



# **Parent Handbook**

## Program Policies & Procedures

Covenant United Methodist Church  
3610 West Main St.  
Dothan, AL 36305  
(334)699-6315  
[www.covenantdothan.org](http://www.covenantdothan.org)

## **Program Policies/Procedures**

Welcome to Covenant United Methodist Church. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's life. We believe your child is a special gift from God and we want to provide the best love and care possible.

Our mission at Covenant is to teach each child to:

- Know God
- Love God
- Serve God

Our goal is to provide a nurturing, developmentally appropriate environment that encourages each child to develop mentally, physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. Age appropriate learning experiences are provided to allow each child to progress at his/her own pace and to experience success through hands-on activities.

### **Introduction**

Our program is exempt from state licensure; however, we follow all guidelines outlined by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources for exempt childcare centers. All teachers are required to have a background check and provide multiple references. They also must have current CPR certification, annual TB test, and medical clearance.

### **Hours of Operation**

Covenant offers a Mother's Morning Out program, full-time Daycare, and Preschool. Full-time Daycare operates Monday-Friday from 7:00am-4:30pm. Mother's Morning Out operates Monday-Thursday from 8:30am-12:30pm, including summers, with the options of 2, 3, or 4 days a week. Preschool operates Monday-Thursday from 8:30am-12:30pm (August-May). Children in our 3P and 4P classes are required to attend 4 days a week. Three and four year olds are eligible to attend MMO during the summer.

We maintain an open door policy for parents during daycare hours; therefore, parents are always welcome to call or drop-in to see their children. We appreciate your taking into consideration the class schedules when dropping by.

### **Enrollment**

Children ages 6 weeks-5 years old (pre-kindergarten) are eligible for acceptance.

We strive to provide a positive class setting by ensuring that all children will benefit from being a part of our program. If your child has special needs, it may be determined that the setting and/or structure of our program is not a beneficial environment for him or her. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to meet with the director prior to enrollment to discuss the child's needs. The following items are required to enroll in our programs:

- Completed Enrollment Forms
- Tuition Agreement
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Agreement Form
- Catered Lunch Form
- Media Release Form
- Blue Slip (Immunization Form)
- Exemption Affidavit (full-time Daycare only)

## Withdrawal

Should you need to withdraw your child from our program, we ask that you give a two week written notice, addressed to the Program Director, prior to the child's last scheduled day. If such notice is not received, a full month's payment will be required.

## Termination Policies

We reserve the right to terminate a child from our program for the following reasons:

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

## Tuition

### Mother's Morning Out & Preschool

Tuition payments are due on the 1st of every month and late after the 10<sup>th</sup>. There will be a charge of \$15.00 for any late payments. Tuition must be paid in full regardless of whether your child attends. Full tuition is due for months with holidays or inclement weather days and **no credits for tuition or lunch payments will be given for absences.**

**MMO tuition and lunches are based on 4 weeks per month. Payments average out to 48 weeks per year with planned closings for holidays.**

### Daycare

Tuition payments are due on Monday of each week for the current week and are late after 4:30pm on Wednesday afternoon. There will be a charge of \$5.00 for any late payments. Tuition must be paid in full regardless of whether your child attends the program. Full tuition is due for weeks with holidays or inclement weather days and **no credits for tuition or lunch payments will be given for absences.**

Lunch payments are based on 4 weeks per month and payments average out to 48 weeks per year with planned closings for holidays.

Full-time students, who have been in the program for at least one year, will receive a "vacation" week, in which tuition does not have to be paid. The vacation week may be a week of your choice, but your child may not attend school during this week. Parents must notify the office two weeks prior to the planned vacation in order to be exempt from tuition.

All tuition payments must be placed in the payment drop slot located on the door of the MMO/Daycare office. **Teachers may not accept any form of payment.** Please make all checks payable to CUMC. Cash payments must be placed in a closed/sealed envelope with proper marking: child's name, amount, date, and payment description. Envelopes are provided outside the office door.

There will be a \$25.00 charge for all returned checks. Childcare services may be suspended until full payment of tuition and NSF charges have been made.

Childcare fees are based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance. To maintain a reserved space, fees must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, holidays, vacation, or for any other reason, with the exception the above mentioned vacation week. **If payments are not kept up to date, the child will forfeit his or her spot in the program.** Please refer to the tuition agreement form for further details regarding tuition payments.

### **Class Determination**

Children will be placed in classrooms based on their date of birth. Children in our 3P & 4P classes will promote to the next class based on their age by September 1<sup>st</sup>:

3P – 3 by September 1<sup>st</sup>

4P – 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup>

- **Please note that in order to move into the 3P or 4P classrooms, your child must be completely toilet trained – NO EXCEPTIONS. If we see your child is struggling in this area, other arrangements will need to be made for childcare.**

Younger children could advance every 6-9 months depending on class ratios.

