



# Family Handbook 2025



**FIRST UNITED  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

*Called to be a Light on the Hill*

1

[www.firstschoolfayetteville.org](http://www.firstschoolfayetteville.org)

## **Welcome!**

The First School staff and First United Presbyterian Church are pleased to have your child enrolled in our program. We thank you for the confidence you have shown by entrusting us with the care and teaching of your child. We pledge to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children can develop a love of learning.

We realize that positive learning experiences that happen during the first five years can affect a child's lifelong educational journey. During your child's time with us, we will strive to fill your child's day with activities that will present physical, emotional, social, creative, and intellectual challenges for him/her. Likewise, our Kindergarten Program seeks to foster a life-long love for fun and learning.

We have compiled this manual to give you a better understanding of the structure and function of our school. It is our hope that each parent will carefully read this booklet and will want to partner with us to make our school run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. This handbook is the best statement of our policies and procedures, and it is subject to amendment, at any time, by the First School Commission Board or Session of the First United Presbyterian Church.

Thank you for choosing to let us be a part of your child's early learning experience. We look forward to a wonderful year!

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# Family Handbook

## Table of Contents

-Mission Statement-	4
What is First School?	4
-History-	4
-Our Curriculum-	5
-Enrichment-	5
-Communication & Security-	5
-Religious Activities-	5
-Special Needs-	5
-Admission Requirements-	6
-Tuition-	7
-Scholarships-	7
-Children's Records-	7
-Operation for the School Year-	8
-Inclement Weather-	8
-Summer Program-	8
-Arrival-	8
-Departure-	9
-Snack and Lunch-	10
-Celebrations & Children's Birthdays-	10
-Attire-	10
-DCCECE Requirements	11
-Personal Items-	11
-Behavior Guidance-	11
-Dismissal from the School-	12
-Grievance Procedures-	13
-Withdrawal-	14
-Conferences-	14
-Communication-	14
-Illness at School-	15
-Medications-	16
-Medical Care Plan-	16
-Washington County Early Intervention/NWA Educational CO-OP-	16
-Educational Care Plan-	16
-Emergency Evacuation/Safe Places-	16
-Suspected Child Maltreatment-	17
-Family Participation-	17
-From the Director-	17
Withdrawal Form	18

## **-Mission Statement-**

First School, an outreach of the First United Presbyterian Church, pledges to provide a safe and loving Christian environment while nurturing a love of learning.

## **What is First School?**

First School is a combination center composed of a part-time Parent's Day Out Program, Part-time Preschool, and Kindergarten. Children are placed in classes by their age on August 1st. Our Parent's Day Out Program, for children ages 12 months through 35 months, is offered two or three days per week. It is designed to provide primary caregivers with a respite while their children are cared for in a creative, nurturing, safe environment. Our Preschool Program, for children ages three and four years-of-age, is offered two or three days per week, and consists of a half day of instruction time with the option of extended care that includes naptime. Our Kindergarten is a five-day program designed for children 5-years of age that would benefit from 5-days of instruction at a higher level, in a low child-to-teacher ratio before starting elementary school. The class is taught by an Arkansas certified teacher and is aligned with the Arkansas Kindergarten Frameworks and Arkansas Academic Standards. Upon completion of kindergarten children can either enter Kindergarten or First Grade in Public School. In the summer First School offers two summer sessions which also include elementary-aged children.

First School is operated within the purview of the Presbyterian Church, USA and governed by the FUPC Session through a Commission. The Commission is led by a moderator from the Session and includes members consisting of church members, The FUPC Director of Christian Education, First School parent representatives, teacher representatives, the director, the FUPC Financial Administrator, and the Co-Pastor.

