

## **HOLIDAY PARK UNITED METHODIST PRE-SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK**

Welcome to Holiday Park United Methodist Church Pre-School. We are proud of our program and are excited about providing an early education experience for your child. Our well-rounded curriculum is designed to help a young child nurture positive feelings about him/herself and develop age appropriate skills while fostering an awareness of the world around him/her in a loving Christian setting.

Holiday Park United Methodist Church (H.P.U.M.C) Pre-School, an outreach program of the Holiday Park United Methodist Church, has served the Plum and surrounding communities for over 30 years. The program consists of four age groups: 2 year olds, 3 year olds, 4 year olds and Pre-K (a transition program for children who are 5 years old and have completed a 4-year-old program but are not yet ready to enter Kindergarten).

Our pre-school offers a choice of days and times to meet the needs of each child and his/her family. As a pre-school, we follow the age guidelines for school entrance based on the local school districts. We also work closely with each surrounding school district to make sure our curriculum follows their requirements for entrance into kindergarten.

We welcome your participation and ideas throughout the year. Please feel free to consult your child's teacher to arrange a time to visit, volunteer or share your individual skills with the children and staff. The staff looks forward to providing a warm and caring environment where your child will be respected as an individual and will be made to feel important and capable.

### **Overview**

H.P.U.M Church Pre-School provides a variety of activities throughout the day, in every class, which focus on all aspects of the young child's development. Individual, small group and large group activities allow for social interactions among children. Fine motor and gross motor developmental skills are addressed through the use of games, music and movement, building with blocks, doing puzzles and constructing with many materials. Language skills develop as children hear and share stories, sing songs, listen to and follow directions and talk with others. Cognitive skills develop, as children are encouraged to solve problems, make choices and plan their activities and projects. Children strengthen their self-help skills by being classroom helpers, using the bathroom, washing hands, sharing snacks and learning to button, snap and zipper coats and tie shoes. Numerous opportunities for developing creative expression are available through dramatic play, art and music. As the children move into the 4-year-old classes and Pre-K, additional projects and activities are planned and implemented to help strengthen academic skills that are necessary for Kindergarten.

Communication with parents is an important part of our pre-school program. School and classroom newsletters are sent home on a regular basis to keep parents up-to-date with school information and events. Parents are welcome to visit and volunteer in the classrooms. Conferences are implemented on an as needed basis as well as on a regularly scheduled mid-year basis. It is essential that lines of communication remain open between the parents and teachers.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Please be prompt with drop-off and pick-up of children. Pre-School staff will be present at the Pre-School door (lower level parking lot) at arrival and dismissal time. Pre-School staff will greet children and take them to their rooms AND bring them to the parking lot at dismissal time. For everyone's safety, if a child arrives late, a responsible adult **MUST** walk the child into the classroom. Please call the Pre-School office (724-733-7953) if late arrival or pick-up is anticipated. Please be considerate – our teachers have other commitments and responsibilities after school ends and cannot wait for late pick-ups. The teachers need to be notified of those people responsible for pick-up of children, including carpools. Please notify the Pre-School in writing of any custody issues regarding a child and school dismissal. In case of an emergency which creates a change regarding pick-up, please call the Pre-School (724-733-7953) and leave a complete and appropriate message regarding person, relationship, make and color of car, etc. so this person is properly identified. A child will not be released to any adult for whom the Pre-School does not have authorization. The complete cooperation of everyone regarding these matters will help provide a safe environment for all of the children.

All parents, grandparents and caregivers need to be aware of the Pre-school guidelines for safe drop off and pick-up of children.

