

**Blacksburg United Methodist Preschool  
Parent Handbook  
2021-2022**



## **A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR & PRESCHOOL BOARD**

We are so pleased that you have chosen Blacksburg United Methodist Preschool for your child. We endeavor to provide the best in trained staff, appropriate activities, facilities, and materials to assure a happy learning experience for your child.

All children are curious and desire to learn. However, the most effective learning for young children comes through exploring and doing. We try to understand each child as completely as possible and to provide activities and experiences that are exciting and motivating to each one.

This handbook explains the policies, procedures, and practices of the Preschool. Please read it carefully and keep it handy for reference throughout the year. Our COVID 19 Guidelines can be found on pages 5-6. Please be sure to sign the separate Handbook Agreement, stating that you read and agree to all the preschool policies and procedures.

We are happy to answer any questions, and we welcome your comments, suggestions, and cooperation. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your family.

Debbie McDowell, Director  
and the BUMP Board of Directors

[preschool@blacksburgumc.org](mailto:preschool@blacksburgumc.org)

540-552-5424 x7

Office Hours:

Due to Covid-19 policies and procedures, office hours will be by appointment only

Follow us on Facebook @BUMPreschool  
[blacksburgumc.org/preschool](https://blacksburgumc.org/preschool)

***Please be sure to sign the separate document indicating that you have read and agree to all handbook guidelines.***

## GOALS

- Provide a happy, secure, and safe environment in which each child will develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically;
- Value play as one of the most important means of learning;
- Provide opportunities for the child to develop confidence and self-esteem;
- Provide age-appropriate, individual, and group experiences;
- Foster, value, and encourage creativity and language development in all areas;
- Provide challenges for self-expression, investigation, reasoning, and generalizing;
- Provide appropriate opportunities for growth in self-direction, independence, and self-discipline;
- Promote understanding and respect for social and cultural diversity;
- Help bridge the gap between home and public school; and
- Provide opportunities for teachers and parents to work together for the welfare of the children.

## BRIEF HISTORY

For many years the Blacksburg United Methodist Church has provided an excellent program of educational enrichment for young children of the Blacksburg and Montgomery County area.

In 1949, before kindergarten classes were a part of Virginia's public school program, individuals in the Church realized the need for a kindergarten program in the area. They requested and received the support of the United Methodist Women to open one of the first kindergartens in Montgomery County that same year, under the directorship of Virginia Kincaid. Margaret Atkins Worley was notably instrumental in this early endeavor. Marian Allen and Mildred Ellmore followed Mrs. Kincaid as directors during the early years.

After approximately 10 years in operation, the sponsorship of the school was assumed by the Church at the request of the women's organization. A Board of Directors under the Committee on Education was elected to oversee the operation of the school.

In 1974, after public kindergartens were legislated in Virginia, the church's program was redesigned for children 3-5 years of age, and kindergarten classes were discontinued. At this time, the school's name was changed to the Blacksburg United Methodist Preschool. Mildred Ellmore remained Director until 1983 and was followed by Lynn Shaffer (1983-1985), Juanita Kornegay (1985-1996), Louise Ridenhour (1996-1999), Marcia Barrow (1999-2018), and Kristy Hudson followed (2018-2021). Debbie McDowell was appointed in August 2021.

During the global pandemic of 2020 through August 2021, the Preschool chose to remain closed to keep children, families, and staff safe.

## OPERATION

The Preschool operates under the direction of a Preschool Board, nominated by the Church and elected by the Annual Church Charge Conference. Members of this Board are selected on a basis of knowledge, experience, and interest in the education of young children. The policies, procedures, and goals under which the Preschool operates have been formulated from guidelines set by the Board. The Director, teachers, and support staff of the Preschool are employed by this Board.

**ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

The Preschool accepts students between the ages of three and five. Children must be born on or before September 30, 2018, to be enrolled in the three-year-old classes. Children must be born on or before September 30, 2017, to be enrolled in the four-year-old classes. A mid-year enrolled three-year-old will remain with the three-year-old classes until they meet the four-year-old class entrance requirements. All children must be toilet trained. Immunizations must be up-to-date, and a copy of the child’s vaccination record is kept on file. Parents must also show their child’s birth certificate or passport when they first enroll in the Preschool. Blacksburg United Methodist Preschool does not discriminate based on race, gender, religion, or place of citizenship.

A non-refundable application fee of \$100 is due prior to enrolling your child in the school.  
A non-refundable supplies fee of \$100 is due by the start of the school year.

