



# Family Handbook 2026-2027

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# WELCOME FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We are so excited to welcome you to a wonderful year of learning, exploration, laughter and joy at Soapstone UMC Preschool. Thank you for entrusting your children to this community. It is a privilege to offer and experience the love of God through their presence!

If you are looking for a faith community, we'd love for you to join us on Sunday morning, at either 8:30 am or 11 am. Children are a vital part of our worship services, and we strive to make them, and their family members feel comfortable and welcomed. Sensory bags with fidget toys and activity binders are available in the sanctuary, on the left as you enter. There is a special message for children during worship, and afterward, children five or under are welcome to stay in the worship service or enjoy time in the church nursery.

You and your family are also invited to attend any event at SUMC including Vacation Bible School, the Strawberry Festival, Live Nativity, Christmas Eve Family Service, and more. You can learn about all of these ministries at [soapstoneumc.org](http://soapstoneumc.org).

Additional opportunities that may be of interest:

-MOMCo (The MOM Community), a group that supports women through their parenthood journeys, meeting twice a month for learning, conversation, and playdates. Childcare is provided. Contact church member Blair Roberts ([bbroberts218@gmail.com](mailto:bbroberts218@gmail.com)) for more information.

-Free Pilates classes, Tuesdays at 1:30 pm, and Thursdays at 9:45 am, upstairs in Room 200. Bring a mat!

I am looking forward to meeting you and your children this year!

Peace,  
Laura

## 2026-27 SOAPSTONE PRESCHOOL STAFF

## Toddlers

|           |                   |              |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------|
| Room #133 | Lead Teacher      | Peg Feely    |
|           | Assistant Teacher | Jamie Fordin |

## 2 Year Old Classes

|           |              |                   |                    |              |                         |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Room #131 | Lead Teacher | Karen Sazani      | Room #132          | Lead Teacher | Val Moser               |
|           |              | Assistant Teacher | Merissa Antonuccio |              | Assistant TeacherBrooke |
|           | Barksdale    |                   |                    |              |                         |

### 3 Year Old Classes

|           |                   |               |           |                   |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Room #134 | Lead Teacher      | Linda Schwarz | Room #135 | Lead Teacher      | Jennifer Schudlik |
|           | Assistant Teacher | Ali Riter     |           | Assistant Teacher | Kim Sauls         |

## 4 Year Old Classes

|           |                                    |                                   |           |                                   |                              |
|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Room #136 | Lead Teacher<br>Assistant Teacher  | Julie Scott<br>Jill Fitzpatrick   | Room #137 | Lead Teacher<br>Assistant Teacher | Vicky Fouse<br>Rebecca Myers |
| Room #138 | Lead Teacher<br>Assistant Teachers | Michelle Partsch<br>Sabrina Brown |           |                                   |                              |

## Transition Kindergarten Class

|           |                   |              |  |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Room #118 | Lead Teacher      | Katie Bigler |  |
|           | Assistant Teacher | Tina Rodgers |  |

