**WINTERS CHAPEL UNITED**

**METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL**

**5105 Winters Chapel Road**

**Atlanta, Georgia 30360**

**Beth Newton, Director**

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**2024/2025 HANDBOOK**

**WINTERS CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL**

Greetings Families and Friends of Winters Chapel UMC Preschool!

We are so excited that you have decided to make Winters Chapel United Methodist Church your preschool choice for your child. We view it as a great honor to partner with you in these formative years of your child’s education. Our staff and our church consider it a blessing to nurture and care for your children.

Personally, I am so thrilled for this school year. Spending time with preschool kids has brought me much joy throughout my years of ministry. I especially look forward to our times of worshiping together in chapel on Wednesday mornings. Chapel services will be 11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. each week unless otherwise noted.

In my short time at WCUMC, I have seen that we have amazing teachers and staff at the preschool! They all love what they do and are very gifted. I can assure you they will love your kids well and do all they can to help your children learn and to have a wonderful school year.

Again, we are excited to welcome you as part of Winters Chapel UMC’s extended family!  We hope for you to experience the love and grace of God as we journey together. I look forward to getting to know you all over the course of the school year.

Peace and Blessings,

- - Pastor Joe Gaunt



Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to Winters Chapel UMC Preschool program. Our goal is to provide a welcoming, safe, and developmentally appropriate environment for every child. This handbook is designed to acquaint all parents with current policies and procedures and to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience within the program. In the handbook we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about the program. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Daily communications and a sense of trust between parents and teachers are vital. Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. To accomplish this, we depend on parents to be responsible and active child care consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns, and suggestions about your child’s experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child’s early education and care experiences. This year we have included a outlining the changes within our health policies, our building, our classrooms, and our activity policies as well as the guiding principles that continue to propel these policies and procedures. Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a “living” document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice through email. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed. I am looking forward to a great school year during these extraordinary times.

Your partner in Early Childhood Education,

Beth Newton

Preschool Director

##### PHILOSOPHY

The Winters Chapel United Methodist Preschool program is concerned with the development of the whole child . . . physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. The context of the learning environment is the Church, where each child is celebrated as a unique creation of God. Hence, the effort is made to individualize instruction according to the needs and skills of each student. Recognizing the curiosity and intellectual potential of children today, we aim to build the learning tools and foundations needed in school. This we strive to do in an atmosphere of love and understanding.

Some special aspects of our programs include math and reading readiness, phonics, language development, music, social studies and science experiences, crafts, physical education, fine arts, outdoor classroom learning, and chapel.

Winters Chapel is certified as a School of Excellence by the North Georgia Methodist Preschool Association. We are affiliated with the North Georgia Methodist Preschool Association, the Georgia Preschool Association, the Georgia Association for Young Children, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Classes are taught by qualified teachers and have the benefit of a full time assistant.

##### PRESCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

**Beth Newton - Director Kathy Honeycutt - Chairperson**

**Christina Dupuis- Assistant Director Tim Brown - Finance Chair**

**Open- Active Parent Open - Teacher**

**Open - Active Parent Joe Gaunt - Pastor**

**Erin Twohig-Canal - former parent Leon Humphries- Trustees chair**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Winters Chapel Preschool is not licensed by the State of Georgia. We are an exempt church school facility. Winters Chapel UMC maintains insurance on participants in all of its programs.

**SCHOOL YEAR:**

Because our school is located in Gwinnett County, we closely follow the Gwinnett County School calendar. In case of bad weather, we will close whenever Gwinnett County Schools close. Our school year begins after Labor Day and ends a few days before County schools.

**SCHOOL DAY:**

Preschool hours are 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Children should arrive between 9:00 and 9:15 and should be picked up between 12:50 – 1:10 pm. Carpool is provided outside the preschool doors. Please familiarize yourself with how carpool will work this year by reading our drop off and pick up procedures below. A late pickup fee after 1:10 p.m. of $10.00 and your child will be sent to our after care program.

**SNACK & LUNCH:**

All children should bring a snack and children staying until 1:00 pm will bring their own lunch, including drink and water bottle. Please remember to include plastic utensils if your child will need them. We regret that we are unable to microwave food for any child. Food should be ready to eat (i.e. peeled, sliced, cut into bite-sized pieces, etc.) Lunch follows soon after snack, so children typically eat lightly at lunch**.** Please label all items in order to ensure their return.

**CURRENT DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES:**

Please make sure your child has shoes on and breakfast finished before you enter the carpool line.

During carpool drop off, please follow the carpool route. Once you have pulled up please get your child/ren out of the car along with their bags and wait for a staff member to take them to their hallway. While children are not required to wear masks, our staff is required and we are asking that you also wear one during drop off and pick up. If you miss carpool, you can park after the regular carpool is completed and bring your child to the preschool door. A staff member will meet you and take your child to class. Once you pull up, please exit your vehicle. We will bring your children to you to secure into their car seats in your vehicle. Parents must write a note if there is any change in the way their child is to be picked up from school. Children will not be permitted to leave with anyone except the parents or person designated to pick them up. If the pickup person is unknown, staff will require an I.D. The Georgia child safety seat and seat belt law states: “Children under 8 years of age must be in an approved car seat or booster seat.” For the safety of your child, please be sure that your child meets the height and/or weight requirement for the seat you are using. This information is available from the manufacturer.

**We request that you only turn right onto Winters Chapel Road during drop off and pick up carpool times in order not to create traffic jams. In order to go left you will need to turn around in a nearby neighborhood. Historically, turning left onto Winters Chapel has backed up our carpool line and created unsafe conditions on Winters Chapel Road. Thank you for your cooperation.**

**LATE PICK-UPS:**

Children become upset and concerned when they are not picked up at the same time as their classmates. A happy morning can be spoiled by anxiety when a child is not picked up on time. **Due to the extensive cleaning that must be performed after children leave the building, we must be very strict about pick up time and will enforce late fees.** Therefore, a late fee will be assessed when a child remains after the scheduled 1:10 pickup. If an emergency arises and you know that you will be late, please call the school so that we will know you are on the way. This will help us avoid calling your emergency contacts to arrange for your child to be picked up by someone else unless it is necessary. Our late fee will be $10.00 and your child will be sent to our after care program.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

In the event of inclement weather, parents should listen to local broadcasts concerning local school closings. We are in Gwinnett County and will close when Gwinnett County Schools are closed or delayed we will be closed for the day. We will notify you by our Brightwheel notification.

**PARENT MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES:**

An Orientation for parents and children is held before school starts. Teachers of our 4-year-old classes will have one required conference with the parents in the Spring. Teachers of our 3-year-old classes will have one required conference in the spring. **Teachers will maintain communication with parents via email and classroom newsletters and you are encouraged to maintain communication with the preschool director via Brightwheel and/or phone.**

**CHAPEL:**

Our 3- and 4-year old’s will meet with the church’s senior pastor once a week for prayer, Bible stories,and songs. Pastor Joe Gaunt is encouraging parents to join in this worship time if you are available.

**BIRTHDAY PARTIES:**

Your child may celebrate his/her own birthday at school if you notify the teacher in advance. You may provide a special treat; however, no birthday presents should be received.

**A class list of addresses, email addresses and phone numbers are provided to every family to help with communication. If you do not want to be on this list, please notify your teacher during Orientation.**

**CLOTHING:**

Comfortable play clothes that children may feel free to be "messy" in should be worn. Removable items should be plainly marked with children’s names. Sneakers are recommended for safest use on the playground. Sandals, boots, and other smooth-bottomed footwear may not provide the needed traction for climbing.

**HEALTH:**

Every child has school insurance, which is included in your registration fee. **Each child is to have a Georgia Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) completed and on file with the school.**  The preschool immunization form is available at most pediatricians’ offices in the area. The immunization form is due by September 30. Reminders will be sent out. This follows State Law from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning for private preschools.

**FACILITIES:**

The school is held in the educational building of the church. We have both indoor and outdoor playground facilities. A huge all-purpose room and the church’s fellowship hall provide excellent rainy-day activity areas. The school also has a large fenced outdoor playground and a field which will be used as an outdoor classroom for sunny days. The indoor classrooms are carpeted and pleasant and all have hand washing stations. An automatic sprinkler system and fire alarm system have been installed in all preschool areas.

**SPECIALS WITHIN OUR CURRICULUM:**

We will be offering Mindful Mondays. This special gives our students a chance to explore and recognize their emotions, and through games, books and activities learn to manage them appropriately. Our students will have Music and Movement on Tuesdays, which consists of singing, movement, games, rhythm instruments, listening and dramatization of stories. On Wednesdays our 3 and 4-year-old classes will attend an age appropriate church service with Pastor Joe. When available, each class attend STEM on Wednesdays as well. Our STEM curriculum combines science, technology, engineering and mathematics in an age appropriate, fun and engaging program.

On Thursdays our classes will have Health and PE. In addition to learning about topics like food and nutrition, health and their bodies, children will also be instructed in the proper use of their gross motor skills and good sportsmanship while playing active games.

**NEWSLETTERS AND PROGRAMS:**

A Class Monthly School Newsletter will be sent home the first couple of days of every month. Please inform us if you are not receiving the newsletter. Most communication will be via Brightwheel. Our newsletter will give you a current overview of the entire program. A monthly events schedule will be included so you'll have an up-to-date picture of all school activities. Special programming will be held throughout the year. Children will participate in a Halloween festivity, a Thanksgiving program, a Christmas Program, a Mother's/Parent’s Day Celebration, and a Closing Program with a graduation for all students. **We will make every attempt to include events which can involve parents. For the time being, these events may need to be held outdoors to ensure the health and safety of our students.** Many additional informal programs and themes are carried on throughout the year in individual classes.

**MESSAGES:**

Please let us know if there is a change in your child's schedule, such as his going home a different way, going home with another child, etc. Put the message in writing and be sure the note is given to your child's teacher or in his/her folder in his/her school bag. If, during the day, an emergency arises, please email beth@winterschapel.org or call the school office and leave a message, 770 393-3478.

**SAFETY PROCEDURES:**

Fire Drills are held monthly school wide. Emergency procedures are also in place for severe weather situations.

**SICKNESS:**

**Sick children should be kept at home to avoid exposing the entire class. Any child who has any of the following symptoms within 48 hours should not attend: Your child must be symptom free and fever free (with out medication to control) for a minimum of 24 but preferably 48 hours before returning to school.**

 **1) severe cold 7) red or sore eyes**

 **2) persistent cough 8) discharge from nose, eyes, ears**

 **3) fever 9) upset stomach**

 **4) sore throat 10) nausea or vomiting**

 **5) swollen glands 11) diarrhea**

 **6) earache 12) rash**

**\*\*Please see our Appendix 1 for more detailed information.**

**SPEECH-HEARING:**

Individual speech, language, and hearing screenings are available in the fall and spring. There is a screening fee and a permission form will be sent home to all parents before the screening. This is an optional service offered to all families of children 2 years and older.

**PICTURES:**

Both individual and class pictures will be taken during the school year for all children in our program. There is no obligation for parents to purchase them, but the school does receive a small commission. Individual pictures are taken in fall and spring; class photos will be taken in the spring.

**TODDLER PROGRAM:**

Our nursery is for children beginning at 9 months of age through 23 months. Our staff/child ratio is 5:1 with activities planned for interested children in the group. Students participate in music and movement. There is story time daily for interested listeners, and some truly creative art is attempted. Most of our Nursery time is spent giving T.L.C. to every child and helping them play safely and happily. Children should always come prepared to go outside when the weather is pleasant.

**ACTIVITY FEES:**

These fees are for supplies, and special programs offered throuout the school year. There will be no refunds of Activity Fees for any reason.

**DISCIPLINE:**

We always attempt diversion to avert discipline problems before they occur if we possibly can. When misbehaviors occur that need to be addressed, we will use a short time out and conference with you. If misbehaviors are severe enough to affect classroom function or to injure other children, we will let you know that we are not the appropriate environment for your child.

# Admissions and Registration

Winters Chapel UMC Preschool accepts applications for enrollment on the following basis:

1. On registration day, first consideration is given to students currently attending the preschool and members of Winters Chapel UMC.
2. Second consideration is given to siblings of current students.
3. Applications are then accepted for the remaining places in the classes on a first-come basis.
4. Any additions, if necessary, will be selected from the waitlist pool based on the needs of that class (considerations will be made for gender mix, etc. -not necessarily the next person on the waitlist.)
5. Winters Chapel UMC Preschool strives to accommodate children with varying abilities, however, Winters Chapel is limited in professional staffing prepared to give assistance to children with special learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, hyper-activity, behavior problems or severe medical, orthopedic, visual or hearing disabilities. Any difficulties of which the school board should be cognizant must appear on the Registration form. Presence of such conditions does not mean that admission will not be granted, rather the school board must determine if staffing is available to meet the child’s needs.
6. In the event that we feel that our program does not meet the needs of your child, the Preschool Advisory Team has the right to ask that your child be removed from our program.
7. Winters Chapel requires payment of September’s tuition on May 1 to ensure that adequate notice will be given should the parent's plans change for the student. If **the student will not be attending or withdrawing from Winters Chapel Preschool, one month’s written notice must be given of the withdrawal. If said notice is given, the first month’s tuition will be refunded if a new student is found for the resulting opening before school begins. The registration fee is not refundable.**
8. Parents are expected to pay tuition on the first of every month for the following month without being billed.