**TUITION**

Tuition is due the first of the month beginning in September. The Preschool uses Procure to notify families of monthly tuition and receive payment. If payment is not made via Procure by the 10th of the month, it is automatically drafted from the bank account or credit card on file with the Preschool. The Preschool requires a method of payment to be on file. If payment cannot be made, please contact the Director. A late fee of \$10 is charged for late payments. A returned check fee of \$35 is charged for returned checks or issues with autodraft.

There is no fee reduction for missed days. In cases of early withdrawal, you are responsible for your child’s tuition through the end of the school year. Tuition remains the same each month, including those with holidays or inclement weather closings. If more than 5 days are missed during the year due to inclement weather, etc., additional days (but no more than 5) may be added to the end of the school year, at the discretion of the Board.

Monthly tuition is as follows:

2 days/week.....	\$300.00
3 days/week.....	\$360.00
4 days/week.....	\$420.00
5 days/week.....	\$475.00

## **COVID POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2021-22**

We recognize that COVID-19 is a serious disease with potential lasting consequences to those who contract the virus. In order to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 to the extent possible, the following policies and procedures will be instituted for the 2021-22 school year. This list is not exhaustive and we reserve the right to modify COVID-19 policies and procedures as we see fit. Should any additions or subtractions be made to the following list, we will inform you in writing of such changes.

Our goal is to keep BUMP open for the entire school year. With your help, we are confident this vision will become reality. Thank you for your support.

The BUMP Board of Directors

### **Personal Mitigation Strategies**

1. All BUMP teachers and staff are required to be vaccinated.
2. All BUMP teachers and staff will wear masks.
3. All BUMP students will wear masks.
4. All parents/family will wear masks while on church premises.
5. Mask breaks may be taken off while outdoors and separated, to the extent possible, at the discretion of teachers and staff.

### **Drop-off/Pick-Up**

1. Drop-off and Pick-up will occur outdoors as the weather allows. The playground is the preferred drop-off and pick-up location. In the event of inclement weather, teachers will meet you at the double glass doors or in the Whisner Building (straight through double glass doors and up the stairs).
2. No backpacks.
3. Provide a hard-sided water bottle, filled, each day, that is easily wipeable.

### **Classroom**

1. CO2 monitors in each classroom.
2. Air purifiers in each classroom.
3. Open windows and doors. Please dress your child appropriately when cool weather is expected.
4. Increased cleaning of high-touch surfaces throughout the school day.
5. Students will be provided their own supplies, to the extent possible.
6. Distanced snack time to the extent possible. Teachers will serve snack to students; no family style.
7. Children will be kept in "pods" to the extent possible while indoors. We do employ shared spaces and shared teachers.
8. Increased time outdoors to the extent possible. Please dress your child appropriately for heat, cold, rain, snow. Apply sunscreen prior to school each day, in anticipation of increased outdoor time.

9. Automatic soap and paper towel dispensers have been installed in each classroom and bathrooms.
10. No water fountain usage.
11. Hand sanitizer is provided.
12. Increased hand washing.

### **Health Screening**

1. Temperature and general health checks will occur daily. By bringing your child each day, you are confirming that he/she and any family members/close contacts, do not exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 nor have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19.
2. If there is a need to give your child ibuprofen or tylenol before preschool, do not bring your child that day.
3. If your child has any respiratory symptoms, fever, runny nose, or other COVID-19 symptoms, do not bring your child to school.
4. If your child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, you will be contacted. We reserve the right to require a negative COVID-19 test before your child returns to school.
5. Your child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

### **Travel, Quarantine, and School Closure**

1. If you plan to travel, please make an appointment to discuss your plans with the director as soon as possible before you travel. You may be required to quarantine upon your return before returning to school.
2. In the event of a COVID-19 exposure in the school, BUMP will contact all families promptly. Quarantine or school closure for up to two weeks may be required depending upon the classroom(s) of exposure. COVID-19 testing may also be required before returning to school. We will work with local health officials, as needed.

### **COVID-19 LIABILITY STATEMENT**

*Blacksburg United Methodist Church (BUMC) and Preschool are taking appropriate precautions to provide a safe atmosphere for all. Worship attendees and participants in church and preschool activities acknowledge and agree that they are doing so at their own risk and understand that in participating, there is an inherent risk of exposure to communicable diseases, including but not limited to COVID-19. By attending worship or other church and preschool activities at BUMC, attendees acknowledge and agree that they fully accept all risk associated with their presence on BUMC property, including all risks of injury or illness.*

**Be sure to sign separate form**

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Preschool operates from 9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Due to our new COVID procedures, we will be dropping off and picking up students on the playground or in the Whisner building if it is raining. You will need to wait for the director or a teacher to check your child in at the gate to the playground. Teachers will have a large picnic blanket where their class will gather before and after school. Please do not bring your child early to play on the playground since we will be using this for school check in.

