



SPUMCNS PARENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

SPUMC Nursery School

731 Benfield Rd., Severna Park, MD 21146

410-987-8339

Tax ID Number: 52-0897890

Office Email: office@spumcns.org

Website: www.severnaparkumc.org/nursery-school

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/spumcns

Director: Catherine Myers cmyers@spumcns.org

Office Manager/ Registrar: Robin Decker rdecker@spumcns.org

Chair, Parent Group – Lauren McAdams parents@spumcns.org

1) SPUMCNS PHILOSOPHY

SPUMCNS offers an enriching, experiential preschool experience in a nurturing Christian environment. Our students learn through first-hand experiences. Our state-approved curriculum offers wide and varied experiences in art, music, literature, the natural and physical sciences, the Christian faith, and community life. It opens the door to new interests and enriches already existing ones. It provides children with opportunities to work, learn, and play as they develop and grow.

Within this framework, and under the teacher's and assistant's thoughtful and empathetic guidance, each child forms trusting relationships with adults outside the family, learns to exercise self-control, increases independence, develops creativity, explores, and discovers, and develops critical thinking skills. In short, SPUMC Nursery School helps each child develop, regardless of his or her unique differences, a love of learning and the interpersonal, academic, social, and spiritual tools needed for success.

Our school offers these experiences through half-day and extended-day sessions. Each classroom of no more than 14 students is taught by a qualified teacher and a teaching assistant.

2) AUTHORITY TO OPERATE AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Our school operates under Certificate of Approval # 3710, issued by the Maryland State Department of Education.

SPUMCNS has an Advisory Council, comprised of members of the church, Nursery School staff and parents, and key church staff members.

All our teachers have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree, as do some of our teaching

assistants. All staff members meet or exceed the Maryland State qualification requirements for Early Childhood Educators. Everyone undergoes a background check and is selected based on ability, interests, and experience with young children. Our classes have a maximum student/teacher ratio of 7:1.

3) POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL PRACTICES

To help our students develop self-control and to reinforce behavior that is kind, respectful, and positive, we employ “conscious discipline,” techniques. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive classroom management and social-emotional approach that creates a learning environment where children feel safe and loved.

From this foundation of safety and caring, children begin learning how to manage their emotions and interact appropriately with their peers. As Becky Bailey, Ph.D., who developed Conscious Discipline as a classroom management approach, explains: “Self-regulation is the key to school readiness and is more powerful than IQ as a predictor of academic achievement.”

4) INCLUSION

We welcome all children, regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic origin, developmental ability, or educational need. We do not have any certified special educators on our staff, but we use the MSDE-endorsed Frog Street™ curriculum which includes specific guidelines to help our educators work with children with certain special needs. If your child is receiving community-based services, such as speech or occupational therapy, please obtain a release form at the office to sign so we can work with the other professionals providing support to your child, exchange information and participate in IEP meetings.

In the event a student requires more support than we are equipped to provide, we will communicate and work with the family to determine the best path forward.

5) COMMUNICATION

During school hours, always monitor your phone. If we need to reach you because your child is sick, we will call the phone number listed on your emergency form. It’s important to ensure your voicemail box can record messages if we need to leave a message.

A monthly activity calendar and the monthly snack schedule will be posted on Bloomz. Make note of announcements and sign-up sheets posted on the board outside your child’s classroom and check your student’s tote bag daily for classwork and teacher communications. In addition to using Bloomz, your child’s room parent may set up a notification network or system for your classroom. Daily interaction with the teaching staff occurs at drop-off and dismissal; however,

more lengthy conversations are best arranged via appointment with the teacher. Phone calls/emails to teachers will be returned prior to the next school day. The school uses a variety of methods to communicate reminders and important information, so make sure to notify us if your phone number, address, or email address changes.

BLOOMZ – The school uses Bloomz, an easy-to-use, secure app, to communicate between parents and guardians, staff, and the parent group. Be sure to sign up for both the school and the classroom groups on Bloomz so you receive all messages, announcements, calendar updates, and alerts. When using Bloomz:

- Commercial and political advertisements are prohibited.
- Comments that are inappropriate, irrelevant to the posted topic, or which contain links or solicitations of any kind, including petitions and friend requests, will be removed.
- Users who post comments that are defamatory or that contain vulgar or obscene language, whether explicit or implied - even with asterisks, abbreviations, intentional misspellings, etc. - will be banned without warning from further access.
- Users who violate the above standards will be blocked from making comments on Bloomz.

