

South Point United Methodist Church Weekday School Parent Handbook



704-825-0525

Dear Parents,

We want to welcome you to South Point United Methodist Weekday School. We look forward to a very exciting and successful school year.

As the Weekday School Board of Directors, we are established to set policy and guidelines for the Weekday School Program. The following information has been validated and set forth in the Handbook for your information and future reference.

Our curriculum will provide your child with developmentally appropriate, high-quality activities to help your child grow and learn. We strive to create a fun, learning-rich environment for your child.

We look forward to working with you to make this an enjoyable and productive year for your child.

The Weekday School Board of Directors
Weekday School Staff
South Point United Methodist Church

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Lauren Hoffman, Director

Office Hours 8a-12p, Monday - Friday

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Weekday School Board Chairperson

Beth Davis – appmom632@gmail.com

SPUMC Pastor

Laura Auten – lauten@wnccumc.net

WEEKDAY SCHOOL ROUTINE USUALLY INCLUDES THESE FEATURES:

Making Great Readers

Handwriting Without Tears

Sharing Time – We will get to know one another and learn how to get along with other children. We will use our imaginations and our senses to talk about the world around us, and how it changes every day.

Creative Play Time – We will build with blocks and boxes, dress up, have puppet shows, use manipulatives and engage in other activities that help us learn about ourselves.

Music Time – We will sing, dance, play instruments and use movement to interpret songs and moods.

Outside Play Time – We will play on our playground equipment to develop our large muscles and to strengthen our confidence and coordination.

Art Time – We will express ourselves in every available form. We recycle different materials into “masterpieces” and use our small muscle skills to cut, paste, paint, color and create!

Story Time – We will read and tell stories using puppets, pictures and dramatic movement.

Quiet Time – We will have time to rest while we listen to relaxing music, play group games and have finger plays.

Chapel Time – We will learn Bible stories to promote character education and moral values. We will focus on the goodness and trustworthiness of God.

Dance and Movement Time – The children will participate in dance and movement in the classroom to enhance motor skills.

Included in our day will be numerous activities all designed to encourage our children in taking that giant leap from home to the outside world. We stress social development, getting along with others, Christian values, and learning good health and social habits.

REGISTRATION

South Point United Methodist Church Weekday School is a ministry of the South Point United Methodist Church. It operates under the auspices of the Weekday School Board of Directors. Registration for the SPUMC Weekday School is open to all children; regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

- Children enrolled in the PMO Class must be 12 months by August 31st.
- Children enrolled in the 2-year-old Class must be 2 years old by August 31st.
- Children enrolled in the 3-year-old Class must be 3 years old by August 31st.
- Children enrolled in the 4-year-old Class must be 4 years old by August 31st.

Children enrolling in the 3- or 4-year-old classes must be potty trained-NO EXCEPTIONS

To secure your child's place in the Weekday School, the non-refundable Registration Fee and Activity Fee must be paid at the time of registration. The Activity Fee includes a Handwriting Without Tears Workbook (3s and 4s), a monthly subscription to Scholastic magazine (4s), fees for special guests that visit the school and field trip admission for 1 student and 1 adult.

TUITION

We accept payment through personal checks, cash, and an online option through our website. If you are paying in cash, please put money in a sealed envelope with your child's name and the amount on the envelope. Make all checks payable to SPUMC WDS and note your child's name in the memo line.

In order to retain your child's place in the Weekday school, **tuition must be paid by the first (1st) day of EACH MONTH.** A **late fee of \$25** will be assessed if tuition is not received by 12:00pm (end of the preschool day) of the 5th of each month. If tuition has not been received by the 5th of the month, in addition to the late fee, your child will NOT be allowed to attend weekday school until payment is received for that month. Absences for illness, vacation, or other reason will cause no reduction of this fee. If a child is absent for a month, for whatever reason, tuition must be paid in order to hold his/ her place in the class.

Withdrawals are necessary for a variety of reasons. If your child needs to be withdrawn from the program, we ask for as much advanced notice as possible. Withdrawal notices should include the reason for withdrawing and should be made in writing to the Director. If a child is withdrawn from the program before the end of the month, tuition for the month is forfeited.

