

Hibben Preschool  
Parent Handbook  
2011-2012

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Hibben Preschool! This Parent Handbook is designed to acquaint you with our mothers' morning out, preschool and kindergarten classes. We feel parental involvement is a necessity in a good program, and we trust that you will work together with us to provide an environment that meets the needs of your child.

All Hibben Preschool staff members are employees of Hibben United Methodist Church. The school is a ministry of the church, and is guided by the preschool board, which is comprised of the Preschool Directors, the Children's Ministry Director, and various members-at-large. Among the members-at-large we strive to include parents of formerly or presently enrolled children, as well as past or present public school educators. All board members are members of Hibben United Methodist Church.

## **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

Hibben Preschool provides developmentally appropriate education within a safe and loving Christian environment.

## **OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT**

As a sanctioned ministry of Hibben United Methodist Church, Hibben Preschool has been developed to nurture the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual development of young children. We offer a safe and healthy weekday program in a Christian environment, offering security, warmth, education and fun for children ages 1-6 within the Hibben congregation and local community.

## **OUR GOALS**

With the mission statement and purpose statement in mind, our curriculum and daily classroom activities are designed around the following goals:

- Foster within children a positive self-concept and a positive attitude toward learning, self-control, and a sense of belonging
- Encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment
- Encourage development of social and emotional skills
- Provide opportunities for fine and gross motor development
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices
- Respect cultural diversity
- Provide experiences that promote creativity and aesthetic appreciation of the arts
- Encourage language and literacy development
- Prepare children for a successful transition to elementary school

## Hibben Preschool 2011-2012 Calendar

This calendar is subject to change due to church events, weather, or other scheduling conflicts. You will be notified as far in advance as possible of any calendar changes.

August 29-September 2	Monday-Friday	Teacher work week
August 31	Wednesday	Parent Night Fair
September 1-2	Thursday-Friday	Meet the Teacher
September 5*	Monday	Closed-Labor Day
September 6	Tuesday	First day of school
October 21*	Friday	Closed-Teacher Workday
November 23-25*	Wednesday-Friday	Closed-Thanksgiving
December 19-30*	Monday-Friday	Closed-Christmas
January 2**	Monday	Closed-Teacher Workday
January 3	Tuesday	School resumes
January 16*	Monday	Closed-MLK Jr. Day
February 20*	Monday	Closed-Presidents' Day
April 6	Friday	Closed-Good Friday
April 9-13*	Monday-Friday	Closed-Easter break
May 24	Thursday	Last day of school

\*same as CCSD (Charleston County School District)

\*\*CCSD resumes for students

## Inclement Weather

- In the event of current or pending inclement weather, Hibben Preschool will be closed if Charleston County School District (CCSD) is closed. Please tune in to local media and if it is announced that CCSD is closed, you will know that Hibben is closed also, even if it is not among the listed closings.
- If CCSD operates on a 2 hour delay due to weather conditions, Hibben Preschool will be closed.
- If CCSD operates on a 1 hour delay due to weather conditions, or announces an early dismissal due to weather conditions, Hibben Preschool will operate on its normal schedule.

# CLASSROOM INFORMATION

## Classes and Tuition/Fee Schedule

<u>Class</u>	<u>Age as of 9/1/09</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Monthly Tuition</u>
MMO 1's	1 year	MWF	\$210
		TTh	\$160
Preschool 2's	2 years	MWF	\$210
		TTh	\$160
Preschool 3's	3 years	MWF	\$210
		TTh	\$160
4K	4 years	M-F	\$250
		M-Th	\$230

### Annual Classroom Supply Fees:

MMO	\$20/semester
Preschool and 4K	\$20/semester

### 2012-2013 ENROLLMENT

Priority enrollment for the 2012-2013 school year will begin in January 2012 for currently enrolled students, their siblings, and Hibben church members. Open enrollment for the general public, including those on the current waiting list, will follow in late January or early February 2012. Following that initial enrollment period, any remaining spaces will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Exact dates for priority and open enrollment will be announced in December 2011, along with enrollment details and fees.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Children are placed in classes based on their age as of September 1. We are not able to accommodate requests to be placed in a particular teacher's class or in a class with a particular child. Children generally remain in the same class throughout the entire school year. The regular school year begins in September, on the Tuesday after Labor Day, and runs through May, ending on the Thursday before Memorial Day. Optional summer classes may be offered based on staff availability and parent demand.