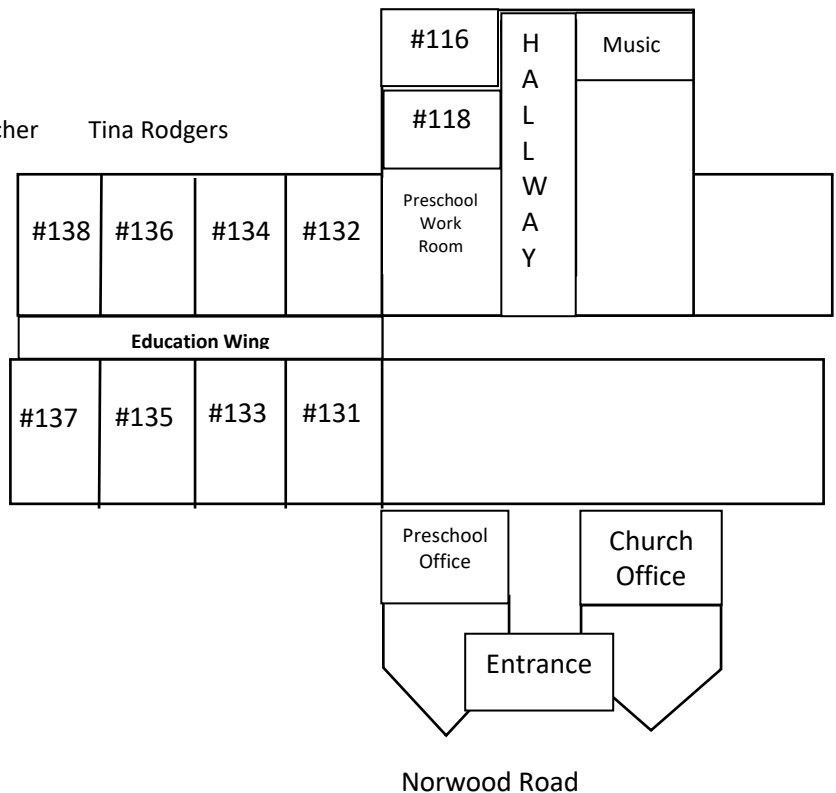
**Music and Movement** Cheryl McNeil

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| <b>Chapel</b> | Church Staff |
|---------------|--------------|

**Yoga** Jamie Fordin

Science Chelsea Jones

**Preschool Director** Mika Scarlett (interim)



# GENERAL INFORMATION

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

**Phone Number:** 919-870-7727

**Website:** [soapstoneumc.org/preschool](http://soapstoneumc.org/preschool)

**Email Address:** **Office:** [preschooloffice@soapstoneumc.org](mailto:preschooloffice@soapstoneumc.org)

## **School Hours**

**2s – TK:** 9:15am – 12:45pm

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

9:15am – 12:45pm (January – May) **Lunch**

## **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 Rogers once said, that “play is really the work of childhood”. At Soapstone, every child is special, and we strive to teach 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 are 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 & FEES

- 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.

## Monthly Tuition Schedule

| Tuition Due Date:  | Tuition for the Month of: |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| May 10, 2026       | May <b>2027</b>           |
| August 10, 2026    | September 2026            |
| September 10, 2026 | October 2026              |
| October 10, 2026   | November 2026             |
| November 10, 2026  | December 2026             |
| December 10, 2026  | January 2027              |
| January 10, 2027   | February 2027             |
| February 10, 2027  | March 2027                |
| March 10, 2027     | April 2027                |

**Tuition Schedule:** Tuition will be due on the monthly schedule as indicated above. **ALL May Tuition 2027 must be paid on May 10, 2026, or, if you register after May 2026, that payment will be collected at the time of registration.**

- Your child is enrolled in the preschool program for the school year. There is no tuition credit for absences, illness or holidays.
- In case of a late start or an extended absence, tuition must be paid if the child's place is to be held.

### **Payment Options:**

1. ACH Draft, Debit Card, Credit Card in your Procure account. *This option is highly recommended.*
    - Families paying by credit card will incur a small surcharge
  2. Checks, made payable to "Soapstone Preschool".
- 
- New families will receive an invitation to join Procure upon admission to the preschool.
  - New families will be charged \$15 for your child's Soapstone tote bag in August 2026.

**Bulk Tuition Payments:** Tuition is collected monthly; however, if you prefer to do a bulk payment, please let the preschool director know. Your choices are the following:

- 1) One (1) payment for the entire year
- 2) Two (2) payments (one per semester) (August – November/December – March).

**Late Tuition Fee:** The preschool will send a friendly reminder if you are late paying your tuition; however, a \$20 late fee will be charged for any tuition payment not received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Another \$20 fee will be charged for any tuition payment not received by the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 day of school. Once school begins, pre-paid May tuition is non-refundable.

# ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

## MORNING ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Arrival begins between 9:10–9:15 AM. Please do not arrive earlier, as staff use this time for morning preparation and devotions. Prompt arrival helps your child build a healthy routine and adjust smoothly to the day.

### Carpool Drop-Off

While walking your child in is permitted for older age groups, we strongly encourage using carpool to keep hallway traffic flowing smoothly.