1. Please arrive **NO EARLIER** than 5 minutes before your child's arrival and dismissal time. Classes arrive at 9:00 AM, 9:15 AM, 12:15 PM and 12:30 PM and dismissals occur at 11:00 AM, 11:15 AM and 11:30 AM, as well as 2:15 PM, 2:30 PM and 3:00 P.M. Drivers are not able to line up 15 or 20 minutes prior to dismissal time, as this does not allow for the **SAFE** and **APPROPRIATE** dismissal of earlier classes. **PLEASE DO NOT** gather (especially with strollers) in the walkway immediately outside the school doorway, as it is difficult to dismiss the children, as well as confusing and overwhelming for the staff and children. Your full cooperation is needed for this system to work in a **SAFE** and smooth manner.
2. **PLEASE DO NOT PASS ANY CAR** in the loading/unloading driveway (**SAFE ZONE**) OR parking lot. **DRIVE FORWARD ONLY** – never back out of our **LOT** or **DRIVEWAY**. We want **ALL CHILDREN AND PARENTS** (and car doors) to be **SAFE**. **PLEASE BE PATIENT AND COURTEOUS!!!!**
3. Please remember to enter our parking lot **ONLY** from the entrance on **SANDUNE DRIVE** and circle around the front of the church to our lower level parking lot. **PLEASE DO NOT** enter our lot from the **DRIVEWAY**, which enters off of **CAPE COD DRIVE** (this driveway is for church use only).

4. When approaching our school doorway, please pull your car as close as possible to the STOP SIGN (leading to Cape Cod Drive.) There should be space for 5 or 6 cars to line up in the driveway between the STOP SIGN and the beginning of the parking lot. ONLY when your car is in this SAFE ZONE (from the STOP SIGN to the START OF THE PARKING LOT), should you allow your child exit or enter your car. Please do not leave your car to deliver or pick up your child unless you are stopped in the SAFE ZONE or if you have parked your car in a lined parking space in one of the church lots. PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK ANY PARKING LOT ENTRANCES.
  
5. After the cars in the SAFE ZONE have dropped off or picked up children, those 5 or 6 cars will pull away and the next 5 or 6 cars will pull into position. PLEASE REMAIN IN YOUR CAR UNTIL IT IS YOUR TURN TO STOP IN THE SAFE ZONE to drop off or pick up your child!
  
6. If you would like to walk your child into school at arrival time or come to the door at dismissal time, please remember that you MUST PARK IN AN APPROPRIATE PARKING SPACE in one of the church lots – NEVER in the driveway or in the middle of a parking lot!
  
7. Please, please, please be cautious and courteous in our parking lot. EVERYONE NEEDS to be PATIENT for all of our children, parents and staff to be SAFE.
  
8. Please contact the Director or your child’s teacher if you have additional concerns regarding safety during arrival and dismissal time. Families or drivers will be contacted during drop off or pick up, by phone or by letter when the parents or caregivers are not following the safety guidelines.
  
9. PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH ALL OF YOUR DRIVERS TO KEEP OUR PRE-SCHOOL A VERY SAFE PLACE!

**\*Pre-School Pathway\***

To alleviate some of the congestion during morning drop-off and pick-up times the upper doors near Wesley Hall (the gym) will be open for your use. When dropping your child off please park your car and walk your child down to their classroom. At pick time you may park your car and walk down to the dismissal hallway and ask the assistant to release your child. You may then leave the parking lot using the Sandune Drive exit to avoid getting into the line.

## **Tuition and Financial Information**

H.P.U.M Church Pre-School is funded only by monthly tuition payments. Therefore, in order to meet our monthly financial responsibilities, we must receive tuition payments by the first of each month. If a family is unable to make tuition payments, it is essential to notify the Director. If a payment is not received on time, a \$5.00 late fee will be due. The Pre-School Board will make decisions regarding the removal from school of those students whose families have not paid tuition. Families are responsible for paying each month's full tuition, whether the child attends one day or every day (due to illness or vacation).

Tuition is paid for nine (9) months, August through April. Tuition for each class may be adjusted on a yearly basis. If a child is enrolled any time after the September starting date, the tuition payments will be based on the number of months the child attends.