## **-History-**

The First School was established in the fall of 1998. Prior to that, First United Presbyterian Church's (FUPC) campus housed the Fayetteville Creative School for many years. The Fayetteville Creative School moved to another location, and the church began its own parent's day out program called Tot's Time. In 1998, First School was officially licensed by the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Childcare and Early Childhood Education Division. In 2003, the First School building was completely remodeled, and the Preschool Hall was added. The First School voluntarily achieved Arkansas DHS Quality Initiative status in 2007. DHS initiated the "Better Beginnings" standards, which were passed in 2010, and granted First School quality accreditation as outlined in the Arkansas Childcare Accreditation System Rules and Regulations. The program is evaluated in seven areas: (a) Space and furnishings, (b) Basic care, (c) Language and reasoning, (d) Learning activities, (e) Interactions, (f) Program structure, and (g) Needs of parents and staff. This program is committed to maintaining low child to teacher ratios and retaining skilled, quality staff.

### **-Our Curriculum-**

Our curriculum was developed using the Adventures in Learning, Explorers Curriculum, and following the Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards. It is designed to help children acquire social competence and the skills they need to succeed as learners. All our children participate in a balance of social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, artistic, and spiritual activities, both structured and unstructured. Our creative, theme-based lessons and classroom activities were designed to incorporate all learning styles and levels of development.

### **-Enrichment-**

Interested in exposing your child to dance and not driving all over town? **JITTERBUGS** offers an on-site enrichment program while your child is at school. Any children 2½ - 6 years old can be enrolled. They can try out the class for free anytime. The classes are Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Payment for this class is separate for school tuition and is paid directly to Jitterbugs through Brightwheel. **JITTERBUGS** dance builds coordination & rhythm and they even have a recital during the year here on Campus!

### **-Communication & Security-**

Communication between home and school is important. We use the app Brightwheel to keep parents, teachers, and the director connected. With Brightwheel you will check your child in/out, receive photos and notes about your child's day, and upcoming events. Tuition will also be collected by autopay through Brightwheel. First School has a security system on our entries for the safety of our students. Each parent will have a 4-digit code from Brightwheel to use on entry keypads. If there are other people who will be picking up your child **regularly** they will need to be added to Brightwheel for their own code. There is a doorbell for infrequent visitors or babysitters. When you are entering the building, please allow the door to close securely behind you so that other parents may enter their code as well. We want to be certain that only authorized visitors enter the building or that a kid does not slip out at pick-up time.

### **-Religious Activities-**

First School strives to provide a climate of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity, where children can learn to live together and love one another. All religions and Christian denominations are valued and respected. Children are treated as members of God's diverse family. As a faith-based school, children will be exposed to songs and Bible stories on their level. The Preschool students will attend Chapel with the church pastoral staff once a week as a group. Chapel generally lasts 15 minutes and is a fun, social activity that brings Bible stories to life using a flannel board to teach and engage students in learning about God and His teachings. Before eating snack and/or lunch, children are encouraged to say grace as a group, thanking God for His blessings. Christmas will be a time of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and Easter His Resurrection.

### **-Special Needs-**

Children with special educational, emotional, or social needs, and children with special physical handicaps or developmental disabilities will be considered on an individual basis for enrollment and

placement. Prior to enrollment, parents must report such needs to the director and provide results of previous developmental/educational assessments. Our program makes every effort to accommodate all children, but our staff are trained in early childhood development, not special education.

### **-Admission Requirements-**

Registration is online from our website at [www.firstschoolfayetteville.org](http://www.firstschoolfayetteville.org) annually on February 14th. If a spot is available your child will be accepted. The non-refundable \$80 registration and \$30 activity fee is paid to keep the spot. Currently enrolled students, their siblings, and members of the church have priority enrollment. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. A child may be placed on a waiting list if the age-appropriate class is full. If you are placed on the waiting list your fees will be refunded. If you accept a spot the fees are non-refundable. Being on the waiting list **does not** guarantee your child a spot. When there is an opening, eligible families will be contacted in the order of the waiting list. Should a family choose to decline the offer of placement, the next eligible family will be contacted. Priority is always given to siblings of currently enrolled students. When a family chooses to accept the offer, the registration/activity fees will be due immediately to hold a place for that child. **These fees are non-refundable.**

First School requires children to be fully vaccinated using the required Arkansas Child Immunization Schedule. Only vaccination exemptions or delays allowed for medical reasons and require documentation from an Arkansas Licensed Pediatrician. The Immunization schedule includes DTap, HIB, Hep A, Hep B, MMR, IPV, Varicella, and Pneumococcal. Please provide a copy of the child's current immunization record. Immunizations must be up to date. If you are informed by the director that your child is overdue for shots, you will be given 15 calendar days to produce a current immunization record. If you are unable to produce a current immunization record within 15 calendar days, your child will be withdrawn from the school in accordance with state licensing requirements.