- **Eligible Groups:** 3s, 4s, and TK.
- **2s Option:** With director permission, 2s who have siblings may begin using AM carpool starting October 15th.
- **Location & Route:** Located on the Old Creedmoor Road side of the church. Enter using the Norwood Road entrance closest to Old Creedmoor Road, then loop around to the back of the church to join the line (see map on page 12).
- **Safety Rules:**
  - Children must remain inside the vehicle until staff unload them. No standing through sunroofs or leaning out windows.
  - Teachers will unload children from the passenger side only.
  - Parents must stay in their vehicles at all times.
  - Do not pull around other cars to leave the line early.

### Walk-In Drop-Off

- **Toddlers & 2s:** Parents must walk these children directly to their classrooms.
- **3s, 4s, & TK:** Parents have the option to walk children to class, though carpool is preferred.
- **Parking:** Park in the front lot (Norwood Road side) or the main back lot. Do not park in handicap spaces (unless you have the appropriate tag) or on any grassy or concrete areas near the Norwood Road entrances.
- **One-Way Hallway Flow:** Enter through the lobby doors to reach the classroom hall. To reduce crowding, the preschool hallway is strictly one-way during arrival. Exit through the door at the end of the hallway leading to the playground. Please do not linger outside classroom doors.

### Drop-Off Tips & Separation

Keep goodbyes short and confident—a quick kiss and a reassuring word usually work best. If your child remains distressed after 30 minutes, staff will contact you.

## AFTERNOON DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

### Toddler Classes

- **Pickup Location:** Main gate at the Busy Bee Garden (front of church).
  - *Inclement Weather:* Preschool lobby (teachers will notify parents via Procure).
- **Schedule & Times:**
  - **August – December:** 12:15 PM
  - **January – May:** 12:45 PM

- *Note:* Teachers may arrange an earlier pickup time at the start of the year based on your child's needs. Late fees apply immediately after the designated pickup time.

## 2s Classes

- **Pickup Location:** Gate at the Toddler & 2s Playground (front of church).
  - *Inclement Weather:* Preschool lobby (teachers will notify parents via Procure).
- **Schedule & Times:**
  - **12:45 PM** (all year)
  - *Note:* Teachers may arrange an earlier pickup time at the start of the year based on your child's needs. Late fees apply starting at 12:45 PM.

## 3s, 4s, & TK Classes

- **Carpool Requirement:** Carpool dismissal is **mandatory** for all 3s, 4s, and TK students.
- **Dismissal Time:** 12:45 PM
- **Carpool Process & Rules:**
  - **Route:** Enter via Norwood Road (closest to Old Creedmoor Road) and loop around to the back of the church to join the line.
  - **Tag:** Hang your family carpool tag from your rearview mirror.
  - **Loading:** Staff will load children into the **passenger side only**.
  - **Car Seats Required:** Children *must* have an appropriate car seat/booster installed. Staff cannot load a child into a vehicle without one; you will be asked to wait until a proper seat is provided.
  - **Buckling Up:** Parents should remain in the car and reach back to buckle their child. If you must exit the vehicle to buckle them, please do so quickly and safely. For liability reasons, staff cannot strap children into car seats.

**Families with Multiple Children (Younger + Older)** If you have a Toddler/2s child *and* an older student (3s/4s/TK):

1. Pick up your younger child on foot first at their designated playground gate.
2. Walk over to the carpool area and wait in the designated "**Parent Pick-Up**" spot. A teacher will bring your older child directly to you.

**Carpool Late Fee will be assessed beginning at 12:55pm.**

## Late Pick-Up:

Soapstone Preschool does not provide after school care. A late fee (\$7 for the first minute, \$1/each minute after) will be assessed for each child who has not been picked up by the completion of the class day (see times above). After the third late pick-up, the Preschool Advisory Committee (PAC) will be notified and a discussion will be held with the family to provide appropriate next steps, which may include reviewing continued participation in the program or adjustments to registration privileges.

## 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 information to the teacher via Procure message. 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.