6) CURRICULUM

The Frog Street™ curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. The program is engaging for children and encourages daily routines, intentional instruction, and thematic activities; and it balances teacher-directed with child-directed play. The curriculum embraces the joy of learning each day and is endorsed by Maryland State Department of Education. We also incorporate Biblical devotions and Christian music in our daily schedule, and the children say a blessing together before eating.

7) CHILD ASSESSMENT

We use ongoing assessment to identify a child's current abilities to plan individualized activities; note developmental progress, concerns, or delays; and guide instruction. Developmental screening is used to identify children with potential learning differences so strategies for appropriate intervention can then be implemented. Progress reports will be sent home in January and May. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in January for all students by appointment, and can be scheduled upon request during the school year

8) TUITION AND ENROLLMENT

To attend, your child must be three or four by September 1, fully immunized (as defined by MSDE), and completely toilet trained (able to use the toilet and wash hands completely independently). Once at full capacity, new enrollments are accepted throughout the year as openings arise. Children on the “wait list” are offered available spots in the order of the date they were added to the list. At the time of registration, the school collects a non-refundable \$100.00 registration fee and one month’s tuition, which is held in reserve to be applied to the May tuition of the upcoming year. This tuition deposit is only refundable if we are notified in writing by May 1st prior to the September of the school year that you are withdrawing your student.

When you enroll your child, we reserve a place for him/her in a class for the entire school year. The tuition, therefore, is a yearly obligation which we collect in nine equal payments, made using a debit card or a bank routing number. Eight of the tuition payments will be collected through Tuition Express on the first business day of the month, from September through April. A late/rejected payment will incur a charge of \$25.00/day beginning the following day. May tuition will be covered by your tuition deposit.

An activity fee of \$20.00 will be included in the September tuition bill. Parents of enrolled students can go to www.myprocare.com to view account statements and print tax documentation.

9) NUTRITION

SPUMCNS is a **NUT-FREE AND PEANUT-FREE** school. We serve a nutritious, simple, and easy-to-serve snack during each school session, and we post a monthly snack calendar on Bloomz.

Extended day students bring their own lunch. Please pack a lunch that your student can eat independently with minimal assistance. Bento-style boxes are an excellent choice, especially when they include plenty of fruit, veggies, and protein (and, of course, some sort of treat). Be sure to include an ice pack for all lunches. Every student must bring his/her own water bottle. Please label water bottles and lunch boxes with your child’s name.

Please advise us of **any** food allergies your child may have. Parents of children with dietary restrictions must provide their child’s snack. Please provide a shoebox-sized plastic bin, labeled with your child’s name, filled with a selection of appropriate snacks individually packaged with your child’s name written on every item. We will choose which snack best matches the school’s snack for the day. Remember to replenish the snack box regularly throughout the year. **If your student has a food allergy, please notify the teacher in writing if you would like him/her to eat the classroom snack when it consists of fresh fruits and vegetables.**

10) ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

At 8:40 each school day, the main entrance doors are briefly unlocked for arrival, and they re-lock at 8:50. For safety and security, the doors to the school are locked and alarmed during the remaining school hours.

Please bring your student to class promptly (by 8:45), to allow the teachers and students to take advantage of every minute in the classroom. If your child is going to be late or absent, send the teacher a Bloomz message in advance so they are aware. Remember: timeliness and attendance are important habits to develop in preparation for kindergarten.

At dismissal, you may pick up your child at the playground or wait for him/her in the car line. In either case, please hold up or hang the card tag with your child's name on it. Once we begin the car line, we will not dismiss any students on foot until the car line is completed.

In the car line, orange traffic cones will mark where the first four cars should wait. If waiting more than 2 minutes or so, please turn off your car until we start dismissing children. Be sure to put your car in "park" while a staff member delivers your child to the back seat of your car and closes the door. Drive forward, park your car, and buckle your child into his/her car seat.

CHILDREN WILL ONLY BE RELEASED to individuals listed on the emergency as authorized to pick up. If someone other than a parent/guardian will be picking up your student on a particular day, please send the teacher, director, and office manager a Bloomz message so they're aware. We'll require proper identification such as a driver's license to verify the identity of all individuals other than a parent or registered caregiver picking up a child. The emergency form you submit at the beginning of the year should list all the people you authorize to pick up your student. If you are unsure who you've listed as an authorized pick-up person, or if you want to add anyone to the emergency form, stop by the office.