Children should be dropped off starting at 9:15, and will be in their classrooms by 9:30. If you are running late, please call the office to check your child in. Children should be picked up on the playground between 12:30 and 12:35. Please call the preschool at 540-552-5424 x 7 if an emergency prevents you from picking up your child on time. A parent or other designated adult should accompany their child to and from the playground or Whisner building each day. Do not drop off children in the parking lot or on the sidewalk.

*If it is raining, we will check-in and out in the Whisner building.*

To help with spacing, we will have 2 lines at the playground gate. One for the Three's classes and one for the Four's classes. You will check in with the director or teacher at the head of your line. On the first couple of days, we will allow parents whose children may have a difficult time separating to take their child to the correct teacher's blanket, but the goal for all students is to "Kiss and Go" from the gate.

*Please be sure to have the Procare app on your phone for easy check-in and check-out.*

The Preschool requests that if a child is going to be absent that the parent notify the teacher. This practice follows the policy of Montgomery County Public Schools.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

The Preschool follows the Montgomery County Schools closings for inclement weather. If Montgomery County Schools are closed, the Preschool will also be closed. However, we will open on time if Montgomery County Schools are delayed one hour. We will open at 10:15 a.m. if Montgomery County Schools are delayed by two hours. The phone number for the Montgomery County School Closing Hotline is 540-382-5102.

## **CONFERENCES**

All parents will be asked to schedule a conference with their child's head teacher in the spring. If you want to talk about your child's progress before then, please make an appointment with the head teacher. Discussions about the child should not take place in his/her presence or in the presence of other parents.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We will be happy to celebrate your child's birthday at school if you wish. Arrangements, including what will be served, should be made in advance with the teacher. Gifts and party favors should not be exchanged at school birthday parties. Simple refreshments (such as muffins or cookies) are preferred over messy cupcakes. This may be altered due to the pandemic and status of COVID 19.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Please refer to our COVID-19 procedures on pages 7 and 8.

Please keep your child at home if he/she has been running a fever above 99.0, vomiting, or has diarrhea. Your child should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Parents or other authorized persons will be contacted to pick up sick children.

Please inform your child's teacher if food allergies or religious/cultural beliefs prevent your child from eating certain foods. If your child has a life threatening food allergy, you must provide a snack for your child everyday they are at preschool.

Simple first aid is administered in case of minor injuries at school. For a serious injury, an attempt is made to contact parents, and the rescue squad (911) is called. Parents are asked to sign a treatment authorization form allowing medical aid to begin at a hospital if parents or emergency contact person cannot be located.

No unenrolled children may be left at Blacksburg United Methodist Preschool without a parent or guardian on the premises.

Any small pet left at preschool all morning must be in a cage, crate, or aquarium. Any pet visiting the classroom must remain with the owner (adult) and have leash and/or carrier available. Lead teachers or co-teachers must check (prior to pet visit) with families of children with allergies or fears. No animals are allowed on the playground without prior approval from the director.

## **LICENSING**

Blacksburg United Methodist Preschool operates under State Religious Exempt Status and files documentation annually with the Virginia Department of Social Services and Virginia Department of Education. The school is inspected annually by the Montgomery County Fire and Health Departments. Our current Religious Exempt Status allows us to have a maximum enrollment capacity of 61 students.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

If the parents/guardians have concerns regarding their child, they should first discuss it with the child's lead teacher or co-teacher. If the situation is not resolved, please contact the Director. If the parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response, the Preschool Board Chair should be contacted.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents should ensure their child arrives promptly and is picked up on time. A child who is late often finds it difficult to join in on activities. Children waiting to be picked up are often anxious.

For safety reasons, accompany your child to the playground gate or Whisner building and pick him/her up at the playground or Whisner building. (Whisner building is used when there is inclement weather.)



*In the event drop off changes and is allowed at your child's classroom in the building during the school year, we ask that you help prevent congestion in the hall by departing as soon as possible after dropping off or picking up your child.*

Dress your child in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Weather permitting, all children play outside each morning. There are times when your child may get messy. It is helpful if coats and sweaters are marked with your child's name.

Teach your child self-reliance by encouraging him/her to do things for him/herself, and allow time for this.