## 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:

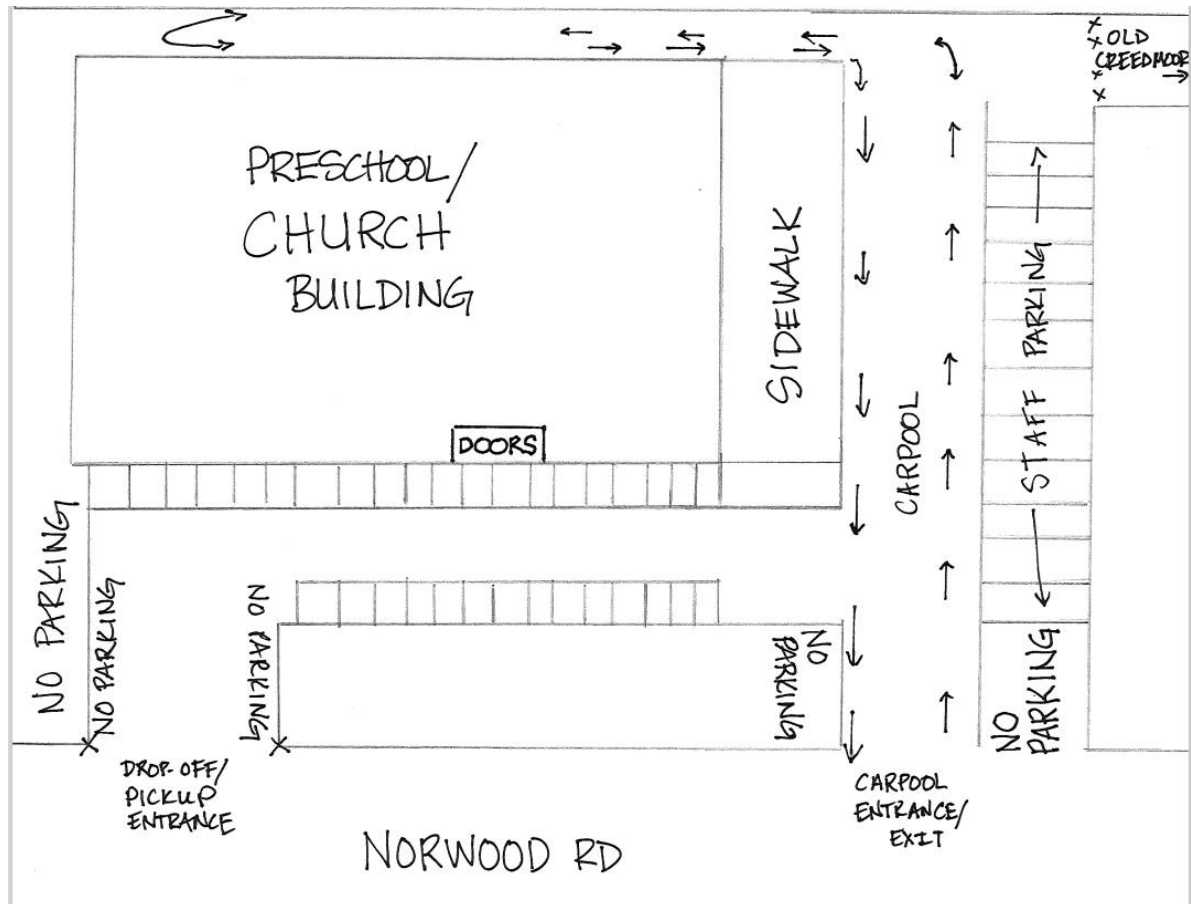
1. Ring the doorbell at the preschool entrance. Display your “Soapstone Preschool Family Card” in the camera monitor.
2. Stop at the Parent & Visitor Kiosk in the lobby
3. Scan the QR Code directly from your Procare app. Select your child and then enter your signature.
4. Next, check into the preschool 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.
- **Do not park in any spot designated for Handicap parking unless you have the appropriate tag.**
- 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 while in our parking lot.
- We encourage 3s, 4s, and TK families to use carpool in the morning.