Class ratios are as follows:

6wks-9 months : 1 to 5

10-17 months: 1 to 5

18-24 months: 1 to 7

24-36 months: 1 to 8

3-4yrs: 1 to 11

4 yrs-school age: 1 to 18

While these are the ratios outlined by the State of Alabama, we strive to maintain smaller class sizes when possible.

### **Curriculum**

Children 18 – 36 months will be taught using the WEE Learn curriculum. The Wee Learn program is designed to provide opportunities for children to learn about God's world and how to live in it. You can obtain further information about the curriculum by visiting [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com).

Children in our 3P and 4P classes will be taught using the A Beka curriculum. A Beka, which is based upon the foundation of Scriptural truth, keeps learning fun, interesting, and memorable. You can obtain further information about the curriculum by visiting the website at [www.abeka.com](http://www.abeka.com).

### **Arrival/Departure**

Each child must be dropped off and picked up each day by an adult. Arrival time begins at 7:00am for full-time Daycare and 8:30am for Mother's Morning Out. Please refrain from bringing your child to his or her classroom prior to these times as the teachers will be busy preparing activities for the day. Parents must sign children in & out each day. In the event of an emergency (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.), we must have an accurate count of the children present for the day. The sign in/out sheets can be used as legal documents as well.

Children in our 3 and 4 year old preschool classes arriving after 8:30am will be counted as tardy. We encourage children in all other classes to arrive no later than 9:00am each day as this is when most classrooms begin their daily learning activities. If you are going to be late or your child will be absent, we request that you call and let us know.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when being dropped off. Please make your drop off as brief as possible; the longer you prolong the departure, the harder it is. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back is all that is needed. If your child is upset when you leave the center, feel free to call back after some time to check on your child's progress. We will call you if your child does not settle down. Most children quiet down quickly as they are reassured by the teacher and become interested in the toys and other children.

Please be brief at pick-up times, as well. If you need to speak with your child's teacher at length, please call to schedule a conference.

MMO children may be picked up at or before 12:30pm and full-time Daycare children may be picked up at or before 4:30 p.m. Each child must be picked up by an adult. If someone will be picking up your child other than those authorized by the parents, the office must be notified in advance or the child will not be released until the parents can be contacted for consent. This person will be required to show proof of identification upon arrival. If there are any last minute changes, the office must be contacted no later than 12:00pm.

MMO parents picking up after 12:30pm and Daycare parents picking up after 4:30pm are considered late and will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, according to the center's clock. Payment is accepted at this time if the parent desires to do so or can be added to the **next month's** tuition. Late children will be taken to the office to await arrival of parents.

**Holidays/Closings**

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Good Friday
- Spring Break (MMO only)
- Memorial Day
- VBS (MMO only)
- Fourth of July
- Teacher In-service
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- New Year's Eve

In the event of inclement weather, we will notify the local television and radio stations regarding program closings.

**Lunches/Snacks**

MMO children are served a light snack daily at approximately 8:45am and full-time Daycare children are served two snacks daily at approximately 8:45am and 3:15pm. MMO children should bring at least 2 drinks from home each day and full-time Daycare children should bring at least 3 drinks each day. Unless signed up for a catered lunch, your child should bring a nutritious lunch from home. We ask that no carbonated drinks, no glass containers, candy, or gum be brought in lunches. **Please be sure to provide all necessary items in your child's lunch (i.e. bowl, spoon, fork, etc.) in order for teachers to adequately prepare and serve it.**

Please see catered lunch form for Menu and prices. **Please Note: We do not prorate lunches for holidays, school closings, or absences.**

- 1 Day per Week, Monthly Fee- \$14.00**
- 2 Days per Week, Monthly Fee- \$28.00**
- 3 Days per Week, Monthly Fee- \$42.00**
- 4 Days per Week, Monthly Fee- \$56.00**
- 5 Days per Week, Monthly Fee- \$70.00**

Daycare children who arrive before 8:00 a.m. may bring and eat their breakfast in their classroom. A light snack will be served at approximately 8:45am.

### Personal Belongings

Diaper bags and/or backpacks should be brought daily to carry your child's belongings. These items include: lunches, diapers, bottles, change of clothes, classroom work, etc. We prefer that children do not bring toys from home unless it is something that can be shared with the entire group (i.e. books, videos, etc.) and you have received approval from the child's teacher. Exceptions to this policy will be that a child may bring a favorite toy for naptime or for show and tell activities. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items and all personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name.

### Supplies

Parents must supply the following items:

#### Infants/Toddlers

Diapers and/or pull-ups, wipes, powders, ointments, pacifier, bottles, baby food, blanket for rest time, and a complete change of clothes. All bottles must be pre-mixed, ready to feed and baby food must be in unopened jars.