PLEASE BE ON TIME for dismissal. If an emergency arises that will cause you to arrive late, you must call our office and let us know. To allow everyone to get into the routine, we allow a two week "grace period" before charging a late fee. **Beginning on September 18th, 2023, late arrivals for pick-up will be charged a \$15.00 fee for every five minutes or increment thereof after dismissal.** This fee will be added to the following month's tuition bill. If you are going to be unavoidably late, PLEASE call the office to let us know, so we can assure your little one that you're on your way and there is nothing to worry about (they, and we, DO worry when a student isn't picked up on time).

Note that repeated instances of late arrival for pick-up may result in termination from the program, as we are neither licensed nor staffed for before- and after-school care.

11) HEALTH AND SAFETY

The following required medical forms must be completed and turned in before the first day of school. Print the necessary forms using the link at the bottom of the school's webpage: www.severnaparkumc.org/nursery-school .

- Emergency Form
- Health Inventory
- Immunization Certificate documenting up to date on all state-required vaccinations.
Note: While not required, MDH and MSDE strongly recommend that all eligible Marylanders ages 6 months and older receive all recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, including boosters. If your student is vaccinated against COVID-19, please ensure that information is included in the immunization record or provide it to the office after the immunization.
- Asthma Action Plan (for children with diagnosed asthma)
- Allergy Action Plan (for children with documented allergies)
- Medication Administration Authorization Form (if applicable*)

Please provide the school with updated information any time your address, phone number, billing information, or emergency information changes.

*The Medication Administration Form is required if ANY medications (including Epi-pens, lotion, etc.) are to be kept at the school or administered during the school day. Medications will be administered by staff members who have completed Medication Administration Training.

Illness – Your student must remain at home if he/she is sick. Use the chart on the last page of this handbook to determine if your student is too sick for school. If your child is sick or develops a fever at school, we will contact you immediately to come pick up your child. A child may not remain at school after showing signs of illness.

NOTE: In the event of a resurgence of COVID-19 or other epidemic illness, the school may implement restricted access, enhanced health screenings, masking requirements, and/or other precautionary measures to enhance the safety and health of our staff and students.

12) PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity helps children release energy, develop strong minds and bodies, and improve coordination and balance. All classes will participate in recess daily, whether on our

secured playground or indoors. Please dress your student appropriately for outdoor play.

13) CLOTHING

Occasionally, children have accidents or soil their clothing at school. Please leave a spare set of clothes (labeled) in a gallon zip lock bag in your child's tote bag. We have a supply of "extras," just in case. If your child comes home in an unfamiliar item of clothing, please launder it, and send it back as soon as possible.

Please label all removable clothing (hats, mittens, boots, coats, etc.) as many children wear similar items.

We play outdoors whenever the weather permits; therefore, children should wear appropriate clothing to school. Tied or fastened shoes with a rubbery sole are safest for climbing and running. (Crocs, flip flops, and other open back shoes such as clogs are **NOT** recommended and are a safety hazard.)

14) "FIRST DAY BLUES"

Avoid making a big production out of your child going to Nursery School. Be enthusiastic, but casual. Make Nursery School sound like fun. Remind your child of all the children he/she knows, including siblings, who will also be going to school. Your positive attitude is key to your child's adjustment to preschool.

If your child seems anxious about school at first, arrive **just in time** for class to start and keep your farewell short. If your child cries or clings to you at drop off, remember this is normal. The teacher, assistant or director will, if needed, carry your student to class and comfort him/her. We will contact you if your child becomes inconsolable, and we will work with you through this transition. Your child's happy adjustment to preschool is important to us. If you have any concerns about how your child is adjusting to preschool, it is best to call his/her teacher to discuss your concerns by phone, rather than in the child's presence.

15) BIRTHDAYS

Parents are welcome to provide a special birthday treat for the class. Please consult with your child's teacher if you wish to furnish a birthday treat, to see if anyone in the class has an allergy and to schedule a date with the teacher. Treats brought into the classroom **MAY NOT CONTAIN PEANUTS OR NUTS.**

16) TOTE BAG (NOT BACKPACK)

Your child will need a "tote" style bag, not a backpack, to bring to school daily. You may buy one separately or purchase one from the



Parent Group. School tote bags will be available for purchase for \$15/each. Label your child's tote clearly with his/her name and check it daily for artwork, soiled clothing, newsletters, communications and notices, order forms, and anything else he/she might bring home. **If you are returning something to the school, please hand it to the teacher/aide at drop-off instead of leaving it in the bag.**

17) FUNDRAISERS

The proceeds from fundraisers enable SPUMCNS to host special events and visitors. Participation in any fundraising event is voluntary.