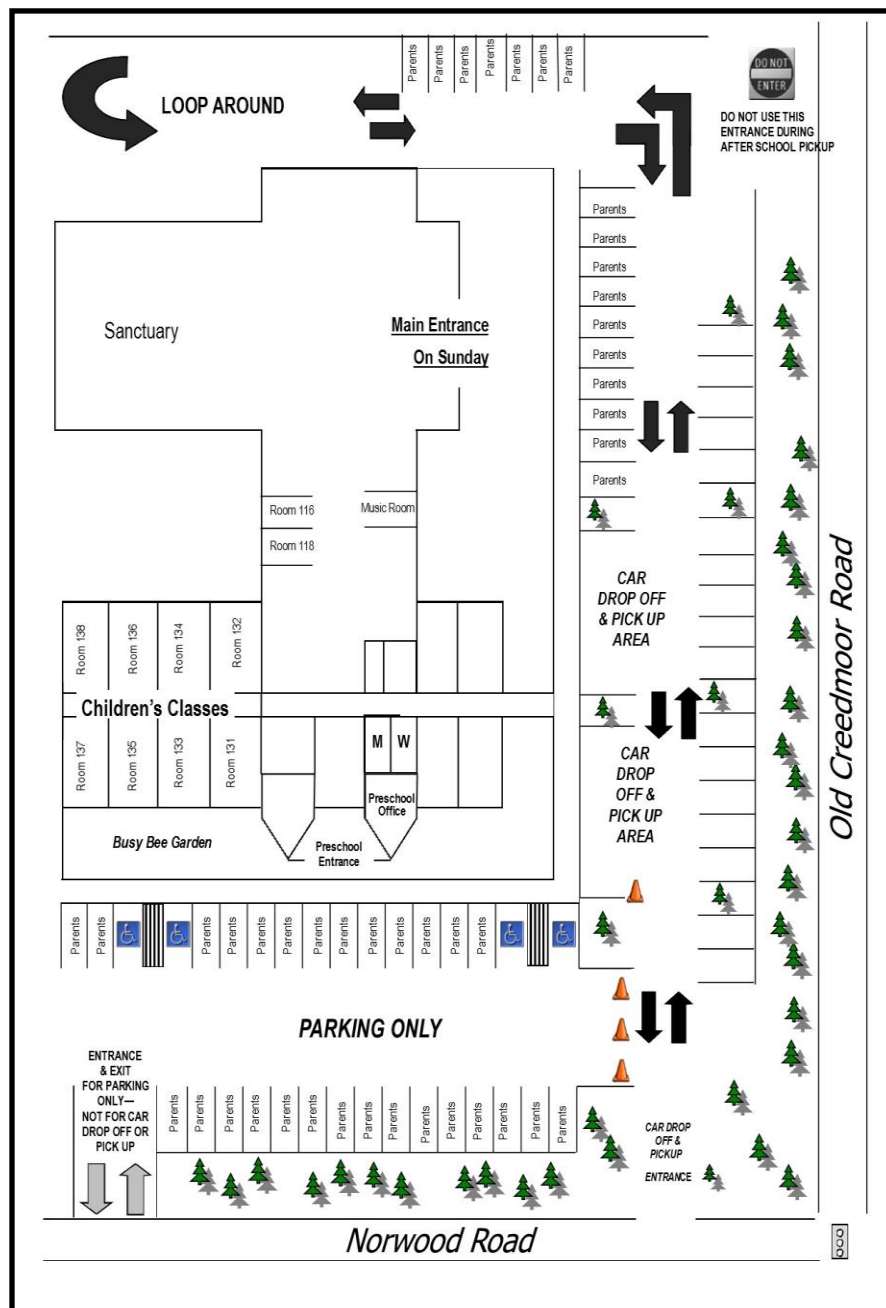
# CARPOOL LINE PROCEDURES

## 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 car seat. 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!
- Car seats/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 WEAR/BRING

## CLOTHING & DAILY SUPPLIES

### Clothing & Dress Code

- **Expect Mess:** Send your child in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothes that can get dirty during play and art.
- **Footwear Rules:**
  - **Approved:** Closed-toe athletic shoes or sneakers with good tread.
  - **Not Allowed:** Flip-flops, Crocs, clogs, sandals, jellies, or smooth-soled boots.
- **Winter Accessories:** We go out every day. Send labeled coats and mittens each day. Mittens are strongly preferred over gloves for all age groups.

