTH POLICIES

Soapstone Preschool has adopted the following "Recommendations from the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics" as our general guidelines for sickness.

We proudly partner with our families to help prevent the spread of illness at Soapstone Preschool. It is the responsibility of our families to contact your child's pediatrician to determine if your child's condition is contagious to others. If your child has a contagious illness, families must contact the preschool. Likewise, the preschool will notify families when their children have been exposed to a contagious disease at the preschool.

Children may not attend preschool if they exhibit any of the following:

***Indicates a condition in which a doctor's note is required for return.**

FEVER: If your child has a fever of 100.4 or higher, children may not return to school until they are 24-hours fever-free WITHOUT fever-reducing medication.

INTESTINAL INFECTION: (vomiting and/or diarrhea) not associated with changes of diet, or new medication. Children may not return to school until they are 24 hours without vomit and/or diarrhea. If a child is sent home from school due to vomiting or diarrhea, they may not return to school the next day.

***STREP THROAT:** Children may NOT return to school until given two doses of an appropriate antibiotic 12 hours apart.

COMMON COLD: 1) congestion and/or 2) persistent and discolored runny nose, and/or 3) frequent cough/wet cough. We require symptoms to be minimal and improving upon return to school (without medication).

***FLU (INFLUENZA):** Please do not allow your child to return to school until he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine, Tamiflu, etc. AND he/she is no longer exhibiting symptoms of the flu. We reserve the right to ask a parent to keep their child home for additional day(s) to keep the flu from spreading in the classroom.

***COVID:** Please contact the preschool director for guidance if your child has been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID.

***RASH:** accompanied by a fever or behavioral changes OR skin infections (impetigo, boils, ringworm).

***EYE INFECTIONS:** (pink eye or drainage) – Children must be on medication for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

***CROUP**

***HAND, FOOT, MOUTH:** If your child exhibits bumps or rashes (particularly on their face, around their mouth, hands/feet), they can return to school with a doctor's note and if they have met the following criteria: *fever-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication), no new blisters/lesions and existing blisters/lesions have closed/begun healing, and children can participate comfortably. This can typically take up to 7 days after symptoms have appeared.*

***OTHER CHILDHOOD COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:** If your child is exposed or becomes ill with a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, scarlet fever, mumps, measles, fifth disease, head lice, etc., the director and the child's teacher must be contacted immediately.

- If your child will miss preschool (for any reason), please message your teacher and/or Ms. Jess in Procure or via email. It is essential that we can reach you, or your emergency contacts, during the preschool hours.
- If a family member is exhibiting a contagious illness above, the preschool requests that you keep your child at home in the interest of the health and wellbeing of the other students and staff at Soapstone Preschool. If we send your child home who is exhibiting one of the illnesses above, we will also send their sibling(s) home as well (if you have siblings who attend the preschool).
- Medical history and current immunization record must be on file before any child may attend preschool. **Children with food allergies must have a separate Food Allergy Action Plan on file.**

Potty Training Expectations

Soapstone Preschool Potty Training Expectations

Soapstone Preschool is happy to work with you and your child's transition from diapers to using the toilet. This is a first step towards independence and learning to listen to their body's needs. Potty-training works best when a child is developmentally ready to begin, and each child is unique. As such, Soapstone Preschool does not require children to be potty-trained by a certain age.

Soapstone Preschool teachers will work closely with parents as their child begins the potty-training process. *Please understand, though, that teachers may not always be able to accommodate parent requests with their individual process due to classroom responsibilities or safety and hygiene concerns.* Here are a few tips and expectations before your child comes to preschool in underwear:

- Please communicate with your child's teacher (Procare, email, in-person) if your child is potty-training and using underwear regularly.
- In order for a child to wear underwear to school, they must be able to tell their teacher when they need to use the toilet.
- If you wish for your child to wear underwear and they are unable to ask to use the toilet on their own, parents are welcome to put a Pull-Up on over the underwear. **We ask you to use a pull-up with Velcro on the sides.**
- Please pack multiple (and labeled) changes of clothes, including socks and an extra pair of shoes. Avoid dressing your child in any clothing that would make it difficult for them to use the toilet.
- If your child continues to have multiple accidents while at school, your child may not be ready to wear underwear to school. Children are engrossed in the play at preschool and tend to ignore their body more so they can keep playing. They just need more practice time learning to stop and recognize their own body signals.
- "Potty" watches are not allowed in the preschool.