**REGISTRATION FEES: All preschool classes $ 125.00 per child**

 **Mother's Day Out $ 125.00 per child**

 **Family Rate $ 300.00**

 **(for 3 or more children)**

**SUPPLY KIT FEE One time $100/per child**

**MONTHLY TUITION: PRESCHOOL FEES**

 **Pre-K class 5 day (9:00-1:00) $420.00**

 **All 5 Day classes (9:00-1:00) $400.00**

 **All 4-day classes (9:00-1:00) $360.00**

 **All 3-day classes (9:00-1:00) $320.00**

 **All 2-day classes (9:00-1:00) $290.00**

**MOTHER'S DAY OUT FEES:**

 **2 days Tues/Thurs (9:00-1:00) $290.00 per month**

**TUITION:**

Tuition for the first month is due May 1st or upon enrollment if enrolling after May. Tuition is always due on the 1st of each month from September through May (9 month’s) for the following month. If you stay current on tuition, you will not owe tuition on the last month you are enrolled at Winters Chapel Preschool, usually in May**. A late fee of $25 will be assessed for payment made after the 10th of the month.** The late fee must be paid by the 1st of the following month to remain current and enrolled in our program. A tuition discount of 20% is given to the 2nd child enrolled from the same family.

**NO TUITION EXCEPTIONS:**

 If a child leaves with family for extended (several months) vacation or trips, tuition is due for each month the family is away, payable in advance. This payment guarantees your child's placement upon return to school. If the stay extends beyond 2 months, the family has the option to withdraw their child and reapply upon return. A new Registration Fee will be required.

We encourage our families to make their payments via Brightwheel either by credit card or ACH transfer. If you choose to pay with a check or cash, please place these in an envelope clearly labeled as ‘Tuition Payment’ in your child’s folder AND send the director an email or message via Brightwheel the day you send in the cash or check in to let them know it is there. This payment will be reflected as an Offline Payment in your Brightwheel account once it is received in the preschool office and logged.

**REFUNDS:** The tuition cost is based on our entire school year and is divided into 9 equal payments for your convenience. Therefore, even though a month may be short (spring break, Thanksgiving, etc.) the payment remains the same. No refunds or discounts are given for vacations or brief illness. **Registration fees are non-refundable. All other tuition refunds require one month’s written notice of the intent to withdraw and the school’s ability to replace the student with another student.**

### WINTERS CHAPEL UMC PRESCHOOL STAFF

**2024/2025**

**Beth Newton:** Director at WCUMCP, I am honored and thrilled to have been given the opportunity to serve as your new Preschool Director for the upcoming 2024-25 school year.  Preschool and all it holds has a special place in my heart and has been a passion of mine for over 19 years!  I believe in the importance of providing high-quality programs for all children. I consider it my privilege and honor to support the AMAZING teachers at WCUMCP so that they are able to provide your children with excellence in early childhood education. My personal goal is to work closely with the school faculty in providing supportive, nurturing, and Christian environments for the children. I plan to continue helping children and families to discover new relationships, to discover new ideas, to construct knowledge through play, and to cultivate a joy for learning. In addition, I look forward to working with the church and its staff to support one another as we show the children, families and community God’s love for all of us. WCUMC Preschool is an extraordinary preschool and I am very excited to be a part of this family. Prior to becoming the new Preschool Director at WCUMC, I had been a teacher in the 3’s class at Norcross First UMC for 12 years and then as the Director of the Preschool for the past five years.

I live in Duluth with my loving and supportive husband Lee for 40 years now and we have raised four amazing sons. In addition, we have four wonderful daughters-in-law (the only way to have girls in this family) and three fun and energetic grandsons. In my free time I love to garden, Shop, and cheer on our local sports teams and I’m a huge Braves fan!

**Christina Dupuis:** Christinais our new assistant director and is excited to begin her first year on staff at Winters Chapel Preschool. Her son, Brayden, graduated from the Cool Cats last year; and her daughter Madison, will be and the Monkey’s class. Christina has spent her entire life in the dance industry as a student, then a professional and now owns her own studio. She loves teaching kids of all ages, but preschoolers are her favorite.