### Extra Change of Clothes

- **Required in Bag Daily:** Keep a complete, weather-appropriate change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks) in your child's tote bag at all times. Place items inside a gallon Ziploc bag clearly **labeled with your child's full name**.
- **Labels:** Label *everything* brought to school—coats, hats, mittens.

### Diapers & Potty Training

- **Diapers:** If your child is not yet potty trained, send a full day's supply of disposable diapers (or pull-ups with Velcro sides) and wipes daily. Label individual diapers.
- **Potty Training:** For older classes, please keep teachers updated on your child's potty-training progress at home so we can support them consistently.

### Tote Bags

- **Official Soapstone Tote Bag Required:** Every child must use an official Soapstone Preschool tote bag daily for artwork and extra clothes. **Standard backpacks/bookbags are not permitted.** Check the clip attached to your child's tote bag daily for notes from the teacher, and use it to send return notes to school.

### Personal Toys

- **Toys from Home:** Please keep personal toys at home unless specifically requested by the teacher for a special activity. Always label approved show-and-tell items.

### Classroom Supplies

- **Classroom Supplies:** Teachers will send out a monthly sign-up list for shared classroom essentials (e.g., Clorox wipes, paper towels, baby wipes).

# SNACK AND 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**

### **DRINKS**

Water Only

### **RAW VEGETABLES**

Cucumber slices or sticks

Celery sticks

Cherry tomatoes - **cut in half**

Broccoli flowerets

Radishes

**Note: No raw 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

Goldfish

Graham crackers

Pretzels

### **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

### **DAIRY PRODUCTS**

Yogurt – plain or with fruit

Cottage cheese

Cheese cubes or slices

### **SPECIAL BIRTHDAY SNACKS – MUST BE STORE BOUGHT WITH INGREDIENTS LABEL**

Mini cupcakes

Doughnut holes

Rice Krispy Treats

Muffins

Cookies

Ice cream cups

Foods **not** allowed in the preschool for safety reasons

**Do not send in the following:**

- Whole grapes or whole grape tomatoes
- Any variety of nut (including granola bars that have whole nuts)
- Raw carrots
- Hot dogs
- Fruit gummies
- Popcorn
- Any form of candy
- Juice and soda

**Children eat independently when at preschool. Pack items for snack and lunch that your preschooler will be able to eat with minimal help. We are not able to slice, heat, or prepare lunches.**

# CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

## 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](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com).

### Additional Behavioral Supports

There is a wide range of behaviors that are developmentally appropriate from 15 months - 5 years of age. However, there are times when a child needs more support in the classroom, even after targeted strategies have been put in place by the classroom teacher. In these instances, the following steps will be implemented:

1. The teacher will document observations of classroom/preschool behavior and will meet with the director to discuss intervention strategies. Teachers will utilize their training in Conscious Discipline and other positive discipline techniques to aid in helping each child be successful in the classroom.
2. The teacher will contact parent(s) to explain the observed behaviors and implemented strategies/interventions. The teacher will work with the parents to determine any strategies used at home to help in the classroom setting.
3. Next, the teacher, parents, and preschool director will meet in-person to discuss alternative approaches to the situation. Outside consultants (Wake County Preschool Services, Project Enlightenment, etc.) will be contacted to conduct observations, evaluations, and/or offer strategies that will help the child, the teacher, and the parents.
4. Teachers will implement recommended strategies on any observations or screenings conducted

- The policies above apply to all children enrolled at Soapstone Preschool. When a child has identified needs, Soapstone Preschool will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of our resources as a half-day preschool program, to support the child's success. This may include collaboration with parents, therapists, Wake County Preschool Services, Project Enlightenment, Child Find, and other support providers. Accommodations and modifications will be considered on an individual basis to help maintain a safe and successful learning environment. If, after reasonable interventions and support efforts, the preschool determines it cannot safely or appropriately meet a child's needs, the preschool will work with the family to discuss alternative placement or support options.