Procare

Procare Solutions is Soapstone Preschool's communication, billing, and enrollment tool. We **strongly encourage** you to download the app on your phone for easiest access.

- **Communication:**
 - Ability to message parents and staff as text message or email
 - Allows for classroom, whole school, and staff messaging
 - Text messaging used for emergency-type situations like weather delays and closing, classroom announcements, staff announcements
 - Ability to send customizable newsletters on a weekly basis – whole school and individual classes.
 - Allows teachers to post pictures of children, sent notes to parents, track absences, and send incident reports electronically.
- **Student Tracking:** Daily Student Attendance & Checking Students In/Out of School
- **Billing:**
 - Parents can set up a payment method (ACH draft, credit/debit card) on an auto-draft schedule
 - Parents receive monthly tuition invoices and payment notifications
 - Parents can quickly be charged/pay for a miscellaneous purchase (t-shirt, late fee, etc.)
 - Parents can access their own monthly and tax YTD statements
 - Preschool can easily track tuition, registration, camp, and miscellaneous payments with quick reports.
- **Enrollment:**
 - Tracks leads for new school year easily, with tasks/notes/messages to document any interested prospects
 - Automates enrollment process to an online application and for existing parents, online registration fee payment.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VIEW THE PARENTS' HELP GUIDE:



INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Soapstone Preschool will follow the closings and delays determined by the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) with an occasional exception. Follow radio (101.5 FM), television (WRAL), or online (www.wcpss.net) for WCPSS closings. We will post on the website, Procure, and Facebook as soon as a decision has been made. Days missed due to inclement weather may be rescheduled. Soapstone Preschool has the option of not making up 3 days per school year.

Determination of Closings and Delays

Wake County Public School System Closed: Preschool will be closed if WCPSS closes schools.

1, 2 or 3-hour delay by Wake County: Preschool will be delayed 1 hour if WCPSS delays school by 1, 2 or 3 hours. Preschool will open at 10:15am and close at normal time— 12:45pm (12:15pm for Toddlers).

3 or 4 hours early dismissal by Wake County: Preschool will close at 11:45am.

If the children attend for any portion of a day, that day will be counted as a full day of Preschool.

FOR PUBLIC HEALTH/PANDEMIC-RELATED CLOSURES:

Follow the updates on Procure for any public health related closures.

Short-Term Closure (2 Weeks or less): During this time, the preschool will move to a virtual learning platform for each classroom and a re-opening date will be announced. Tuition will still be collected.

Long-Term Closure: If the closure extends past two weeks, the Preschool Advisory Committee will determine action steps.

Safety Protocols

Soapstone Preschool is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all our students and staff. Listed below are the many things we implement to keep safety as our top priority for all!

CPR Certification

All staff are required to have updated CPR certification, which is offered at the preschool each summer.

Background Checks (Staff)

All adults employed by the preschool have current background checks (repeated every 5 years).

Safe Sanctuaries

Safe Sanctuaries is a program of the United Methodist Church which assists local churches in establishing policies and procedures to protect children and youth from abuse. Soapstone Preschool follows the safe sanctuary guidelines as established by Soapstone UMC. This plan reflects our commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, employees and volunteers who participate in our ministries.