**Erin Canal:** Erin is no stranger to Winters Chapel. She volunteered her time serving on various school committees and helped organize our school library. Most importantly, her daughter Mira, now a first grader, is a former student. Erin has a BA in psychology and a Masters in library and information science and has worked in various capacities with children including 12 years as a private school librarian. In her free time, she enjoys family hikes, tennis, cooking, and gardening. Erin is excited to assist with the Cool Cats!

**Diane Chappell:** Dianewill be returning for her 20th year at Winters Chapel as our Health and PE specials teacher and one of our substitutes. Diane has a B.S. in Psychology and a Masters in Therapeutic Recreation from Georgia State University. Diane teaches her Fun & Games Galore P.E. class at several schools in the area including ours. Diane’s daughter, Lindsay, a former WCUMCP graduate, is a fifth year student at the University of Georgia.

**Luz Garcia**: Luz is our lead in the Marvelous Monkeys class. Luz is originally from Guatemala. She has been a member of the surrounding community for 10 years and she loves working with children. Luz is happily married to her husband David for 13 years and is a mom to three children ages 12, 10, and 5 years old, and our pug Milo.

**Kellie Meehan:** Kelliewas a parent at Winters Chapel. She has twin girls in Middle School that will be home schooling through the Georgia Virtual Academy again this year. Kellie is our go-to person for all things pertaining to our physical preschool space. She has kept our school facilities running smoothly for the last 12 years. She loves the outdoors and vacations at the beach. She will be instrumental again this year in helping us adhere to continued CDC cleaning/disinfection guidelines.

**Allison Parkes:** Allison has worked at Winters Chapel preschool for 8 years. She is beginning her ninth year with the two-year old’s! She graduated from Berry College with a degree in political science and worked for Turner Broadcasting for 10 years. She is married and has three children of her own. Her oldest child, a son, is a senior in high school this year. She also has two daughters, a sophomore and a seventh grader. In her spare time, she enjoys hanging out with her family, hiking, reading, and spending time with her dog!

**Shaina Rodriguez:** Shaina enjoys working with children of all ages. She earned her bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Development from the University of Rhode Island. After moving to Atlanta with her husband in 2014, she taught young toddlers at a Montessori school. Shaina started substitute teaching at Winters Chapel this past school year before becoming a teacher for the Tumbling Teddies. Shaina’s two sons have attended Winters Chapel since they were babies. Eli, her oldest, is in first grade while her youngest, Caleb, is in the kindergarten this year. In her free time, she enjoys doing art and science projects with her children, baking, hiking, spending time with her husband, and playing with their dog, Pickles.

**Martha Anne Singer:** Martha Anne is starting her 11th year at Winters Chapel Preschool. She has a bachelor's degree in Special Education and taught for 5 years in the Chicago Public School System. In her prior years at Winters Chapel, she taught Math and Science, assisted in the Flying Fish (3-year-old) room and been lead teacher in the Flying Fish room. She has 3 children - Jake (19 at GA Tech), Jordan (18 at GA State University), and Cara (15 at North Springs High School). She is excited to teach Mindful Mondays and STEM this year!!

**Marissa Wadsworth:** Marissais excited to begin her 3rd year teaching music at Winters Chapel. She finds joy as she sings, dances, and creates music with young children. She received a BA in Music Education with an elementary music specialist emphasis from Brigham Young University. She has four children: Adelyn in 4th grade, Hudson in 1st grade, Elsie in the Llamas class, and Bennett in the Pandas.

**SCHOOL CALENDAR 2024/25**

***A monthly calendar will be sent in the newsletter at the beginning of each month highlighting any special events. The following is a scheduled list of holidays we will follow in accordance with the Gwinnett County Public Schools.***

**August 29 Monday Staff Reports**

**September 1 Thursday Parent/Student Orientation – 10:00-12:00**

**September 6 Tuesday 1st Day of School**

**October 6-10 Thurs-Monday Gwinnett County Fall Break-No School**

**November 21-25 Monday-Friday Thanksgiving Holidays**

**December 19 Monday Christmas Break begins (No School)**

**January 5 Thursday School Reopens from Christmas Break**

**January 16 Monday M. L. King, Jr. Holiday- No School**

**February 16-17 Thurs/Friday Student/Teacher Holiday- No School**

**February 20 Monday Gwinnett Teacher Work Day - No School**

**April 3-7 Monday–Friday Spring Break**

## May 18 Thursday Last Day of School 11:00 Graduation/Program

**May 19 Friday Staff Workday**