- Successful support plans require active partnership and cooperation between home and school. Families are expected to participate in meetings, follow through with agreed-upon strategies, and cooperate with recommendations made by the preschool and outside support agencies, including but not limited to the preschool, Project Enlightenment, Wake County Preschool Services, Child Find, therapists, or other agencies/professionals involved in supporting the child. Soapstone Preschool seeks to be inclusive and supportive of all children; however, if a family declines to participate in or follow recommended support plans and interventions, the preschool will no longer be able to serve the child at the preschool. No monies paid up that point will be refunded.

**Please know that the safety of all children and staff is the first priority here at Soapstone Preschool.** Aggressive behaviors against other children and staff members (kicking, hitting, pushing, spitting, etc.) that go beyond what is developmentally-appropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Children who consistently exhibit these behaviors may be asked to leave the preschool.

## 2026-27 HEALTH POLICIES

*Soapstone Preschool has adopted the following “Recommendations from the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics” and recommendations from the North Carolina Childhood Commission as our general guidelines for sickness. Soapstone Preschool follows the [American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization Schedule](#) (chart found on page 2).*

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.

### IMPORTANT NOTES

- If your child will miss preschool (for any reason), please message your teacher and/or the preschool director 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, 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.
- Medical history and current immunization record must be on file before any child may attend preschool.
- **Children with food allergies/medications must have a separate Food Allergy/Medication Action Plan on file.**

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, they may not return to school until they are 24-hours fever-free WITHOUT fever-reducing medication.

**INTESTINAL INFECTION:** (vomiting and/or diarrhea). 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):** Children may return to school once they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine, Tamiflu, etc. AND they are 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:** Children may return to school once they have been fever-free for 24 hours, with minimal and improving symptoms - without any fever/symptom-reducing medicine. We reserve the right to ask a parent to keep their child home for additional day(s) to keep COVID from spreading in the classroom.

**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.*

**LICE:** Head lice is a reality of living in a community and as such, sometimes will show up in our school. *There is no shame or stigma, it just happens.* Any child with diagnosed head lice will need to remain home for 24 hours after the initial treatment has been administered (not 24 hours after being notified). After that time, children can return to the preschool. Please make sure you inform the preschool if your child has lice so that we can take appropriate actions in the classrooms.

Lice treatment information will be distributed to you if your child is in a class with a confirmed case. Impacted families (in the immediate classroom) will receive an initial notification for a confirmed case, with a reminder to monitor your child's symptoms.

Siblings of children with known cases of lice must be treated for lice, too. If siblings who attend Soapstone Preschool show no nits or lice, they can return to the preschool once treated.

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

# POTTY-TRAINING GUIDELINES

Toilet-training is an important developmental milestone and a first step toward independence. At Soapstone Preschool, we recognize that every child develops at their own pace. As such, we do not require children to be potty-trained by a specific age.

Potty-training is a partnership between families and the preschool. Our goal is to support your child's success while maintaining a safe, healthy, and manageable classroom environment.

## **Key Understandings:**

- Potty-training routines used at home may not always be practical in the classroom due to teachers' responsibilities and hygiene/safety guidelines.
- Progress and success at home may not immediately carry over to the preschool setting. That's okay! Children often need time and consistency in both environments.

## **Preschool Potty-Training Guidelines (Wearing Underwear to School)**

### **1. Communication First:**

Before your child begins wearing underwear to school, please notify your child's teacher (via Procare or in-person) that you are actively potty-training at home.

### **2. Developmental Readiness:**

Your child must be able to communicate the need to use the bathroom in order to wear underwear at school.

### **3. Transition Period:**

Children must wear pull-ups **with Velcro sides** for a minimum of two weeks while actively potty-training. If your child stays dry and communicates their need to use the potty consistently during this period, they may begin wearing underwear at school. Teachers will work with parents individually to determine this timeline.