General Safety Policies

- Entrances to the preschool are always locked (except for morning arrival and dismissal)
- All outside classroom doors are always locked when children are inside the classroom
- Cameras installed inside and outside the building/preschool wings to monitor building visitors and foot traffic
- Only those who are authorized to pick up your child in Procare will be able to do so. We **will** ask for identification from this person if they are unfamiliar or picking up for the first time
- Classroom teachers carry an emergency red bag and walkie-talkies at all times

Soapstone Preschool Family Card

Each family will be issued 2 family cards at the beginning of the school year. If you are visiting the preschool during preschool hours (dropping off a bag, picking your child up, volunteering, etc.), you will be required to show this card upon arrival when you ring the doorbell at the preschool entrance. This allows both preschool and church staff to verify you are a member of the preschool community. If you do not have your card on your person, you will be asked to wait outside until preschool office staff can verify your identification.

Parent & Visitor Kiosk

If you visit the preschool during preschool hours, please stop at the Parent & Visitor Kiosk in the lobby. You will scan one of the QR codes to either:

- Sign your child in/out (late arrival or early dismissal)
- Check in as a visitor to a classroom or volunteer

After you scan the QR codes, go to the preschool office. A staff member will escort you to your child's classroom. If there is no one available in the preschool office, please check in with the church front office. They will find a member of the preschool staff to assist you.

Active Attack Training & Plan

Soapstone Preschool has developed a comprehensive Active Attack Plan that covers safeguards and strategies in the unlikely event of an active attack. This plan was created by Soapstone Preschool, in conjunction with the expert recommendations from ALERT, Special Agent Craig West (NCSBI), the Wake County Sheriff's Department, and members of the SUMC staff, the Trustees Committee and the Preschool Advisory Committee.

All Soapstone Preschool staff have received active attack training from Special Agent Craig West from the NCSBI and ALERT program. In addition, all staff have been trained on the Soapstone Preschool Active Attack Plan.

Safety Drills

- Fire Drills will be conducted throughout the school year
- Active Attack Drills will be conducted throughout the school year (based upon Soapstone Preschool's Active Attack Plan)

YOU CAN HELP BY ...

- **Keeping children home when they aren't feeling well!** Remember **The Golden Rule!**
- **Providing preschool supplies for your child.**
- **Dressing your child in comfortable clothes.** We will be busy moving around and doing many art projects throughout the year. **For their own safety, children are not allowed to wear crocs, flip-flops or sandals to school.** Please keep a labeled change of clothing (socks included) in your child's tote bag.
- Download the Procure app on your phone for easy access to class/preschool messages, your child's newsfeed, and bill-pay. Please keep your profile, as well as your child's profile, up-to-date with current information.
- **Carry your "Soapstone Preschool Family Card"** with you to gain access to the building during school hours
- **Check out Teacher Wish Lists** for additional supply requests
- **Volunteer at the preschool** – mystery read in a classroom, help with special events
- Participating in our annual fundraisers.
- Linking your **Harris Teeter VIC card** to Soapstone
Must re-link each August; Soapstone Preschool's code is **6147**
You can link to more than one school!

PRESCHOOLER BASICS

Preschoolers are:

- **Creative**—in order to express themselves
- **Curious** about everything—eager to learn
- **Imaginative**—expressing what is uppermost in their minds as they play
- **Imitative**—as they step into the roles of other persons, animals, or objects
- **Active!**
- **Literal-Minded**—in their interpretation of words, thinking in terms of what they have seen and experienced
- **Sensitive**—to their “emotional environments”

Preschoolers Learn:

- **Through relationships**—with parents, teachers, and other children
- **By doing**—experiencing first-hand
- **Through the senses**—touching, tasting, hearing, feeling, and smelling
- **By repetition**—practicing new skills over and over
- **Through satisfaction**—as they experience success
- **Through play**—the work of the child!

Preschoolers Need:

- **Love**—unconditionally
- **Acceptance**—to feel respected
- **Trust**—that is developed by adults meeting needs promptly
- **Security**—provided through consistency and familiarity
- **Independence**—to choose among appropriate options and discover his/her unique gifts
- **Guidance**—that patiently and lovingly teaches what is right and wrong

Parents are often concerned that their children are not learning anything when they are "just playing." However, this is a vital part of your child's learning experience. There are lots of wonderful things learned when they are playing.