#### Preschool

Complete change of clothes and a blanket for rest time. MMO children need 2 drinks each day and Daycare children need 3 drinks each day.

All personal belongings must be marked with your child's name.

### Health/Safety

Please understand that our main goal is to keep every child safe, healthy, and happy. If your child is showing signs or symptoms of any of the following, please refrain from bringing them to school:

- Runny nose (green in color)
- Fever (must be fever free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat and/or deep or reproductive cough
- Discharge in eyes (pink eye)
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, a rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without neglecting the health, safety, or well-being of the other children in our care.

If you are not sure whether or not it is ok to bring your child, please call ahead to ask us. We may require a doctor's decision as to whether or not the child is contagious. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. **Please Note: If a child arrives with any of these signs or symptoms, you will be asked to come and pick them up.**

We strive to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals and after using the restroom. We use paper towels for drying hands so that children do not have to use the same towel. All employees are required to wash their hands frequently and also use hand sanitizer.

Infants sleep in separate cribs with clean sheets used only by them. Beginning at toddler age, we use vinyl nap mats that can be easily sanitized. Each child has a separate nap mat and blanket. Nap mats will be sanitized daily and blankets should be taken home and washed weekly.

### Medication

Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Written authorization is needed for us to administer ANY medications. This includes prescription or over-the-counter medications such as diaper rash creams, medicines for teething, sunscreen, etc.

**NOTE:** All medications must be in their original container with pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written.

### Clothing/Attire

Children should arrive dressed for play. Daily activities often include outdoor play and/or messy activities. **Children are encouraged to wear socks and tennis shoes daily to prevent accidents when playing on the playground or traveling to and from different areas of the church.**

All children walking age and up are required to wear shoes to school. Children's shoes will be kept on at all times for their safety. In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for us to evacuate the building quickly.

### Behavior

We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency, firmness, and positive reinforcement. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. Young children often have difficulty expressing their feelings. Sometimes they may hit, throw toys, bite, etc. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when the offense involves another person, and withdraw privileges.

A period of "time out" will be used when a brief cooling off period is needed. During time-out a child will be removed from the group and will be temporarily unable to participate in program activities. Children will be separated from the group only when the teacher has tried other methods for guiding the child's behavior and these methods have been ineffective or the child's behavior threatens the well-being of themselves or other children. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be spanking, physical or verbal abuse, name calling, or isolation. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment. Also, children will not be punished for lapses in toilet training.

If a child displays disruptive behavior, communication will be sent home notifying the parents or a parent conference will be scheduled. This includes any type of behavior that is disruptive to the class and other students such as: biting, hitting, kicking, pushing, scratching, spitting, defiance of direction, etc. Each situation will be dealt with, by the Program Director, on a case-by-case basis.

**Please Note:** Dismissal could be deemed necessary if child's behavior does not improve or worsens.

### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Communication between parents and teachers is essential in providing a positive experience for the children. We have many forms of communicating with the parents.

- **Initial meeting with parents** – Prior to enrolling your child into the program, the Director or Assistant Director will show you around the center and answer any questions you may have. You may wish to share concerns about your child and tell what you expect from the program. Please tell us if your child is on medication, behaves in any unusual ways, or has special needs of which we need to be aware.
- **Parent/Teacher conferences** - Conferences between parents and teachers are encouraged to keep lines of communication open. If you desire a conference with your child's teacher, please contact the office and we will assist you in scheduling this meeting. Please refrain from talking with the teacher at length during arrival/dismissal times. Conferences with the Director are also encouraged any time you have concerns, needs, or suggestions.
- **Parent Information Board** – The parent information board, located outside the office, serves as a place to post the Monthly Newsletter, School Calendar, and other important program information.
- **Monthly Calendar** – All classes 18 months and up will have a monthly calendar posted outside their classroom door outlining the month's activities.
- **Classroom Schedule** – Each class has a schedule posted inside the classroom to inform parents of the daily activities.
- **Daily Reports** – A written report is sent home daily for the parents of children in our infant, toddler, and 2 year-old classrooms. This report contains information about the child's food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns, and general behavior. We will also use this report to notify parents when supplies (diapers, wipes, etc...) are getting low.
- **Monthly Newsletter** – The newsletter is published quarterly and is distributed to all children. The newsletter contains valuable information that pertains to every classroom.

### **Birthdays/Parties/Special Occasions**

Parties are planned for the children throughout the year. Teachers may ask parents to sign-up to bring items and/or assist with the party. Parents are always welcome to attend any special events. We encourage the children to celebrate their birthdays with their classmates at school, but some like to have parties outside the program. If parents would like invitations distributed at school, please make sure everyone in the class receives one.

# **Parent Handbook**

## **Acknowledgement Agreement Form**

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Covenant MMO & Daycare Parent Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the standards set forth in the handbook. Failure to do so could result in the termination of my child's position in the program.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_