Send toys to school only when requested by the teacher.

Inform us if you have a talent or interest you are willing to share.

Get to know your child's teacher and work with her concerning any issues that may arise or concerns you may have.

Take an interest in the school and the things your child brings home.

Take time to listen to and discuss your child's daily experiences.

Report any upsetting experiences that may help the teacher better understand your child's behavior.

Send materials from home that you might have for art and/or craft projects when requested by the teacher.

Help your child to learn his/her full name, parents' names, address, and telephone number.

Be willing to help with field trips and other special events.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our goal is to help children learn self-control. Physical punishment is never used.

- Rules are clearly stated. Children are reminded what is and what is not allowed. The preschool practices a 'safe hands & safe feet' policy.
- Children are encouraged to solve their own problems when possible. When harm to the child, or another child, appears likely, an adult intervenes.
- Children are offered positive choices or redirected to another activity.
- In some cases, a cool-down period may be necessary. The child is removed from the group but usually remains in the classroom; however, an adult is always present. The child decides when he or she is ready to return to the group and follow the rules.
- The preschool reserves the right to request that any student be removed from our classes when, in the opinion of our staff, we are unable to meet the needs of the child.

## **THE PRESCHOOL DAY**

The Preschool day includes a wide variety of hands-on, minds-on activities. These are designed to encourage creativity and discovery, as well, as to meet the developmental needs of the child.

### **Working and Playing**

Each child chooses from a variety of activities: looking at books, listening to CDs, building with blocks, playing in the kitchen and home-living center, drawing and writing, painting at the easel, cutting and pasting, and playing with a variety of manipulatives, while using their imaginations to the fullest extent. Children enjoy outside play each day, weather permitting.

### **Cleaning Up**

Children are taught to put materials and equipment back in designated places.

### **Eating Snack Together**

Children are provided a light snack each day. They are encouraged to participate in acceptable food habits and table manners. Conversation is encouraged during snack time.

### **Enjoying Music and Movement**

By participating in musical activities children improve self-confidence, motor coordination, speech and language, rhythm, creativity, and imagination. Musical instruments, such “rainsticks,” shakers, and a variety of other instruments, are used to provide hands-on experience for the children. Children participate in Music and Movement each day while at preschool.

### **Sharing Group Experiences**

Listening to stories and poems, talking together, participating in show-and-tell, acting out plays, taking walks, and going on field trips help broaden the child’s range of interest, improve language skills, and contribute to a happy preschool experience.

### **Chapel Time**

Once a month, the pastoral staff offers Chapel Time during the last half hour of preschool. This is a simple, non-denominational event in which the pastor tells a story and leads a song or two. Attendance is voluntary. Parents are welcome to join us.

### **Staff Requirements**

All teachers are required to be up-to-date on their CPR/First Aid Certifications. In addition, per our Religious Exempt status, all teachers are required to have a completed staff health report signed by a physician stating the teacher is free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Staff are also required to provide proof of Covid 19 vaccination as of June 2021.

### **Lead Teachers and Co-Teachers**

Lead teachers and co-teachers must have a degree in child development, early childhood education or related field, in addition to experience working with young children.

### **Assistant Teachers**

Assistant teachers must have some college training or extensive experience working with young children.

### **Music and Movement Teacher**

The music teacher should have extensive experience in music, as well as early childhood education.

## PRESCHOOL BOARD

Ginger Cope, Chair and Parent Representative  
 Brad Dulaney, Lead Pastor  
 Robin Barge, Director of Age Level Ministries  
 Pamela Winkeler, Finance  
 Debbie McDowell, Preschool Director  
 Sue Ellen Cannon, Member at Large  
 Robin Manuel, Teacher Representative  
 Mary Lou Moore, Member at Large  
 April G Peacock, Member at Large

## PRESCHOOL STAFF

During the regular Preschool hours, the staff may be reached by phone at 540-552-5424 x 7.

Position	Name	Room
Director	Debbie McDowell	Preschool office
Music	Marci Craig	Music Room
Snack Coordinators	Robin Manuel	
	Lorri Moench	
Lead Teachers	Lorri Moench	Oak Room
	Amanda Allen	Redbud Room
Co-Teachers	Tricia Wheatly	Magnolia Room
	Brette Arms	Magnolia Room
	Robin Manuel	Maple Room
	Rachel Tracy	Maple Room
Asst. Teachers	Abigail Middleton	Redbud Room
	Brandi Lemmon	Oak Room
	Jennifer Stonefield	Oak Room