Tuition payments need to be mailed, along with the payment coupon, to:

**H.P.U.M Church Pre-school/Tuition  
81 Sandune Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15239**

Tuition may be delivered to the Pre-School Office or Church Office. Please DO NOT send the payment to school with a child or give it to the teaching staff. However, you may give the payment to Holly Cook directly.

**Checks need to be made payable to H.P.U.M.C Pre-School.**

## **Illness and Absences**

Young children often become ill during their first few years in a school or group experience. At H.P.U.M Church Pre-School, children are reminded to cover sneezes and coughs and are encouraged to wash hands often to prevent the spread of germs. However, children will still acquire various illnesses from school friends as well as from other people and places. It is essential for parents to keep their children at home if they have a fever, intestinal upsets or viruses, unidentified or contagious rashes, or any infections or severe colds which make the children extremely tired or uncomfortable.

Please call the Pre-School and leave a message if a child will be absent from school. Please remember, when in doubt, keep an ill child at home. It is nice to share...but not illnesses. Please help us keep everyone healthy!

## HPUMC Preschool Parent Advisory Committee

In an effort to enhance our students' overall pre-school experience, the Parent Advisory Committee's goal is to help fund student enrichment activities as well as to aid in the purchase of necessary equipment, supplies, and training for staff members. This committee also is in place to provide necessary feedback from parents directly to the school. In the past, the Parent Advisory Committee has succeeded in acquiring supplies through participation in Campbell's Labels for Education program and Giant Eagle's Apples for the Students program, and raising monies through the sale of the Kid's Stuff Coupon Books and by hosting a Pancake Breakfast. Our participation in the Campbell's program and Giant Eagle program are ongoing throughout the year, as the programs permit. Other sales/events are subject to change as we see fit for the preschool and are limited to 1-3 sales/events per school year.

To participate in Giant Eagle's Apples for the Students program, you just register your Giant Eagle Advantage Card at [www.gianteagle.com](http://www.gianteagle.com) or call 1-800-474-4777. Our school ID number is 5439. Each time you scan your card, you help our school earn points that we can then redeem for school supplies. This program does not cost anything to the card holder and does not affect your Foodperks or Fuelperks in any way; it simply keeps track of how many people support our pre-school. Call or register online to help us earn school and classroom supplies!

For Campbell's Labels for Education program, you simply cut out the point labels or keep the caps of qualifying products (See the included Eligible Products List) and turn them in to the preschool. You can turn in the labels directly or you can clip the labels and paste them onto the point collection sheets and bring the sheets to the preschool (See the included Point Collection Sheets). Start collecting those labels today!

The Parent Advisory Committee raised over \$3000 in 2010-2011 through the sale of the Kids Stuff Coupon Book and the Pancake Breakfast. Not only is the Kids Stuff Coupon Book a great way to raise money for the preschool, it is a great way to help parents and families save money. The Kids Stuff Coupon Book contains great coupons for shopping at area businesses, chain stores, restaurants, and even offers discounts for area attractions and activities. The Pancake Breakfast was a great success in February 2010 and February 2011. The breakfast was a fun event for the pre-school, church, and surrounding community. Watch for the Kids Stuff Coupon Book sales and other events throughout the school year!

As always, we would greatly appreciate any support or contributions you would like to provide. We are looking for new members to help plan and organize activities. Anyone who would like to volunteer their time or ideas to help the HPUMC Preschool Parent Advisory Committee should contact Holly Cook, HPUMC Preschool Director, at 724-733-7953.

## **Clothing for School**

Please make sure that children wear comfortable play clothes and non-slip play shoes. Children are better able to play and learn when they are comfortable and do not have to worry if their clothes should get dirty. Sometimes the classroom activities do get messy and there is always the possibility of bathroom accidents or spills at snack time. Extra clothes can always travel back and forth in a child's backpack.

Parents of the children in the 2-year-old classes need to provide diapers or pull-ups and wipes for their child. Please keep the teacher up-to-date on the status of each child's potty training.