**Please inform us immediately if your child has any food, insect, or environmental allergies.**

Children are considered for enrollment regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. All personal information regarding enrolled children and their families will remain confidential and will be respected. Children will be admitted to a class if they meet the age requirement by August 1 of the current school year. We use the same age requirement date as Fayetteville Public Schools to ensure that your child leaves our program of age for kindergarten. Exceptions to this policy may be made at the director's discretion. When placing children, the director will take into consideration a child's physical and developmental level in comparison with the rest of the class. The director's decision will be final. All students are promoted as a group at the end of the summer term.

**All children entering the three and four-year-old rooms must be toilet trained before admission into those classrooms.** Preschool students are expected to have more independence in their toileting habits. Occasional, involuntary accidents are to be expected. If documentation indicates 2 or more accidents occurring within 1 week, the director will ask for a conference with the parents and teacher to discuss gaining success in toileting. If a child has ongoing accidents on consecutive days or weeks,

he/she will be asked to remain home until more independence is gained. Children in our preschool program will not be permitted to wear pull-ups during any portion of the day.

### **-Tuition-**

The tuition schedule is established by the First School Commission on an annual basis. Tuition is a daily rate multiplied by the number of school days in the school year and divided equally over ten months. August tuition is due on June 15th to secure your child's spot. September through May tuition is due at the first of the month. There is a discount for multiple children in the program and a church member discount of 10% on one child. The registration and activity fees are required annually, non-refundable, and not discounted. Registration \$80. The \$30 Activity Fee covers costs such as the pumpkin patch experience, snow cone truck, fall and Spring class pictures.

#### **FIRST SCHOOL MONTHLY TUITION 2025-26**

**Registration/Activity fees total:\$110 (\$80 registration and \$30 Activity Fee)**

		<b>MWF</b>	<b>TT</b>	<b>KINDERGARTEN M-F</b>	
12 to 35 months	8-12:00	\$337	\$241	8-12:00	\$578
	8-2:30	\$547	\$391	8-2:30	\$938
3 & 4 years old	8-12:00	\$316	\$226		
	8-2:30	\$514	\$368		

### **-Forms of payment-**

Tuition and fees are paid by autopayment using Brightwheel Software. Autopay by ACH bank draft fee of 0.6% (a maximum of \$2) per transaction, credit card fees are of 2.95%. Brightwheel also gives parents the ability to look at their account balances and print off statements.

### **-Scholarships-**

The Outreach Committee of First United Presbyterian Church offers scholarship money for First School tuition. People interested in applying should contact the director for a scholarship application. All applications and inquiries will be kept confidential. The scholarships are a percentage of the monthly tuition. The director, financial administrator, and the moderator of the First School Commission will comprise the scholarship review committee and will treat the application with the utmost discretion, providing a written response to the applicant. Scholarship applications will be accepted between February 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> for the coming summer and school year.

### **-Children's Records-**

We must have a complete file on each child upon enrollment and all files must be updated annually. Parents must complete all required emergency information, addresses, phone numbers, and signatures. **Parents must be conscientious about updating their child's file when addresses or phone numbers change or when their child receives additional immunizations. Please inform us immediately of any allergies your child has.**

## **-Operation for the School Year-**

Parent's Day Out and Preschool Program Days: Monday/Wednesday/Friday **OR** Tuesday/Thursday.

Hours: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **OR** extended day until 2:30 p.m.

Kindergarten Program: Monday through Friday. 8:00 am-12:00 pm, extended care until 2:30 p.m.

1. You must choose one time for pick up.
2. There is no extended day drop-in option.
3. If you need to pick up at 12:00 on Tuesday and 2:30 on Thursday, you will be required to register for the 2:30 pick-up time with the accompanying fee.

## **-Inclement Weather-**

**First School follows most of the Fayetteville Public School System's Closure Policies.** This includes days closed for *inclement weather* or outbreaks of illness. Please check Brightwheel for messages about closing. There may be a few occurrences of First School closing when Fayetteville Public Schools are not closed. Keep in mind the roads to our facility are incredibly steep and may become treacherous while other roads are still passable. First School will be closed for various teacher in-service days in accordance with the Fayetteville Public Schools' calendar. First School does not give a tuition credit for snow days or days out for sickness or vacation

## **-Summer Program-**

Our summer program offers eight weeks of care divided into two sessions, each four weeks. The Parent's Day Out and Preschool Programs run very much as they do during the school year except for being closed on Fridays. The summer elementary camp offers a place for children finishing kindergarten through second grade. Classes are Monday/Wednesday and/or Tuesday/Thursday.

The hours are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., or 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. **Summer**

**Sessions: (1) June 2-26 (2) July 7-31**

PDO 8:00-12:00	\$249
8:00-2:30	\$405
PREK 8:00-12:00	\$234
8:00-2:30	\$381
ELEM 8:00-12:00	\$249 children completing K-2nd grade
8:00-2:30	\$405

## **-Arrival-**

Parents must escort their children into the building each morning. Your child's teacher will be ready to receive students at 8:00 a.m. *You must sign your child in using Brightwheel App.* If you cannot be reached by phone on a day while your child is at school, please inform us that someone on your emergency contact list will be available should your child get sick or hurt. The emergency contact number can be anyone on your list of people you have authorized to pick up your child from school. If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, we need to be notified **by phone or in writing**. This person **MUST** be listed in your child's file as authorized to pick up your child. *Only a child's parent(s) may authorize his/her child's release to someone else. Please remind others picking up your children that their IDs will be checked.*



The morning sets the tone for the entire day. Goodbyes are best handled in a matter-of-fact way. Many children will have difficulty separating from their parents at drop-off time in the beginning. Usually this is very short-lived, and the child adjusts to the day's activities shortly after the parent leaves. If separation anxiety is prolonged or extreme, your child's teacher will work with you to resolve the situation.

Keep in mind that children adjust better when their arrivals and departures are on a regular, consistent schedule. Our teachers have scheduled the first 20 to 30 minutes of the day to greet children who are arriving. If you consistently arrive after this time, your child will be entering a classroom that is already engaged in activities. Thus he/she will have missed valuable time for adjustment and preparation for his/her day.

A very important avenue of partnership between a parent and teacher is the flow of information. Please communicate events or situations that may affect a child's behavior. It is important for staff to know, for example, about the death of a family member or pet, a parent being out of town, a late bedtime, etc.

### **-Departure-**

Time is precious and unexpected things arise. But children must be picked up from school on time. If you are late you will be charged \$1 for each MINUTE that you are late.

**Please remember that it is traumatic for children if you are either too early or too late.** Once the first parent has arrived to pick up his/her child, all the other children's eyes in the classroom start to linger toward the door wondering when their parents will arrive. A child may become distressed if they are the last one left at the end of pick-up time. Please notify the First School office if you are going to be significantly late. **This does not absolve you of the late fee**, but it does allow us to reassure your child that someone is on the way. If your child is still at First School at 3:30 p.m. and we have not been able to contact anyone listed on your child's enrollment form, we will consider your child abandoned, and State licensing requires us to call the Child Abuse Hotline. Subsequently someone will be sent to pick up your child.

Parents are responsible for their children as soon as they remove them from the classroom. Check with the teacher about your child's day, but please keep it brief, as she will have other students who need her attention. Children are not allowed to leave the building unaccompanied. Even if your car is directly in front of the building, your child could be injured in the parking lot. Please be alert to other children as you drive in and out of the lot, for even under the most diligent parent supervision, children sometimes break free and could dart into the path of an oncoming car. **Please do not leave children in an unattended car in the parking lot.**

*Divorced or separated parents should work out their visitation arrangement without involving school personnel.* School staff members are not authorized to enforce custody and/or visitation agreements. We cannot deny a parent access to his/her child without a copy of the divorce custodial agreement.