The Weekday School reserves the right to terminate enrollment for any child who presents a risk to the health or safety of other children or staff, or to any child whose needs cannot be met in our program. Refusal or inability to follow the policies of the Weekday School may also result in termination.

SCHOOL HOURS

Weekday School begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 11:30 AM. **Children should arrive no earlier than 8:25 and be picked up no later than 11:45.** It is important for your child to begin his or her day at 8:30 AM.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- Drop-off is from 8:25-8:35am.
- Pick-up is at 11:30am.

Drop-off and Pick-up are conducted under the canopy behind the church.

Please have your child ready to exit the vehicle when you pull up to the door. Please make every effort to arrive within that time frame. When children arrive late, it is disruptive to the classroom. Please send communication to the director if you are arriving outside of the assigned drop-off time. All student drop-offs occurring outside of the assigned time frame need to be made at the main Weekday School entrance door on the side of the building.

When you arrive to pick your child up, please be ready to load your child into the car. Pick up is more efficient when you display the provided 'car tag' in your windshield. If you are comfortable, please pull to the parking lot to buckle your child in their car seat. **Any pick-up that is after 11:45am is deemed late and the following late fees will apply:**

\$1 per minute after 11:45am for the first offense

\$2 per minute after 11:45am for the second offense

\$5 per minute after 11:45am for the third offense

*Continued disregard for the pick-up time or failure to pay late fees may result in disenrollment.

Late fees will be invoiced by the Director and payment expected within 5 business days.

RELEASE POLICY

When children are going to be picked up by someone other than parents, the Director or Teacher **MUST** be notified in writing prior to pick up. The designated person must bring child's designated car tag. If we have any questions regarding the release of your child, we will contact you by phone to authorize the release.

CLASSROOM VISITATION & SECURITY

Parents are invited to observe Weekday School at any time with prior notice. Please make arrangements with the Director. One caution is that children in our PMO and 2 year old class do not usually understand if you visit during the day and then leave again. If you are a parent of a child in those classes, please plan to schedule your visit before afternoon pick up. Security of our children and staff is important to us. All exterior doors remain locked during the course of our school day, with the exception of when our classes are outside. When classes are outside, the rear door is unlocked to allow for easy and quick re-entry in the case of an emergency. Please use door bells to alert us of your presence, if you are visiting during the course of the school day.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

We have plans in place in the event of fire, tornado and stranger on campus. Periodically, each class will demonstrate the procedure for those emergencies. Please carefully encourage your child to participate in these exercises. Emergency numbers are kept in each classroom with easy access to teachers. If an evacuation occurs, we will contact families from cell phones. Please rest assured that if an actual emergency exists that you will be notified immediately. Communication will be made through our communication app or through direct phone calls.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS & HEALTH ASSEMENT

The Gaston County Public Health Department has assigned an individual to our Weekday School for public health service and information. All Weekday School children are required to have a health assessment (physical examination) before the first day of Weekday School. Physicals completed within the past 12 months, prior to August 31st are acceptable but must be updated if the child has a physical during the school year. These health assessment forms **MUST be signed by a physician.** We are required to keep physical copies of the health assessment form and up to date immunization records for each student.

INDIVIDUAL CARE PLAN (ICP)

An ICP is required if your child has special health care needs, which may include but not limited to, the use of medication, food intolerances or allergies, delayed speech, or physical/mental special needs. Your child's physician must provide a signed form with all necessary information.

STUDENT ILLNESS

Children should never be sent to Weekday School when the chances are great that they will need to return home before 11:30am. Children who are ill with a contagious illness or have a fever should not attend.

If a child becomes ill after arriving at Weekday School, it is the responsibility of the parent, upon notification from the Weekday School, to pick up the child within 30 minutes. It is most important that each parent make arrangements in advance if both parents work, or if the parents are going to be away from the home during the day. This should be discussed with the child at the beginning of the school year so he/ she will know what to do in case of illness.

The Weekday School Director will determine if a child is too ill to remain at the weekday school. Any child experiencing the following symptoms will be sent home and should not return the next day:

- Fever of 100 or higher
- Contagious skin or eye infection
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Head lice

In an effort to ensure all children remain healthy, children may return when he/she can participate in all group activities AND there has been **24 hours** since:

- the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea
- evidence of eye discharge has been resolved
- the child is fever free without a fever reducing medicine
- any contagious rash has been resolved
- the child is symptom free of any diagnosed contagious illness or condition

MEDICATIONS

We realize that on occasion physicians will prescribe medication that must be taken during Weekday School hours. If this situation arises, we request that the parent be on hand to administer the medication. Weekday School staff will not administer medication, except asthma or allergy medication with a Doctor's written directions. ***PLEASE SEE THE INIDIVIDUALIZED CARE PLAN*** included in the registration packet.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage open and honest communication between teachers and parents. We use the WhatsApp communication app for most correspondence. Private messaging is available on the app to send information directly to weekday school director/teachers. Occasional newsletters will also be sent home in folders.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Situations occasionally arise when an in-person meeting is necessary. When either the parent or teacher requests a parent conference, every effort must be made to keep that appointment. The conference must be scheduled in advance by notifying the teacher or the parent. The conference must not interfere with Weekday School hours. Weekday School Director will be present for all conferences.

CONCERNS/GRIEVANCES

Occasionally situations arise when parents feel the need to go beyond the classroom to discuss concerns. We fully support such communication and the appropriate steps in which to resolve such concerns or discuss grievances are to contact:

- The Classroom Teacher(s)
- The Weekday School Director
- The WDS Committee Chairperson
- The Pastor of SPUMC

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken daily and will be kept as a record of your child's participation in Weekday School. If your child is going to be absent, please notify the Weekday School Director or teachers to inform them of any illness, vacation, etc.

SNACKS

Parents are asked to send an individual snack and water each day. **Please label the snack container and water bottle with your child's name.** This should be a healthy snack that does not need to be refrigerated and **MUST** be tree nuts or peanut free. SPUMC Weekday School is a **TREE NUT AND PEANUT FREE SCHOOL.**

CLOTHING

Appropriate dress allows participation in all activities. Playing in sand, water, paint, play dough, etc. is learning by interacting with their environment. Such learning is great fun and can also be quite messy at times. Keep that in mind when choosing articles of clothing. You will also be asked to send in a seasonally appropriate set of clothing in case of an accident; we will exchange clothing as the season changes. Please label each item (underwear, socks & shoes too) and place them in a Ziploc bag with your child's name on the bag.

Outdoor play is an integral part of the Weekday School program. As the weather gets cooler, please make sure your child has a jacket, hat and gloves. We go outside every day unless it is raining, snowing or below 38 degrees. Please LABEL your child's jackets, coats, sweaters and hats with his or her name. This is very helpful in teaching children to recognize their name and keep up with their own items. Please do not send any item that is not labeled to school. We encourage close-toed shoes for comfort and safety on the playground. Please **no flip flops.**

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Children should not bring toys, games, radios, cameras, breakable items or other personal items to Weekday School. The only time children may bring something is when the teacher instructs them to do so. Weekday School offers children an opportunity to experience new toys and equipment. **Guns, bow and arrows, knives or any war toys are not appropriate for children to bring at any time.** Please keep all make-up, Chapstick and hand sanitizer at home. Weekday School Staff cannot be held responsible for loss or damage to personal items.

DIAPERING/POTTY TRAINING

PMO & 2-YEAR-OLD CLASS

Children in the PMO & 2-year-old classes are **NOT** expected to be potty trained. Parents must provide your own supply of diapers and wipes, as well as a complete change of clothes. These items will be kept in personal cubbies within our classroom. **Please label these items with your child's name.** We will request additional items when supplies run low.

If your child starts the potty-training process while in our program, we will partner with you to help with this process. All children **MUST** be potty-trained before moving to our 3-year-old class.

3-YEAR-OLD & 4-YEAR-OLD CLASS

Children in the 3-year-old and 4-year-old classes **MUST be potty trained in order to attend**. Children must be wearing underwear and rarely have accidents. Please note that wearing pull-ups isn't considered being potty trained. Please also note that the older age's classrooms are not equipped for diaper changing and there are strict standards for that process. Due to sanitation regulations, soiled or wet clothing will not be rinsed nor washed at the weekday school. However, it will be bagged and sent home with the child.

Being potty-trained means that the child can do the following:

1. Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go.
2. Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing to go and use the restroom.
3. Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance.
4. Wipe him/herself after using the toilet. **With bowel movements as well as urinating. **
5. Get on and off the toilet by him/herself.

We do offer the opportunity to use the bathroom throughout the day, as well as upon request from the child at any time. We do understand that even potty-trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents, especially when they are in a new environment. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should NOT happen frequently.

In the case of wetting accidents, teachers will verbally guide the children in changing their clothes, encouraging as much independence as possible. Clothes with elastic waistbands make it easier for children in this process. Parents will be notified at the time of pick up if this occurs.

In the case of a soiling accident, parents will be contacted and requested to come and assist your child. When a teacher is busy helping children change soiled clothing, it takes away from learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class. In addition, it violates our Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures for the Weekday School at South Point United Methodist Church, which states "...no fewer than two adults be present at all times with any activity involving children." Furthermore, the WDS Safe Sanctuary Policy is posted on our website for your reference.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement weather closings follow the Gaston County School schedule for every condition.

- If Gaston County Schools are closed or choose remote learning, SPUMC Weekday School will be closed.
- If Gaston County Schools delay their opening 1 (one) hour, then SPUMC Weekday School will open @ 9:30.
- If Gaston County Schools delay their opening 2 hours, then SPUMC Weekday School will be closed.

When hazardous driving conditions develop during school hours, parents should come for their children before 11:30 AM, regardless of public school closings, in order to assure the children's safety. Parents are encouraged to discuss with their child the instructions that will be followed if an early dismissal is necessary.

Parents will be notified if the Weekday School is closed through an announcement on WhatsApp.

HOLIDAYS

The Weekday School follows the Gaston County Schools calendar, including teacher workdays. The Weekday School is closed on Gaston County School early dismissal days for the purpose of training & teacher preparation.

CELEBRATIONS/BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthdays are an exciting time, especially in a child's life; we love observing our friend's birthdays in class. Children who have summer birthdays may observe their half birthday (6 month), if desired.

Parents may send in a special snack, per NC Childcare Rule: "food must come from an approved source such as a local bakery, grocery store ... or prepackaged for retail sale.". Parents **must** notify weekday school director in advance, so allergies can be taken into account. If you prefer your child not participate in the party snacks, please let us know in writing on the form within the registration packet. We ask that parents DO NOT join us as it can cause distress for other friends.

If you would like to send birthday invitations, please include the **ENTIRE** class, otherwise invitations would need to be distributed privately.

We also observe certain holidays with festive class parties. Each time a party is planned, teachers will send a sign up for items needed. **We ask that you do not send items in unless asked**. Everyone will be contacted to contribute throughout the year. If you prefer your child not to participate in the party snacks, please let us know in writing on the form within the registration packet. Holidays provide a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, so parents are invited and encouraged to attend these class parties. Arrangements for younger siblings must be made for these celebrations, unless otherwise discussed with the weekday school director.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are educational and planned to enrich learning for the children. The 3's and 4's classes only participate in various field trips during the school year. Parents and students are asked to meet at the location of the field trip, as our facility does not have transportation permission. Parents are required to stay with their child during the field trip, unless prior approved arrangements have been made. If a child does not plan on attending a scheduled field trip, parents need to arrange for alternate care on that day. Students are required to have a SPUMC WDS t-shirt to wear on all field trips. Parents will receive prior notices of all field trips including pertinent details to each trip.

DISCIPLINE

Classroom rules are established for the safety of every child. Weekday School follows the “Assertive Discipline” policy. This policy gives short and simple rules, rewards and consequences. “Assertive Discipline” is used nationwide in public schools, churches and other organizations where a positive means of discipline is needed. Parents will be informed of any inappropriate behavior. If a behavior continues, the child may be excluded from Weekday School on a temporary or permanent basis. Weekday School staff does not allow corporal punishment.

INJURIES/INCIDENTS

While we try to avoid any injuries while children are in our care, children are prone to bumps and bruises on occasion. We will send a copy of an incident report home with any child who sustains an injury resulting in bleeding or a visible bump or bruise. Should an accident occur while a child is at the Weekday School and the child’s injury needs attention, we will contact the family. If the accident is serious enough that medical care is needed immediately, 911 will be contacted first then the family. If the parents cannot be reached in case of an accident, the next person on the emergency contact form will be notified. Therefore, it is important that other persons be listed to call in case of an emergency.

INCLUSION POLICY

In keeping with the call to minister to all of God's children, South Point United Methodist Weekday School is committed to the philosophy that includes children with differing abilities which benefits all the children in our school. We are clear however that SPUMC WDS is not a therapeutic preschool, but an opportunity for atypical and typical developing children to interact, learn, and socialize.

- Children who have been evaluated and/or identified as having special needs prior to their enrollment at SPUMC WDS will be considered for admission on an individual basis. Past and current records of the child by professionals must be provided to the school at the time of application, including an IEP, if available. The Director will meet with the parents to discuss the child's developmental strengths and weaknesses. The child and parents will also be invited to visit the classroom. Further observations will take place at this time. If the child is transferring to SPUMC WDS from another school those teachers may be consulted. Based on this information, and in consultation with the child’s prospective teachers, the Director will make a decision to accept the child when the child and SPUMC Weekday School will mutually benefit.
- SPUMC Weekday School does not formally test any child before entrance. The above evaluative process before acceptance is intended to provide enough information to indicate a favorable match between school and child.
- The maturity level and behavior of the child also influences the child’s success in school.
- The child’s ability to maintain the class schedule is crucial. The child must be able to stay with the class during the day unless the parents provide an assistant to care for the child while he/she attends school.

After enrollment, the child is observed closely for one month to determine the effectiveness of the program and the ability of SPUMC Weekday School to meet the needs of the child. The Director, teachers, parents, and professionals working with the child are consulted during this time period. A conference will be scheduled between the child's parents and teachers to discuss the child's progress, participation in the program and any other identified needs. Any notes taken will be provided to everyone involved. The purpose of the one month evaluation period is so that a prompt decision can be made as to whether the placement is mutually beneficial and if the child's needs are being met. It also allows for timely placement in a new program if necessary.

Two possible determinations at this time are:

- The child's presence in the classroom is of mutual benefit to the child and SPUMC WDS
- SPUMC WDS is unable to meet the child's needs.

A child not identified at the beginning of the school may need to be evaluated later in the year. The recommendation for the evaluation could originate with the parents, medical personnel or the teachers. To continue enrollment at SPUMC WDS, parents will be expected to arrange for this evaluation.

SPUMC Weekday School can offer guidance with this process. The resulting evaluation must be shared with the teachers and Director. Based on information received and consultations with parents, teachers, and professionals, decisions will then be made concerning the child's continued enrollment in SPUMC WDS. If parents decline evaluation of their child, and it is determined the child is not functioning well in the classroom, then the parents will be asked to seek other placement.

Some children attend SPUMC WDS and receive special therapy (e.g., physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) outside the facility. To ensure the most positive outcome for the child, the school needs to understand treatment goals of the therapies. This will allow teachers to guide the child in a way that supports those objectives. This can be best accomplished by providing SPUMC WDS with a copy of the treatment goals.

Whenever possible, SPUMC Weekday School will make reasonable adaptations to meet the individual needs of each child. However, the safety and, successful functioning of the class unit always has priority over the individual needs of any given child within the above outlined policy.

SPUMC Weekday School believes that there is a range typical, normal, and acceptable abilities, behaviors, and needs of children. We attempt to accommodate as broad a range as possible in the belief that this diversity strengthens and enriches all children, and the adults who work with them.