## **Field Trips and Parties**

Throughout the school year, various trips and/or visitors to the school may be planned. The 2 year old class will participate in in-house "field trips" only, or like the 3 year olds, may go on trips with parents in family cars. The 4 year olds and Pre-K will participate in field trips that are within walking distance or they will travel with parents in individual family cars. Parents will be notified so appropriate transportation arrangements can be made. The destinations of the field trips may change from year to year. All trips and visitors are of a developmentally appropriate nature.

There will be three holiday parties during the year – Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day. The activities on party days will be 1 or 1½ hours in length (depending on age of children) and the children will attend school only for that time period. Each teacher will notify the parents of the day and time of the party as well as any other specific information prior to the party day (ex. costumes, treats, cards, etc.). Each teacher will provide a sign-up sheet for parents to volunteer to help with the party of their choice. The designated parents plan the parties with appropriate guidance from the teacher.

Additional special activities are planned throughout the year (Mother's Day, end-of-year picnics and Graduation for 4's), for which parents will receive appropriate information in a timely manner.

## **Snacks and Birthdays**

Parents provide the snacks that the children will have on a daily basis. Teachers will assign specific snack days for each child. Teachers may request a special snack, a particular ingredient for a cooking activity or a snack of the child's choice. Please keep the snack simple & healthy and remember to check for any food allergies in the classroom. If a child has a food allergy, that child's parent(s) may need to provide appropriate snacks for him/her.

Here are some suggestions for healthy snacks: pre-cut fruits or veggies, yogurt, cheese, crackers, graham crackers, animal crackers, goldfish, cheese-its, trail mix, whole grain cereals, granola bars, pretzels, applesauce, mini rice cakes or baked chips.

Birthdays may be celebrated in the classroom with a special snack. The teacher may assign a birthday treat day or the parent may request a day to bring a treat. Summer birthdays are celebrated in the late spring prior to the end of the school year. Please keep birthday treats simple and easy to serve. Each teacher will acknowledge the child's birthday in an appropriate manner.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Communication between parents and teachers is essential for a positive learning environment. Teachers will send home monthly newsletters as well as any other important information regarding the classroom. Classroom Calendars will be sent home on a monthly basis. The Pre-School Director also will send home a newsletter on a monthly basis which will provide families with information that pertains to the entire school. Please check each child's backpack on a daily basis for classroom and school information.

Parents are welcome to volunteer or visit the classroom whenever they wish. Parents are encouraged to share information with the teachers by way of a written note, by phone or by setting up a conference time. Please feel free to leave a message on the Pre-School phone (724-733-7953) and the teacher will return the call in a timely fashion. Conferences will be scheduled (optional for the younger children) during the school year to discuss each child's progress. Please contact the teacher at any time if there should be concerns or questions.

### **Health Concerns**

Keeping children healthy is of great concern for our Pre-School. Although preschool children are not required to be immunized, it is important to remember that children will need the necessary immunizations to enter Kindergarten. It is advisable that children visit the doctor on a regular basis and receive all recommended immunizations. Parents will need to have the child's physician complete and sign the H.P.U.M.C Pre-School Physical Examination Form.

*If a child is taking a prescription or over-the-counter medication, we ask that the medicine be given by the parent or caregiver before or after school hours. Pre-School staff members are not permitted to give children any medications.*

Written documentation from a child's physician needs to be presented to the Pre-School staff and Director regarding a child's possible severe allergic reactions to any food, etc. which might require the need for anti-allergy medications to be kept on school premises. This information will be kept on file at the school.

## **School Closings and Delays**

H.P.U.M. Pre-School will follow The Plum Borough School District guidelines regarding closings and delays. The Plum and H.P.U.M. closings and/or delays will be posted/announced on KDKA TV and KDKA Radio "Storm Center" announcements.