## **Mandatory Expectations**

- **Arrival & Dismissal:**  
Parents are responsible for toileting their child during drop-off and pick-up times. Teachers are unable to assist during these transition windows.
- **Clothing Guidelines & Supplies:**  
Avoid dressing your child in clothing that is difficult to remove independently (e.g., overalls, buttons, snaps). Please provide **2 complete changes of labeled clothes**, including socks and shoes.  
Pull-Ups with Velcro on the side are required when a child is actively potty-training
- **Accidents:**  
Accidents happen! If your child has an accident and does not have a full change of

clothes at school, parents will be called. You will need to come to school to change your child or take them home, depending on the severity of the accident.

- **Frequent Accidents:**

If your child continues to have regular accidents while at school, it may be a sign they are not yet ready to transition to underwear in the classroom environment. We will require pull-ups with Velcro as your child continues to practice.

- **Potty Watches:**

Reminder watches are not allowed at school due to classroom distraction and hygiene concerns.

*If families do not comply with these expectations, we will be unable to continue working with your child on potty in the preschool.*

# PROCARE

Procure Solutions is Soapstone Preschool's communication, billing, and enrollment tool. All families are required to have an active Procure account.

## PROCARE FEATURES

- **Communication:**
  - Allows for teacher and office messaging
  - Text messaging used for emergency situations like weather delays and closing, classroom announcements
  - Ability to send school and classroom newsletters
  - Allows teachers to post pictures of children, send notes to parents, track absences, and send incident reports electronically
  - Parents have a activity newsfeed of their child
- **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 pay for a miscellaneous purchase (t-shirt, late fee, etc.)
  - Parents can access their own monthly and tax YTD statements

## 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](http://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 after the preschool, not the child's class, has missed 5 days of school.

The preschool does not reimburse families for missed days due to inclement weather, sickness, or other unknown events.

### Determination of Closings and Delays

**Wake County Public School System Closed:** In general, 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 11:00am.

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 Procare 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. CPR must be completed every 2 years.

### **Background Checks (Staff)**

All adults employed by the preschool have current background checks (repeated every 3 years).

### **Safer Sanctuaries**

Safer 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 Safer Sanctuaries 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. Safer Sancturries training must be completed every 2 years.

### **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 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. At this kiosk you can:

- Scan a QR Code to sign your child in or out in Procare (late arrival or early dismissal)
- Check in as a visitor to a classroom or volunteer

After you check in, 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.

### **Safety Plans**

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.

Fire Drills will be conducted throughout the school year.

# PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

At Soapstone Preschool, we believe children thrive when families, teachers, and staff work together with kindness, trust, and mutual respect. As a faith-based community, we strive to model compassion, grace, and respectful communication in all interactions.

**Families and guests are expected to:**

- Communicate respectfully with teachers, staff, and other families
- Address concerns directly with the appropriate staff member or administrator
- Support school policies, classroom procedures, and behavior expectations
- Model kindness, patience, and self-control while on campus and at school events
- Refrain from hostile, aggressive, threatening, intimidating, or inappropriate language or behavior
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, disruption of school operations, or posting harmful or confidential information about the preschool, staff, or families on social media

We understand concerns may arise, and we are committed to working together in a respectful and constructive manner to support every child and maintain a positive school community.

Soapstone Preschool reserves the right to require a family to withdraw from the program if conduct does not meet these expectations. In that event, tuition and fees already paid will not be refunded.

*Thank you for helping us create a caring and respectful preschool community.*

## 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
- Participate in our annual fundraisers.

# SOAPSTONE PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

Thank you for choosing Soapstone Preschool! By enrolling your child, you are entering into an agreement with us to ensure the best possible educational experience for your family. We agree to provide a high-quality preschool experience. You agree to be responsible for reading all communication that comes from the preschool including the handbooks, policies, and newsletters/emails, and to satisfy all financial obligations set forth herein in a timely manner.

To ensure a positive preschool experience for our children, families and staff, anyone who does not adhere to preschool policies stated in our preschool handbook or communicated through the director may be asked to withdrawal from our program and forfeit any paid tuition

As the parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, I do hereby acknowledge that I am aware of and agree to adhere to the aforesaid policies of Soapstone Preschool.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child/Children's Names

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature