

PARENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026



SFUM
PRESCHOOL

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE PRESCHOOL

Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool (SFUMP) was established in 1980 as an outreach program of Spanish Fort United Methodist Church. SFUMP strives to meet the educational and social needs of early childhood in a Christian atmosphere, and to expand the world of the child to include friends in the community, as well as in the home and church. Through a curriculum that is developmentally age appropriate, each child will have the opportunity to experience a wide range of readiness activities.

**“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he shall not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6**

ADMISSION

A registration form is necessary for each child's file and is required to be completed by the parents/guardian prior to the first day of school. New forms will be filled out each year. All children must have a current immunization record on file and must be kept up to date throughout the school year.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

School begins at 9:00 with carline starting at 8:55.

****It is imperative that you drive very slowly, and with extreme care, through the parking lot. ****

School ends at 12:00 with carline starting at 11:55. A parent is considered late after 12:05. If you are running late, please call so that we can prepare your child for the wait. Parents will be allowed three late pick-ups per year without being charged. After this grace period, a fee of \$5.00/day will be charged. If the parent continues to be late the \$5.00 daily late fee will be charged as well as \$5.00 per minute the parent is late.

Every family will be issued a carline tag at the beginning of the school year. You must have this tag with you, displayed in your window to pick your child up from school. Your child will be escorted to your car by a staff member.

Anyone, other than the child's parent, picking up a child must be listed on the registration form and must be prepared to show identification. The director should be notified prior to pick up time if someone other than the parent is picking up the child.

COMMUNICATION

We feel that open communication between parents and teachers is of the utmost importance to your child. To accomplish this, we will:

1. Provide a Communication Folder on the first day of school. Please check the folder daily, remove the contents and return it to school the following day.
2. Provide individual class and school communication through Brightwheel.
3. Provide Facebook notifications through SFUM Preschool page.
4. Make telephone calls or send notes to share with you if we feel there is a need.
5. Hold Parent/Teacher Conferences when requested.
6. If the school needs to be closed due to inclement weather, we will follow Baldwin County Public School's decisions.

Communication - continued

1. Please **label** lunch boxes, jackets, school bags, etc. with a permanent marker. As the seasons and clothes change, please remember to label everything that comes to school.
2. Parents of Toddlers/ 2-year-olds please bring at least three diapers and put any special instructions in the folder. Toddlers/ 2-year-olds should bring a lunch box snack and a sippy cup for their drink.
3. If your child is to be picked up by any person other than you, (or will be picked up early), please notify the director and teacher.
4. If you will not be home during school hours, please leave an emergency phone number where you may be reached in the daily folder.
5. If your child will be absent due to travel or illness, please notify the director or teacher. We worry about our children when they are absent. If the absence is unexpected, please call after 9:15 AM or message your child's teacher on Brightwheel.
6. All children have a file in Brightwheel with their name, address, parent contact information, and Doctor's name and phone number. **Please change this information in Brightwheel if it changes at any time during the school year**

CLOTHING

1. Please send your child dressed for play. We like to do a variety of things that might get your child messy.
2. Closed toed shoes are required. **Please no Flip Flops or Crocs.** These types of shoes do not securely attach to the foot and can prove dangerous when climbing on playground equipment.
3. Every child in the school should always have a seasonally appropriate set of clothes in their backpack. Accidents happen.
4. When the weather gets cooler, please send appropriate coats, jackets, or sweaters.

SNACK

1. Please do not send peanut or tree nut products. This includes Nutella products.
2. Your child's teacher may advise of additional food restrictions due to allergies.
3. Please note snack time is meant to last for approximately 15 minutes. Please limit the number of choices in your child's lunchbox.

4. Please send your child to school with a refillable water bottle. No Stanleys or twist-top bottles. These types of drinks lead to spills

TOILET TRAINING

We know that toilet training is a process, but we require our three-year-old and four-year-old students to be completely potty trained, no pull ups. A child is potty trained when he or she initiates going to the bathroom and can independently adjust clothing necessary to urinate or have a bowel movement.

Each teacher sets regular breaks during the day to allow children ample opportunity to go to the bathroom.

Accidents are expected from time to time and will be treated as such. It will not be considered an accident if the child has an accident each day he/she is in school. Should your child have a bowel movement accident at school they will be changed as a courtesy the first time. Accidents will be documented, and notifications will be sent home if they occur frequently. Accidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis, if a pattern arises or if the child does not appear to be fully potty trained, we will require that he/she to be kept home until the child is confident in their bathroom skills. Tuition will continue to be paid and the child's spot will be held until they can return to school.

If by the first day of school, a child **is not fully potty trained** and needs additional time, they will need to remain at home until the child is confident in their bathroom skills. Tuition will continue to be paid and the child's class spot will be held until they can attend school.

BIRTHDAYS

If your child would like to celebrate his/her birthday at school, please notify your child's teacher. We are happy for your child to bring a special snack to share with the class. Suggested snacks include popsicles, cookies, or doughnuts. Please check with your child's teacher to see if allergies need to be considered so the treat can be enjoyed by all.

FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL

1. If your child does not feel well (sore throat, cough, nausea, earache, diarrhea, etc.) please keep your child home. A parent may be called to pick up a child for the protection of others if the school feels it is necessary.
2. Students should not attend school when they have the following conditions:
 - Temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater
 - Stomach illness such as vomiting or diarrhea
 - Contagious illness (Hand Foot and Mouth, Impetigo, etc.)
 - Excessive cough or runny nose
 - Head lice
 - Skin Rash

3. If your child contracts a contagious illness (chicken pox, etc.), please contact the school at once. The director will notify other parents.
4. Students who have been ill may return to school when they are symptom-free for 24 hours or released by a medical doctor. Students must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever suppressing medicine prior to returning to school.
5. No medications will be administered at school under any circumstances with the exception of life saving medication including but not limited to Epipen, Auvi-Q, or rescue inhaler.
6. Children entering the 3 and 4-year-old program must be potty trained. Please refer to Toilet Training section of the handbook.
7. If your child becomes ill while at school, the Director will contact the parent/guardian immediately to pick up your child. If you are unavailable your emergency contacts will be called. Your child will be separated from the other children while they wait for you to pick them up

SCHOOL CLOSING

We follow the Baldwin County School Calendar; therefore, we will close for the same holidays that the school system closes. When severe weather is threatening our area, if Baldwin County schools close, then Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool will be closed. In the unfortunate event that a sizeable funeral is to be held at the church, school could be cancelled due to the Preschool's proximity to the facilities used to accommodate the services. The school's closing will be at the discretion of the Senior Pastor and will be to ensure the safety of the children.

In the event of the school closing due to unforeseen circumstances such as a natural disaster (i.e. hurricane) or a national emergency (i.e. COVID-19) SFUMP will follow local, state, and national guidelines. Tuition for that month will not be prorated or refunded. This will ensure your child's spot will be held until school is able to re-open.

TUITION AND FEES

<u>Class:</u>	<u>Days:</u>	<u>Tuition:</u>	<u>Enrollment Fee:</u>
2-Year-Old	Monday – Friday	\$225/month	\$225/year
	Mon./Weds./Fri.	\$195/month	\$225/year
3-Year Old	Mon./Weds./Fri.	\$195/month	\$225/year
	Monday – Friday	\$225/month	\$225/year
4-Year Old	Monday – Friday	\$225/month	\$225/year

**The enrollment fee is non-refundable
Second child enrolled receives a 10% discount on tuition.**

All Payments will be made online using the Brightwheel App. No cash or checks will be accepted.

TUITION PAYMENT

1. Each family will receive an invoice on the Brightwheel app each month. Tuition must be paid using the Brightwheel app- no cash or checks will be accepted. Tuition can be paid on Brightwheel using credit/debit card or using EFT to withdraw funds from your account. The fees for EFT are significantly less- capping at \$2.00 a month.
2. Tuition is due on the first day of each month. A grace period extends to the fifth (5th) of the month. **If payment is received after the 5th of the month, the current month's tuition will be due and pre-payment of the following month will be required to be paid at that time as well.** If there is a pattern of late payment for a period of three continuous months, enrollment will be forfeited. In the event of an unexpected financial hardship for the family, please see the director.
3. The budget for the school is based on the number of children registering. If your child must be withdrawn from preschool before the end of the school year for any reason, a written 30-day notice and tuition payment will be required. This notice will allow us to place a child from our waiting list in our current roster.
4. The first tuition payment will be due on or before the first day of school-August 20, 2025. This will be a half month tuition rate (\$97.50/\$112.50). The first **full** tuition payment will be due on September 1, 2025. The last tuition payment will be due May 1, 2026-this will also be a half month tuition rate (\$97.50/\$112.50).
5. Tax documentation is available using the Brightwheel App.

EXTENDED DAY

Extended Day is an optional 1-hour extension of your child's preschool day. Children in the 3-year-old and Pre-K classes may be enrolled in this program. Extended Day is not currently offered to our 2-year-old classes.

To enroll, please fill out the extended day enrollment form. If the extended day enrollment form is not filled out and returned, your child will not be enrolled in extended day. Extended Day is an additional cost of \$50 for 3-day classes and \$85 for 5-day classes. Extended Day enrollment is based on the class in which your child is currently enrolled. Only children in the MWF 3-year-old class can sign up for the 3-day Extended Day. If your child is enrolled in a 5-day class they will also enroll in the 5-day Extended Day, even if you are not planning to use all 5 days. Please note this is necessary to assure adequate staffing for the program.

If you enroll your child in Extended Day, your monthly tuition rate will change to:

3 Days/week = \$245/month (This price includes regular tuition & Extended Day)

5 Days/week = \$310/month (This price includes regular tuition & Extended Day)

1. Please send lunch separate from snack; or labeled so your child knows what to eat when.

2. Send a lunch that your child can handle independently. The teachers are there to assist, but your child should be able to open most items.
3. No peanut butter (nor tree nuts), please keep in mind that peanuts are included in a variety of products (Nutella). If you use a peanut butter substitute, please indicate this on the packaging.
4. If sending lunchables, please send the cheese, meat, and cracker variety. We ask that you **not** send the lunchables that require assembly or lots of little pieces. i.e. pizza, nachos etc.
5. In addition to a refillable water cup, if sending juice boxes/bags or thermos containers, make sure they have a straw. No twist top bottles.,

Extended Day ends at 1:00 with carline starting at 12:55. A parent is considered late after 1:05. If you are running late, please call so that we can prepare your child for the wait. Parents will be allowed three late pick-ups per year without being charged. After this grace period, a fee of \$5.00/day will be charged. If the parent continues to be late the \$5.00 daily late fee will be charged as well as \$5.00 per minute the parent is late.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Classroom activities will vary based on the age of the children. Circle time, center time, story time, snack time, outside/activity time, art, music, Bible story and motor skills are all included on a regular basis. The 3's and 4's usually have some morning table time activities.

Have your child here on time. The early morning time helps the children wake up, warm up, socialize, and prepare to fully participate in the busy day.

LEARNING CENTERS

Children of all ages love to play. Whether your child is five months or five years old, play is the best tool for fostering learning. As your child plays, he is building a foundation for academic skills, learning to get along with others, and developing pride in his accomplishments. At the preschool, the teachers set up several learning centers each day to provide a variety of experiences.

Art is a time to create freely. Because a preschooler isn't always able to translate what he feels into words, art takes on great importance. A child can express his thoughts and feelings and expand his creative powers through color, shape, texture, and design. Creative play can be messy work, so please have your child dress in play clothes.

Blocks provide opportunities for creative problem solving. Whether building the tallest tower in the world or miniature networks of cities, a child is learning about weight, balance, space, dimension. The addition of cars, planes, or animals creates play scenarios, and invites discussion.

Christian Education will include Shining Stars, our weekly Bible lesson, during this time the children will sing songs, learn a short lesson, and pray together. These lessons help children to explore their faith through story, to enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play.

Housekeeping (Dramatic Play) is one of the best-loved centers. Children have the chance to dress up, “cook” in a kitchen, work with “tools”, and play-act roles. Children freely try on new roles of family life (and wildlife), and let their imaginations run free.

Library (Language Arts) is a place to go to relax, think, get lost in a book, play with a puppet, or share a story with a friend. Through books children find new information, deal with important feelings and changes in their lives, and let their imaginations run free.

Manipulatives such as puzzles, lacing cards and legos help strengthen the small muscles and develop coordination. They also provide a great deal of experience with problem solving and concentration. Manipulatives, such as small blocks and sets of bears and dinosaurs, are also the best math tool available for early childhood education. Children learn similarities and differences as they count, sort, and classify.

Science at a preschool level can be simply a table or box with objects for a child to see, touch, smell, ask questions about, and compare. Science can also be experiments that begin - and sometimes end - with questions, and that opens worlds of wonder.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Disruptive behaviors of a student shall be behaviors which generally disrupt the classroom, which are disobedient in nature, or which are disrespectful to teachers or the director, and shall include, but are not limited to:

- Failing to obey instructions
- Talking when inappropriate
- Talking back to a teacher or the director
- Failing to remain seated, etc.

With respect to disruptive behavior, when such behavior becomes a significant enough concern to a teacher or to the director, then within the judgment of the director and the teacher, a parent/teacher/director conference may be called at which the parent or parents are required to attend. Should the behavior of the child not improve sufficiently within the judgment of the director, then the child may be suspended from the preschool for one week. Should the behavior continue after the one-week suspension, then the director has the authority to extend the suspension.

AGGRESSIVE AND/OR UNSAFE BEHAVIOR

Aggressive and/or unsafe behavior shall be defined as behavior in which inappropriate aggression is exhibited, or the child engages in unsafe, dangerous, or violent behavior. All students and staff are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect, which is free from all forms of intimidation, bullying, exploitation, and harassment, including sexual harassment. The definition of bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort.

This behavior shall include, but is not limited to:

- Kicking a student, teacher, or property in the room
- Hitting a student, teacher or property with a hand or other item
- Throwing items in such a way that it places a person or property at risk
- Biting.

DISCIPLINE CONTROL POLICY

If an incident of aggressive and/or unsafe behavior occurs, this incident will be reported to the director and parents within three hours of the incident and shall be noted on the appropriate form and filed in the student's records.

- The first incident of aggressive and/or unsafe behavior shall involve a notification to the parents of the child engaging in such behavior within three hours.
- A second incident of such behavior by a child will cause the parents of the child to be called immediately and will require that the child be picked up from the school immediately.
- The third incident of such behavior by a child within a thirty (30) day period will result in a parent / teacher / director conference and can result in the student being suspended from the preschool for one week.

Additional incidents will result in a second parent/teacher/director conference and the child may be subject to an additional week of suspension from preschool. Should incidents continue after such suspensions are complete, an additional week of suspension will occur, and the preschool board being notified, with the board determining what further action, if any, should be taken.

In the case of a facial bite, severe bite or broken skin caused by one child's behavior as regarding another, a parent of both children will be called immediately, and a decision will be made by the director and the teacher about what action should be taken immediately.

This policy is written for the safety and well-being of the child engaging in such behavior, other children in the classroom, and the teacher. These are general guidelines intended to aid the teachers, director, and preschool board in determining the most appropriate action for discipline situations.

DISMISSAL FROM PRESCHOOL

Notwithstanding any portion of this Discipline Control Policy, the Senior Pastor or the Associate Pastor of Spanish Fort United Methodist Church has the discretion to determine whether the behavior of a child or the action of a parent of a child enrolled in the preschool warrants immediate dismissal from the preschool. This pertains to all matters relating to the operation of the preschool, including the Discipline Control Policy.

CONFLICTS INVOLVING PARENTS

If any parent has an issue with a teacher or director regarding treatment of their child or operation of the preschool, then that parent must request a parent/teacher/director conference. This must be done by calling the preschool office and making an appointment with the teacher and director. Under no circumstances should a conflict involving behavior of a child, or the operation of the preschool be discussed or dealt with during drop off or pick up times relating to the children, or during the operation hours of the preschool, unless a parent/teacher/director conference has been scheduled. The teachers and the director need the time of the drop off and/or pickup times and hours of operation to educate and interact with the children, and to either safely bring the children into the building and classrooms or to dismiss them to their parent or caregiver.

This is not intended to prevent general discussions between parents or teachers as to how the child's day has gone, or to confirm information necessary to the operation of the school including dates, times, or necessary school supplies, but is to provide for the orderly operation of the school and to prevent attempts to resolve conflicts in front of the children.

WEAPONS AND ALCOHOL/DRUG

The Senior Pastor of Spanish Fort United Methodist Church and the director of the preschool are authorized to have removed from church property any person bringing weapons, alcohol, or illegal drugs onto the church property. Any person so removed may be readmitted to the property when the Senior Pastor and/or the director of the preschool determine that such person no longer presents a danger to the safety or security of the children and/or staff. Law enforcement officials may be notified if any person is found in the possession of or in the act of using weapons, alcohol, or illegal drugs on church property. Additionally, should it be in the judgment of the Senior Pastor and/or the director of the preschool that any person is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, then the Senior Pastor and/or the director of the preschool have the additional discretion to have that person removed from church property.

With respect to law enforcement officers, should an officer be on duty, he should follow the guidelines of his agency or employer as it relates to firearms. If the formal guidelines of an agency or employer require a law enforcement officer to be armed, then such officer may remain on church property. Should the formal guidelines or rules of the agency or employer of an officer not require officers to remain armed, then no weapons should be brought onto church or preschool property. Whether in uniform, plain-clothed or undercover, law enforcement officers should take extra precautions to not to display firearms in front of children.

STUDENT/EMPLOYEE HARASSMENT POLICY

All students and staff are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect, which is free from all forms of intimidation, bullying, exploitation, and harassment, including sexual harassment. The definition of bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Anyone who violates this policy will be disciplined, up to and including termination or expulsion. Any violations are required to be reported to the preschool director. A complete policy of unsafe and/or aggressive behavior is available in the preschool office.