## MOTHERS' MORNING OUT

Mothers' morning out (MMO) is offered Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. for children who under age 2 as of September 1. Children attend either Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday. The teacher: child ratio is kept to 1:4, whenever possible, and will never exceed 1:5. Classes are staffed by two teachers.

These classes primarily provide supervised play time, during which children develop social skills as they interact with other children and non-parental caregivers. Other activities that may be incorporated into the day include story time, music, simple crafts and outdoor play.

## PRESCHOOL

The preschool program is for children aged 2- 3 years. Children in 2 and 3 year old classes attend either Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The teacher to child ratio is 1:5 for 2's and 1:6 for 3's. Each class is staffed by two teachers.

As children progress from age 2 to age 3, and beyond into 4K, the classes gradually become more structured, while still allowing plenty of time for creative play. Each class routine allows for alternating periods of more structured activities such as circle time or group activities, with periods of less structured activities such as outdoor play and individual activity centers. Throughout the year activities are planned and carried out which allow the children to develop age-appropriate skills in the areas of language and literacy, math, science, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, social and emotional skills, and self-help/personal skills.

## KINDERGARTEN: 4K and 5K

Children in 4K attend either Monday-Thursday or Monday-Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Children in 5K, when offered, attend Monday-Friday from 8:45 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. The curriculum adheres to South Carolina curriculum standards in English/Language Arts and Math. Additional instruction is given in science and social studies, especially in 5K. The teacher to child ratio is 1:8 for 4K, and each 4K class is staffed by two teachers. The 5K class has one teacher, and a maximum class size of 10.

## WAITING LISTS

Waiting lists are maintained for each age group. They may include children who do not attend, as well as children who attend but are waiting to switch or increase their days of attendance (from TTh to MWF for example). Waiting lists are prioritized, with consideration given for various factors, such as Hibben church membership, current or previous enrollment status, current or previous enrollment status of siblings, classroom spot previously offered and declined, and length of time on the waiting list. As a result, a child's position on the waiting list

may move up or down.

Waiting lists are not kept more than one year ahead (i.e. a newborn cannot be put on a waiting list to begin preschool as a 2 year old), and waiting lists do not automatically roll over from year to year. If a child is on the waiting list and does not get in that year, the parent must inform us that they wish to be placed on the waiting list again for the following year.

## MUSIC EDUCATION

In addition to music activities that may be incorporated into the day by the classroom teachers, all children receive weekly music instruction from our music teacher. One and two year olds remain in their regular classrooms for music lessons, while older children visit the Hibben music/choir room for music class.

Singing of both secular and spiritual songs may be accompanied by the piano or by recorded music, or sung a cappella. The basics of music theory are taught, and children also have the opportunity to participate “hands-on” with assorted rhythm instruments. Older children may participate in musical program performances in December (Christmas) and May (graduation).

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*Jesus said, “...let the children come and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 19:14*

Hibben Preschool is an outreach ministry of Hibben United Methodist Church, and Christian teachings are incorporated into all classes. Teachers incorporate Bible stories and songs into lesson plans, blessings are said before lunch, and may be part of the opening and closing daily classroom routine as well. Children in 4K and 5K learn and recite a monthly Bible verse, and children in 3 year old preschool and older attend chapel once a week with one of Hibben’s pastors. Through chapel lessons and other activities, children have a chance to expand their knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ and his love for them, Christian doctrine, Biblical principles, and the significance of the church seasons, including Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLASSES

Assorted extra-curricular classes may be offered on an optional basis after the regular school day. These classes are not a part of Hibben Preschool, but are made available to our students on our premises. These classes require a separation registration and monthly fee, paid directly to each class’ instructor. Classes begin after the regular school day ends, and classroom teachers will assist the children in preparing for the classes and moving to the class locations within the Hibben campus; parents do not need to be present during this transition time.

Current class offerings include JumpBunch, karate, dance, Going Bananas Over Books, Little Chefs, and Animals Around the World. For more information

including class schedules, class fees and minimum ages for participation, please refer to the information in your parent folder (distributed at the Parent Night Fair) or stop by the preschool office.

### WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL

Dress children in comfortable play clothes, suitable for running and active play  
Dress children in washable play clothes, as they will be using paint, glue, markers and other “messy” materials on a regular basis.

Dress children in layers. Our HVAC system is such that some rooms get quite hot, even during the winter, while others may get chilly, even during the summer. Dressing in layers is the easiest way to ensure that children stay comfortable throughout the day.

Please avoid sending children in overalls. They are a time-consuming obstacle at diaper and potty time.

Please avoid shoes without a heel strap, such as flip flops, as they are a safety issue during active play, especially outdoors.

### SPARE CLOTHING

All children need to bring a diaper bag or backpack to school each day. It should contain a complete change of clothes, including socks and underwear, in case of accidents or spills. Occasional accidents are inevitable, even with kindergarteners, and children will be more comfortable if they can change into a spare set of their own, familiar clothing. Please ensure that your child’s spare clothes are seasonally appropriate, and label all items with your child’s name. Children who are still in diapers/pull-ups should have at least 3 diapers/pull-ups in their bag each day, and these should also be labeled with the child’s name on the front with a permanent marker. Pacifiers must be attached to a clip that fastens to the child’s clothing, and should also be labeled.

If your child has an accident or a spill, and does not have suitable spare clothing, we will attempt to find something appropriate in our spare clothing bin. If your child leaves school wearing any clothing you do not recognize, please launder the item(s) and return them as soon as possible so that it can be made available to the next child who needs to borrow it.

### LUNCH AND SNACKS

Lunchtime is part of the daily routine in all classes, and each child needs to bring a packed lunch to school each day. Lunch is also part of the learning experience, and the teachers use this time to incorporate teaching about nutrition, thanking God for our blessings, and table manners. Your cooperation in adhering to the following guidelines on what to pack and what not to pack for lunch are greatly appreciated!

*Please DO:*

Send food and drink items that have nutritional value and that your child will enjoy

Send food and drink items that your child can feed him or herself with limited assistance

Label all lunchboxes, lunch bags, and re-useable serving containers

Include a napkin with the lunch each day

Include a fork/spoon if the lunch includes items that require utensils

When sending food that must be cut up, please do all cutting at home, prior to packing the lunch

NOT send in any soda or candy, or large “desserts” with high sugar content.

Soda and candy will be set aside, and sent back home in the lunchbox.

NOT send in knives, even plastic ones

NOT send in items that must be refrigerated\*; use cold packs instead

NOT send in items that must be warmed up in a microwave\*; use a thermos or other insulated container instead

*\*A small refrigerator and microwave are available in the 1's classroom only, since some children in that class are still drinking milk/formula/baby food that must be kept refrigerated or be warmed for serving. If your child is in the 1's class, please provide clear, written instructions for the refrigeration/warming of your child's bottles or baby food.*

Please ensure that your child has eaten a filling breakfast prior to arriving at school. Older classes do not generally include a snack time during their daily routine. If your child has difficulty making it until the class eats lunch, you might try giving him or her a small snack just prior to arriving at school. Some teachers will request that you send an extra drink; however, your child's teacher will let you know if this is the case.

A small daily snack is provided in the 1's classes and sometimes in the 2's classes. This snack typically consists of cheerios, crackers, or pretzels. Please speak with the teachers in your child's class if you have a concern about a particular snack and/or need to send in a different item for your child.

## ALLERGIES

Parents must inform the school of any and all known food and medical allergies. Space is provided for this on the enrollment application. Hibben Preschool has adopted a written Allergy Action Plan for all children with food allergies. If your child has a food allergy, you will receive a copy of this plan, and in accordance with the plan, a meeting will be scheduled prior to the start of school with you, your child's teachers and the directors. (If your child does not have a food allergy but you would like a copy of the Allergy Action Plan, simply request one from a director.)

In general, if a child has a food allergy, a special “allergy alert” will be posted in the classroom, and will include the child's name and photo, a description of the

allergy, and any special treatment instructions. Since all children eat lunch at school and since these lunches are not provided by Hibben Preschool, it is not feasible to maintain a peanut-free environment (or gluten-free, lactose-free, egg-free etc.) For additional details, please refer to the Allergy Action Plan.

## BIRTHDAYS

Parents are welcome to bring special treats to their child's class to celebrate his or her birthday. Please arrange such events in advance with the classroom teacher to ensure that the treats are appropriate for the entire class. Also, please do not distribute birthday party invitations at school, unless the entire class is to be invited to the party. Student addresses are generally available in the school directory for invitations which need to be mailed.

## SUPPLIES

Each student will be charged a supply fee at the beginning of each semester. This fee is in lieu of giving parents a list of supplies for which to shop. It goes toward the cost of consumable items used throughout the year, such as crayons, glue, construction paper, paper towels, hand sanitizer, baby wipes, etc. In addition to the supply fee, 5K students pay a book fee, which goes toward the cost of individual student workbooks. All supply and book fees are paid at the beginning of the year and are non-refundable. Students joining the class mid-year will be charged a pro-rated supply fee. (5K book fees cannot be prorated.)

## VIDEOS

Videos are not a regular part of the daily routine in any class. A video may occasionally be shown to enhance a subject being studied, for special holidays, or as a special reward. Videos may also be shown during playground time if there is inclement weather and the gym is unavailable for use that day. The showing of videos for any reason not listed above will be strictly limited.

## FIELD TRIPS

Occasional field trips may be planned to coincide with classroom activities for the 5K classes. Parents will be notified in advance of the field trips and given all details concerning the nature of the field trip, location, departure and return times, and any special needs for the trip. A signed permission slip will be required for each child attending. Parent chaperones will be used on all field trips; however, younger siblings may not attend unless special permission is granted by both the classroom teacher and a director. Any parent chaperone must be Safe Sanctuaries-approved, and any parent chaperone providing transportation for a child other than their own to and/or from a field trip must be Safe Sanctuaries-approved as a driver, and provide the preschool office with a copy of their current drivers' license and automobile insurance card. All children being transported to/from a field trip must be securely buckled into a child safety seat appropriate for their age and weight.

## SCHOOL PICTURES

School pictures are taken in both the spring and the fall by a professional, local photographer. Fall pictures are generally taken inside, with a backdrop suitable for holiday pictures. Picture orders are complete in plenty of time for Christmas. Spring pictures are generally taken outside, weather permitting. Class pictures are generally taken in the spring as well. You will be notified of picture dates and order information in advance of each photography session.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Hibben students may be included in photographs of school activities for promotional and publicity purposes. Such photographs may be used, for example, in brochures, in scrapbooks, on posters within the school, and/or may be posted on the church/preschool website or Facebook fan page, or published in the newspaper. Photos may also be emailed directly to a particular group of parents, such as when a class or group of classes participates in a special event. Such photographs will never identify a child by name. An "opt out" form is available in the preschool office, and must be signed by a parent and returned to a director if you do not agree to allow your child to appear in photographs as described. Failure to complete and return an "opt out" form will be interpreted as implicit permission for one's child(ren) to be included in any such photographs as described above.

## SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 9:00.\* Prior to 9:00, teachers are busy preparing for the day and cannot admit children into the classroom until that time. Teachers plan arrival time activities that usually last until around 9:15, at which time more structured activities begin. As a courtesy to the teacher, and to avoid causing a distraction to other students, please bring your child to his/her class by that time.

The school day ends at 12:30,\* and all children should be picked up no later than that. Teachers involve the class in a closing time activity around 12:15, and will dismiss individual students to their parents as they arrive. Children get very anxious when they are the last one to be picked up, so please make sure your child is picked up by 12:30.\*

Any child picked up after 12:40 will be charged \$1.00 per minute for each minute late. This late pickup fee will be reflected on your monthly statement.

\*5K students arrive at 8:45 instead of 9:00, and dismiss at 12:45 instead of 12:30. Late pick up fees begin accruing at 12:55 for 5K students.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION FEES

An annual registration fee is required of each student at the time of enrollment. This fee ensures the child's spot in the program, and is not applied to tuition or other classroom fees. This fee is non-refundable.

## MONTHLY TUITION AND LATE FEES

Tuition is paid monthly, from August through April, for attendance September through May. Each monthly payment is due in full by the 1st day of each month, and is considered late as of the 2nd day of the month. We do allow a grace period until the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month (not applicable in August); however, any payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> will incur a late payment fee of \$25.00. Please note that late payment fees will be incurred, even if the 10<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, holiday, or a day your child is not normally scheduled to attend. If tuition remains unpaid beyond the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, the child's space in the program may be forfeited. A financial statement will be placed in your child's folder approximately 1 week prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, to remind you of your balance. Tuition is the same each month, regardless of the actual number of days of attendance.

If you or your child is sick or you are out of town when tuition is due, please make arrangements to pay ahead of time, send your payment with a friend, or mail it to us. Please note that mailed payments are considered paid on the day they are actually received, NOT the day they are postmarked. We cannot be responsible for postal service delays.

## METHODS OF PAYMENT

We accept payments in the form of cash, checks or money orders. Checks and money orders should be made payable to "Hibben UMC." Please note that we do not keep cash in the preschool office and are unable to make change. If you are not able to provide the exact amount due, we will credit the overage toward the following month's tuition or other charges.

With the exception of cash, which should be given directly to one of the directors, payments can be placed in one of the two tuition drop boxes. These boxes are kept locked, and only the preschool directors have keys. One is located on the wall just outside the preschool office, and the other is located on the wall across from the 4 day 4K class in the Christian Life & Learning Center. These boxes are available any time the church building is open, generally from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., although this may vary.

## ONLINE BANKING PAYMENTS

If your bank offers online banking and bill payment services, you may utilize these services to pay your tuition. When utilizing online banking and/or electronic bill paying services, please be aware that unlike other bills you may have, payments to Hibben are generally not made via electronic transfer; your bank will draft your account, and then cut a check and mail it to us. To ensure that the check sent by the bank on your behalf arrives on time and gets properly credited to your account, please heed the following instructions:

- Allow adequate time for the bank to process and mail your payment to us. We suggest that you schedule the payment to be made prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.
- Enter the payee as “Hibben Preschool”
- On the memo line, indicate “preschool tuition”
- If the last name on the bank account is different from the child’s last name, add the child’s last name to the memo line
- You, not your bank, are responsible for the timely payment of your child’s tuition.

## RECEIPTS

Routine receipts will be issued for cash and money order payments only. For payments made by check, your cancelled check will serve as your receipt. If your employer’s payroll plan allows you to receive a pre-tax deduction for child care expenses, we will be happy to provide you with a receipt with our tax ID number on it at your request. Please attach a note to your payment each month; we will print a receipt and place it in your child’s folder, generally within 1-2 days. If your employer provides a specific form for this, we will be happy to complete any necessary payment information, sign it and place it in your child’s folder, generally within 1-2 days.

## TUITION AND THE SCHOOL CALENDAR

We are frequently asked whether tuition is prorated during months with holiday breaks or other school closings. Monthly tuition is the same each month; holidays and other closings are figured into the cost of tuition and averaged out over the course of the year so that tuition is the same each month, August through April.

## RETURNED CHECKS

Checks returned for insufficient funds will incur a returned check fee of \$25. Please be sure you have sufficient funds in your account to cover any checks you write to us. We cannot hold checks and cannot accept post-dated checks. More than one returned check may result in a requirement that your tuition be paid in cash for the remainder of the year.

## WITHDRAWALS

Parents are required to give a 30 day written notice when withdrawing their child from the program for any reason, prior to the end of the school year. This allows us ample time to fill the space being vacated by your child. You are responsible for paying tuition through the end of the 30 day notice, regardless of if or when your child's space is filled by another child. Pre-paid tuition will be refunded in a prorated amount, to the extent that the prepaid tuition covered a period of time beyond the 30 day notice. In the event you are due such a refund, a check will be cut and mailed to you. Please note that it may take 5-7 business days to do so.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

## CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES

A child who exhibits symptoms of a contagious illness, or who does not feel well enough to participate in all classroom activities, including outside play, should be kept at home. Students who develop any of these symptoms while at school will be isolated from other students if possible, and a parent will be called to pick the child up immediately.

Such symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- Elevated temperature
- Skin rash
- Abnormal urine or stool
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Evidence of head lice
- Severe coughing
- Severe runny nose or sneezing
- Difficult or abnormal breathing
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

A child will be re-admitted to school when all signs of illness are gone, or with a written note from a physician stating that the child is not contagious. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications, before returning to school.

## ORAL MEDICATIONS

The Hibben Preschool staff will not administer any oral medication to children at school. If your child is taking any oral medication, please plan the timing of your doses at home so that your child will not need to receive medication while at school. Please see the "Minor Injuries" section below for our policy on topical first aid treatments.

## EXPOSURE TO CONTAGIOUS DISEASES/HEALTH RISKS

When children are exposed to more serious diseases or health risks, including such things as chicken pox, measles, head lice, etc. parents will be notified, provided we are made aware of the exposure. Such notification is generally limited to parents of other children in that particular classroom. If the child in question has a sibling at Hibben Preschool, the parents in the sibling's class may also be notified. In extreme circumstances, a school-wide notification may be issued.