\*If Plum Schools are closed due to severe weather or road conditions, our Pre-School will be closed.

\*If Plum Schools have a 1 or 2 hour delay in the morning, then our Pre-School will have a 30 minute delay for the start of the morning classes. All AM classes will be dismissed at the regular time. Afternoon classes will begin and dismiss at the normal times.

\*If an early dismissal occurs for the Plum Schools and it is announced on the radio or TV prior to 12:00 Noon, there will be NO afternoon classes.

\*If school should need to close for any other reason on a regularly scheduled day, then the parents will be notified by phone. A phone chain will be established in each class and will be used in case of an emergency closing.

\*If there is ever any concern on the part of the parents regarding weather or road conditions, it is the choice of the parents whether or not to bring a child to school or to come to school early to pick up a child. Safety should always be of utmost concern.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

Any employee of H.P.U.M. Church Pre-School who has reason to believe that a child in their care or in attendance at the school has been "abused", is required to report the concerns to the Director. The Director will discuss with the family the concerns regarding the child and if necessary, as required by law, report the circumstances to The Office of Children, Youth and Families or Child Line

## **Withdrawal from Pre-School**

If for any reason, a child needs to be withdrawn from H.P.U.M. Pre-School, please notify, in writing, the child's teacher and the Director as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements can be made.



## **Speech, Hearing and Vision Screening**

H.P.U.M. Church Pre-School participates in screenings for speech, hearing and vision, which are conducted by outside agencies. The screenings are not mandatory, but highly recommended. Children need to be at least 3 years old to participate in these screenings. Vision screening is a free service, but there is a cost per child for the speech and hearing screening. Information regarding dates of screenings, cost per child and permission slips will be sent home prior to the screenings. A signed permission slip is required for each child to participate in the screenings.

## **Children with Special Needs**

Children with special needs are welcome to attend H.P.U.M.C Pre-school, as long as they are capable of functioning in a typical pre-school classroom. All special needs must be discussed with the Director prior to the start of school. The Director **MUST** review all Individual Education Plans and approve outside support staff prior to the beginning of school/services. The visitation schedules of all support staff must be discussed with the Director and teacher, prior to the start of services at the school. If a child is to have the services of a TSS, then that person **MUST** be in attendance for the child to attend class.

## **Some Tips for Helping a Child in School**

Pre-School should be a positive and exciting experience for young children. It is important to instill in the child a love of learning and enthusiasm for attending school. Listed below are some ideas for parents and caregivers to inspire a child's interest in school:

1. Talk with the child, using appropriate words and grammar. Encourage the child to use words and ask questions. Have fun with language by making up songs and stories.
2. Take local field trips – parks, zoo, library, stores, museums, and farms. Talk or write a story about the experience.
3. Provide crayons, paper, playdough, scissors, glue and blocks for creative expression.
4. Listen to all kinds of music.
5. Read, read, read and read some more!
6. Model a positive and friendly attitude towards school and teachers.

### **Important Reminders**

1. Please provide a backpack which your child will need to bring to Pre-School every day. Please make sure that the backpack is large enough to accommodate school papers and artwork.
2. Please dress your child in appropriate clothes and shoes for play and for the weather.
3. Children in the 3 and 4 year old classes need to be toilet trained.
4. Please keep toys at home. Sometimes it is difficult for a young child to share special toys from home, and it makes others sad when these items are not shared. There are many toys at school for everyone to use and share.
5. Toy guns and knives are never used at Pre-School. Please remind children that all toys are to be used in a safe and appropriate manner.
6. Share with the teacher any concerns or questions regarding the program or a child's behavior. If the concerns are not properly addressed, please consult with the Director.
7. Please be cautious and courteous in the parking lot, especially during arrival and dismissal time. Always follow the school guidelines for drop-off and pick-up of children. Drive very slowly and watch for young children who may dart away from their caregivers. Please help keep all of the children safe!!

**Thank- You for sharing your child with us!**