SECURITY

In our ongoing effort to keep your children safe as possible, SFUMP has a security system in place. The front doors will open (to start carline) starting at 8:55am for school drop off. They will also be open during school dismissal. At all other times the doors will remain locked. If you arrive after the doors have been locked, you will need to ring the doorbell to gain admission into the school. If it is a person who is not recognized as a child's parent, they must be prepared to show picture identification to enter the school or pick up a child.

In the event that someone from your Emergency Contact List is picking up your child, he/she will need to be prepared to show picture identification. Please call or email the preschool office in advance to inform us of the change in pick-up. Your child will not be released to any person not on your Emergency Contact List.

PRESCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS

Please remember, apart from the start and end of school SFUMP will follow the Baldwin County School Calendar. SFUMP will cancel classes if Baldwin County cancels classes.

Meet the Teacher – Tuesday, August 19

First Day of School – Wednesday, August 20

HOLIDAYS – NO SCHOOL

Labor Day – Monday, September 1

First Day of Extended Day - Tuesday, September 2

Fall Break – Monday, Oct. 13-Tuesday October 14

Veteran's Day – Tuesday, November 11

Thanksgiving Break – Monday, November 24 – Friday, November 28

Christmas Break – Thursday, December 18 – Monday, January 5

MLK Jr. Holiday – Monday, January 19

Mardi Gras Holiday – Monday, February 16-Friday February 20

BCBE E-Learning- Monday March 16- Tuesday March 17

Good Friday- Friday, April 3

Spring Break- Monday April 13-Friday April 17

Last Day of School – Thursday, May 7

Pre-K Graduation – Friday, May 8

SPECIAL EVENTS

Our preschool will celebrate many holidays. Most preschool events will happen on two dates to include all classes. If needed, we will send out links to Signup Genius for each event informing you of the date of your child's class party/special snack and what you can sign up for your child to bring. These school parties are during school hours and usually just a special snack or a special school day. Parents will drop off and pick up like a normal school day.

PARENT PHOTO CONSENT FORM

Throughout the school year, there may be times when Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool staff, church staff, or other organizations, with the approval of the SFUMP Director, may take photographs of students and audio/videotape students in a way that would individually identify a specific student. These images could be used on social media, websites, and newsprint. If you wish to grant permission or if you do not wish your child to be included fill out the information below and return.

I, _____, Parent/Guardian of _____
grant unto Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool the permission to use my child's image / photograph and/or videotaped image for the purposes mentioned above. I understand and agree that SFUMP may use these photos and/or videotaped images in subsequent school years unless I revoke this authorization by notifying the preschool director in writing. Furthermore, I hereby consent that such photographs, films, recordings, projects, and tapes are the property of the school, and they shall have the right to distribute, duplicate, reproduce, and make other uses of such photographs, films, recordings, projects, and tapes as they desire free and clear of any claim whatsoever on my part.

Please check the appropriate box:

☐ **I DO** give my permission to you to include my child's image on videotape or photos as he or she participates in class conducted at Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool.

☐ **I DO NOT** give my permission to you to include my child's image on videotape or photos as he or she participates in class conducted at Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool.

Printed Name of Parent / Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent / Guardian: _____

Full Name of Student: _____

Date Completed: _____

Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool Parent Contract

My child, _____, is enrolled at Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool for the 2025-2026 school year. I acknowledge that the school year begins at 9:00am on Wednesday, August 20, 2025, and ends on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 12:00pm. I understand that, once classes begin, Spanish Fort United Methodist Preschool will follow the calendar of Baldwin County Public Schools (BCPS) and will be closed to students on all days that BCPS are closed (plus any additional days that are deemed necessary by SFUMP or SFUMC).

I understand that my Enrollment Fee paid at the time of registration is non-refundable.

I acknowledge that tuition is due on the first day of each month and considered late if not received on the 5th of the month. If payment is received after the 5th of the month, the current month's tuition will be due and pre-payment of the following month will be required to be paid at that time as well.

I understand that the school year for SFUMP lasts eight full months and two half months, and I agree that I am obligated to pay the full tuition rate for each month of this term, regardless of whether my child is absent due to illness, vacation, or holiday. I accept that tuition must be paid on time, even if my child is absent.

If, for any reason, I must terminate my child's enrollment at SFUMP prior to May 2026, I agree to provide a minimum of 30-day notice in writing to the Director of the Preschool, and that I will be liable for all tuition through the end of that 30-day period.

I acknowledge the availability of the Parent Handbook on the school website and recognize that I may request a paper copy of this handbook at any time. I hereby agree to comply with all policies and provisions of SFUMP. I understand that failure on my part to read the parent handbook does not exempt me from any of the policies contained in it.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date