Since diseases and other contagious health conditions are often contagious

before symptoms appear, please let us know immediately if your child or anyone in your household is diagnosed with such a disease or health issue so that we can quickly notify the parents of other children of possible exposure. Please be assured that your child will not be “named” in such parental notices.

### IMMUNIZATIONS

Each child is required to have on file in the preschool office a copy of his/her current SC Certificate of Immunization, showing that the child has received all vaccinations required to date by the state of South Carolina. Your physician’s office will have this form, and they are welcome to fax the completed form to us. A new and updated copy of the record must be submitted as additional immunizations or booster shots are received. We will notify you in writing if your child’s immunization form has expired or is about to expire. Please be aware that we do not accept any exemptions, including medical, religious or other.

### MINOR INJURIES

Minor injuries are inevitable during active play. When a child receives a minor cut or scrape that breaks the skin, the affected area will be washed with soap and water or an antibacterial wipe, and Neosporin or equivalent may be applied. Ice or cold packs may be applied to bumps and bruises, and Benadryl cream or equivalent may be applied to insect bites and stings. Desitin, Balmex or equivalent is applied to diaper rash as necessary. Large doses of TLC are administered for all injuries as well!

When injuries occur, an incident report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by a director, and a copy given to the parent. If the situation warrants, the parents may be called prior to pick-up time to be informed of the injury.

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Preschool staff members certified in first aid, and in CPR for infants and children, are on site at all times. In the event of a serious accident or illness that requires immediate emergency medical treatment, the child may be transported to a local hospital by a preschool/church staff member or by ambulance. Parents will be notified as quickly as possible, as will the child’s physician.

### FIRE/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire exit maps are posted in each classroom. Fire drills will be conducted periodically. Severe weather drills may also be conducted. All staff members will know the location of fire extinguishers and will know how to use them.

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Hibben Preschool has adopted an emergency response plan, which outlines procedures that will be followed in the event of various emergency situations including things such as fire, severe weather, earthquake, criminal activity near the campus, or hazardous environmental incidents near the campus. These

procedures will be followed as closely as possible, but circumstances may warrant a deviation from the plan. Copies of the Emergency Response Plan are available in the preschool office.

## PREVENTION

Children will be under direct supervision at all times.

Fighting is prohibited, as is running and throwing things, unless supervised and part of an organized activity or game.

Poisonous substances and potentially hazardous equipment or materials are stored out of the reach of children.

Furniture and equipment are checked regularly for safety and stability. Any questionable equipment will be reported to a director.

No hard candy or chewing gum is permitted at any time.

All unused electrical outlets are capped.

All staff members submit to a criminal background check before being hired.

## SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY AND CHILD ABUSE

Hibben United Methodist Church has adopted a "Safe Sanctuaries" policy, which is a church-wide Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Policy. As a ministry program of the church, Hibben Preschool abides fully by this policy. The policy addresses the following topics:

- Qualifications and screening procedures for employees and volunteers who work with children
- Procedures and guidelines for child ministry programs and activities
- Policy orientation training and additional training in the area of child abuse
- Reporting procedures for suspected, alleged, or actual abuse

A complete copy of the policy may be found by visiting the church website, at [www.hibbenumc.org](http://www.hibbenumc.org). Written copies are also available in the preschool office.

In accordance with this policy, all preschool staff have undergone background checks and reference checks before being hired, have signed a covenant statement to abide by the Safe Sanctuaries policy, have participated in policy orientation training, and have completed at least one other class or workshop on the subject of child abuse.

If a teacher has any reason to suspect that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect of any kind, it will be documented and reported to the director. The director will then notify the Department of Social Services and the pastor(s) of the church. Depending on the situation, the police may be notified as well. It is the policy of Hibben Preschool not to release a child to any parent or other adult if that person shows any sign of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Under such circumstances, we will offer assistance in calling another authorized person to pick up the child and/or a taxi. The police will also be notified if deemed necessary by Hibben staff.

# COMMUNICATION

## SHARING INFORMATION

Children are easily affected by events occurring in the home. We ask that you share with your child's teacher(s) any happenings that might alter your child's behavior. Our staff can be of comfort to a troubled child if they know what they are dealing with. Such happenings might include illness or hospitalization of a family member, moving plans, birth of a sibling, death in the family or death of a pet, parent separation, visitors staying with the family, or any other event that might cause stress, tension or changes in the family dynamic.