WHEN YOUR CHILD BUILDS WITH BLOCKS:

- She learns to use her imagination to create something from her own thinking.
- She has the satisfaction of being able to make something.
- She learns about sizes and shapes, weights and balances, height and depth, smoothness, and roughness.
- She is exercising her body.
- She learns to play with others.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PAINTS:

- He is more concerned with the process he is going through than with a finished product. This is how it should be for this stage in his development.
- He learns about colors and how he can use them.
- He learns to use his imagination and transfers his ideas to paper.
- He gets emotional satisfaction from being able to express himself.
- He learns how to use small muscle coordination to handle a brush.
- He learns to make choices and decisions.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS ON THE OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT:

- She learns how to use her body effectively.
- She experiences joy in achieving a skill.
- She has fun and relaxation found in bodily movement.
- She learns the limitations of her body.
- She learns safety and caution.
- She learns to take turns and to share a piece of equipment.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS IN THE HOUSEKEEPING CORNER:

- He learns what the roles of mothers and fathers and children are.
- He understands what it feels like to play at being somebody other than himself.
- He learns how to use his imagination.
- He learns how to cooperate with other children.

WHEN YOUR CHILD MAKES A GIFT OUT OF PAPER AND PASTE:

- She learns about doing things for others.
- She learns how to use materials like scissors and paste/glue.
- She learns how to use her imagination to make the kind of present she has in mind. Again, the process, not the finished product, is important to her.
- She learns about shapes, sizes, colors, and textures.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS IN THE SAND:

- He finds it soothing to bury his hands in sand and pour sand in and out of cups, buckets and other containers.
- He is able to relax with these types of media and center his attention on a task.
- He has an opportunity to play alone and not have to compete with other children as with some activities. This is especially important to a child who has trouble getting along with others.
- He has a great opportunity to learn about size and measurement, experimenting with measuring spoons, cups and different sized containers.
- He is not concerned with a final product so he does not find it frustrating.

WHEN YOUR CHILD WORKS WITH PUZZLES:

- She has an opportunity to work alone or together with other children
- She gains satisfaction in completing a puzzle and builds her self-confidence.
- She has an opportunity to improve her hand eye coordination.
- She will use skills learned in doing puzzles later when she learns to read-putting letters to sounds, making words with letters, and making stories with words.

WHEN YOUR CHILD LISTENS TO STORIES OR LOOKS AT BOOKS:

- He learns to listen.
- He has an opportunity to increase his vocabulary by hearing new words read to him.
- He learns about different concepts, people and places.
- He learns to enjoy books and reading.
- His mind is stimulated, visualizing the things he is hearing about.

WHEN YOUR CHILD COOKS:

- She learns to follow directions.
- She stimulates and uses all five senses.
- She learns to recognize colors and shapes from different kinds of foods and kitchen utensils.
- She has an opportunity to use different tools and equipment to improve small muscle coordination.

WHEN YOUR CHILD LISTENS TO MUSIC, SINGS OR DANCES:

- He learns to appreciate music from different countries, cultures, and time periods.
- He learns to express himself and his ideas.
- He increases his vocabulary.
- He gains satisfaction from participating in an activity that can be fun, physical and/or enriching.

WHEN YOUR CHILD USES MANIPULATIVE ACTIVITIES:

- She explores new concepts, practices emerging skills, and reinforces skills already mastered.
- She develops fine motor practice.
- She learns about classifying, sorting, predicting, problem solving, and analyzing results.
- She develops her knowledge of the world around her using real objects and concrete examples.
- She learns how to learn.

WHEN YOUR CHILD PLAYS WITH PUPPETS:

- She is able to verbalize her feelings using words.
- She can begin to understand the feelings of others.
- She can role-play and perhaps find solutions to situations that may disturb her.
- She stretches her imagination.

ADDENDUM I: Parent Acknowledgment

General Acknowledgment

I have read the 2023-24 Soapstone Preschool Parent Handbook and I understand the policies and procedures that have been outlined within.

Child/Children's Names

Parent
Name

Date

Parent Signature