18) FIELD TRIPS

Our field trips are arranged with the intent that a parent will accompany the child, meet us at the location of the field trip, and remain with the child throughout the event. The Nursery School does not transport children to special events.

19) PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs staff members take to record classes and students participating in daily activities may be used internally within the school, uploaded to the Bloomz app to be shared within the school, or added to our web page and/or Facebook page. The school will never publish the names of any students whose images appear on our web page or Facebook page. Parents acknowledge this practice by checking the appropriate block on the online registration form.

20) SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

Changes to normal school hours will be announced on Bloomz. In the event of inclement weather, please monitor radio, television, AACPS.org, for an announcement regarding the county decision on school closings or delays. SPUMCNS does not issue refunds for days lost due to closings for inclement weather or COVID quarantine, nor do we conduct Zoom/remote classes in the event of a closure.

Our policy is as follows:

- If Public Schools open one or two hours late, we will open at 10 a.m. Both morning and extended sessions will dismiss at the normal time.
- If Public Schools are closed, we will be closed.
- If Public Schools close early, ALL students will be dismissed at 11:45 with our AM students.

The director will confirm inclement weather operational status via a Bloomz alert by 8 am on the morning of the affected day.

21) PARENT GROUP

The Parent Group sponsors four evening special events for families throughout the year. At the beginning of the year, we will ask for volunteers to sign up as class parents, one for each class. The Parent Group chair will work with class parents to generate ideas, schedule events, and solicit volunteers and participants. These events are foundational to our school, helping to build a real sense of community among our families, and are supported and conducted completely by parents.

22) DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOL

We welcome your contributions to the school. Please check with the teacher or admin staff if you have something you would like to donate.

23) CPR/FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

CPR/First Aid

All staff members providing direct care are certified in CPR and basic first aid. In an emergency, SPUMCNS will activate the 911 system and immediately notify the family or emergency contact listed on the Emergency Form.

In accordance with state guidelines, we have developed an emergency plan to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

Fire Drills

The school holds fire drills monthly. Children are taught to walk quickly and quietly to the far side of the playground.

Tornadoes or sheltering in place

If we must take shelter inside the building during an emergency, the staff will take the children to the men's and ladies' restrooms in our school hallway across from the preschool office. This area has been declared as safe for sheltering since there are no windows. The staff will have cell phones for communication. The school holds shelter-in-place drills twice a year. If circumstances dictate, we either remain inside classrooms or leave the building. Staff will take appropriate action to protect students and contact parents promptly if such actions become necessary.

Catastrophic events and emergency evacuations

In the event of emergency or adverse conditions that require us to leave the church property, we will walk with the children to Heartlands Assisted Living, across the parking lot from the church. Heartland has graciously given permission for the school to shelter on their sun porch. The staff will have contact numbers, cell phones, emergency food supplies, water, toys, books, etc. to occupy the children. Parents will be notified by phone or text to pick up their children there.

Heartlands Assisted Living

715 Benfield Road

Severna Park, Maryland 21146

phone: 410-729-1600

Print and post this chart to refer to when your child shows symptoms, to determine whether to keep them home for the day.

Too Sick for School?



Send to School:

- Have a runny nose or a little cough, but no other symptoms.
- Haven't taken any fever reducing medicine for 24 hours, and haven't had a fever during that time.
- Haven't thrown up or had any diarrhea in 24 hours.



Keep at Home:

- Have a temperature higher than 100.4 degrees even after taking medicine.
- Throwing up or have diarrhea.
- Eyes are pink and crusty.
- **Lethargic/ not him/herself**
- **Heavy nasal discharge**
- **Deep, frequent cough**



Call the Doctor:

- Have a temperature higher than 100.4 degrees for more than two days.
- Have been throwing up or have diarrhea for more than two days.
- Have had the sniffles for more than a week and they aren't getting better.



SEVERNA PARK UMC
NURSERY SCHOOL

Print and sign this form and turn it in prior to the first day of school.

Note: both parents/guardians must sign

**Handbook Receipt Acknowledgment
and Statement of Understanding**

I/We* acknowledge having read the 2023-2024 Severna Park United Methodist Church Nursery School (SPUMCNS) Parent Handbook, to include the Addendum outlining the procedures and precautions used to protect against Covid-19. I/We* understand these policies may change due to the evolving nature of the pandemic, and that we will be notified if that happens. I/We* agree to abide by these policies.

Parent / Guardian #1

date

Signature

Printed Name

Parent / Guardian #2

date

Signature

Printed Name

*Please note that both parents/guardians must sign this form except in the case of single parent families. A completed form must be returned to the office before the school year starts.