In similar fashion, your child's teacher will make it a point to share with you anything that occurs in the classroom that might be having an effect on your child. This could include things such as a substitute teacher being present, a new student, a change in the daily schedule, or the way a child gets along with another child. If at any time you feel something may be going on at school that is affecting your child in any way, please do not hesitate to discuss it with your child's teacher and/or a director.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

Opportunities may be available for parents who wish to participate in the classroom. While it often helps to keep a distance at the beginning of the year so that the class can get established in a routine, teachers will generally welcome the participation of parents who would like to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, etc. with the class. Children are delighted and proud to have a parent visit their class; we simply ask that you discuss such plans with the teacher ahead of time. Depending on the level of involvement, it may be necessary for parent volunteers to complete the Safe Sanctuaries approval process. (refer to p. 17)

## CONFERENCES AND PHONE CALLS

*Conferences:* Teachers in 3, 4, and 5 year old classes usually conduct parent-teacher conferences in January and/or May, and provide semi-annual written progress reports at these times as well. Conferences with parents of younger children are held on an as-needed basis. Teachers may also send out additional progress reports or request additional conferences as necessary, and parents may also request a conference at any time. If you wish to schedule a conference, please make an appointment with your child's teacher or with a director.

*Phone calls:* Drop-off and pick-up times are often hectic, and don't always allow for adequate communication between parent and teacher. For this reason, teachers may make occasional phone calls or send emails to parents to touch base or discuss particular concerns. As with conferences, such calls/emails can

also be initiated by parents; please feel free to phone or email your child's teacher or the preschool office, or to leave a note requesting that the teacher or director call or email you at a particular time if there is any issue you wish to discuss.

## OTHER MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

**Student folders:** Each child has a folder which should be checked daily, as it will include work or artwork the child may have done, notes from the teacher or director, newsletters, financial statements, Scholastic book order forms, information on upcoming events such as school pictures, and a host of other important items. This folder will have the child's name on it and will be located on the sign-in table outside the classroom door. (5K students will have folders in their cubbies; these folders go home with them each afternoon and are returned each morning.)

**Email:** In an effort to reduce the amount of paper used, we try to communicate as much as possible by email. Monthly newsletters will be distributed in this manner, as will other various news and announcements. You are welcome and encouraged to use email to communicate with us as well. The preschool office email address is [preschool@hibbenumc.org](mailto:preschool@hibbenumc.org).

**Newsletters:** Hibben Preschool distributes a monthly school newsletter, Hibben Handprints. It contains reminders of upcoming dates to remember, staff news, announcements of new students and new siblings, and other general news. If your family welcomes a new baby, please let us know the name of the baby and the date of arrival, so that we can announce your older child's new status as a big brother or big sister! As mentioned above, this newsletter is distributed via email, although a few hard copies are also available in the office.

**Facebook:** Hibben Preschool maintains a fan page on Facebook, and we invite you to "like" our Facebook page so that updates will appear on your Facebook wall. Simply search for "Hibben Preschool" and click "like." Various notices of news and school events, as well as occasional pictures, are posted on our fan page, and will show up on the walls of our fans.

**Bulletin boards:** Each class has a bulletin board outside the classroom door. Please look at the bulletin board each day, as it may include class announcements, sign-up sheets for class activities, pictures of class activities and other items.

**Website:** Hibben United Methodist Church maintains a very thorough website. The website is [www.hibbenumc.org](http://www.hibbenumc.org). If you visit the website, click on "ministries" and then click on "preschool" to go to the preschool page. The preschool page is

updated periodically with important dates to remember, and other preschool-related information. The website is also a great source of information for other church activities for both children and adults. These include children's ministry programs, youth group activities, Bible studies, Sunday services, family ministry events and other "social" activities.

*Phone messages:* If you need to speak to a teacher or director outside of normal school hours, you are welcome to call the preschool office at 216-8438 and leave a voice mail. Voice mail is checked daily by the directors, and messages for teachers will be forwarded to them. Additionally, the school directory will include at least one form of direct contact for each preschool staff member (phone number or email address). The directory will be available to you by early October. Prior to that, you may obtain this information from a director.