**Children who stay for the extended day will have rest time.** It is very important that your child nap or rest quietly during this time as other children in the room need their rest. If your child is consistently disruptive during naptime, we will ask that you pick him/her up at noon.

## **-Snack and Lunch-**

For the safety of our students with nut allergies, First School is a **NUT FREE** campus. This includes tree and ground nuts. Please read the ingredients carefully when packing your child's lunchbox. It is very important that this be taken seriously as it can be a life-or-death issue.

Each child should bring a snack and lunch from home. First School does not provide snack or lunch. The Parent's Day Out Program's students will have morning snack and lunch before the noon pick-up time. Preschool students picked up at noon leave before lunch. *Licensing standards require us to ensure that your child's lunch provides 1/3 of the minimum daily nutrition requirements from each of the four basic food groups.* The Department of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) policies state that each child's lunch must contain 1 milk, 2 fruits and/or vegetables, 1 grain/bread, 1 meat/meat alternate. If your child is missing a required food element, we will supplement it and your account will be charged \$5. We realize that not all children like fruits, vegetables, or milk products; but when consistently offered a wide variety of foods, they will begin to experiment with them. For children who follow a vegetarian diet, a protein/meat alternative may be used. All children have access to water whenever they wish to consume it. **Please notify us if your child has food sensitivity or allergy.**

State DCCECE licensing requires that you send only 100% juice drinks and avoid sugary snacks. Water is preferred in place of juice. Our goal for the children is that they can be independent within reason in their lunchtime routine. Please keep that in mind as you pack your child's lunch. It is beneficial if most items packed for lunch are things that your preschooler can handle by himself. **Please include an ice pack in your child's lunchbox to keep its contents cool.**

Students need to bring spoons and forks as needed for the day. We have no way to sanitize utensils to DCCECE standards, so we ask that you send clean items every day. They will be rinsed after use and returned to you at the end of each school day. Disposal utensils are also acceptable. Food for younger students should be cut into small pieces. Grapes must be cut in half for small children.

## **-Celebrations & Children's Birthdays-**

All birthdays will be celebrated with the child in an appropriate manner. If it is your child's birthday, you may bring **store bought nut free** treats. Please consult with your child's teacher to make the necessary arrangements as we have several children with other food allergies/sensitivities. Fruit is a healthy alternative to sugary treats. When inviting students to birthday parties, if your child's entire class isn't invited, please use the school directory to mail birthday invitations. We don't want anyone's feelings hurt or anyone to feel left out. Also, because balloons have been known to cause choking in young children, **no balloons will be allowed into the school.**

## **-Attire-**

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing. Children need to be free to actively participate in all outdoor and indoor activities. They are likely to get a little mussed up or dirty when they are fully participating in playtime. This is a place of fun, not fashion. Dress your child in play clothes that do

not matter if they get paint or dirt on them. Hair bows can be easily lost so please label with initials or just use rubber bands. **Please do not allow your child to wear cowboy boots, shoes that are too large or too small, cleats, capes, flip flops, or shoes with heels.**

### **-DCCECE Requirements**

Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education licensing requires that all enrolled children may be subject to interviews by licensing staff, child maltreatment investigators and/or law enforcement officials for the purpose of determining licensing compliance or for investigative purposes. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent.

Licensing compliance forms are on file for three years and are available for review upon request. Compliance forms are report cards from DCCECE licensing specialists showing that the center complies with all licensing requirements.

DCCECE requires that all children in the center go outside daily when the temperature is above freezing. Therefore, your child should be dressed appropriately for the season. It is also helpful for a child to have **clothing that makes toileting easy**. Overalls and one-piece outfits can be too difficult for children to be self-sufficient and can make diapering difficult.

All children should bring a full change of clothes appropriate for the season. In the Parent's Day Out Program, we ask that you bring disposable diapers and baby wipes for your child's use. **Please send diaper ointment if your child needs it, but it must be given to the teacher and not left in the diaper bag.** DCCECE considers diaper ointment a chemical, and a medicine form must be filled out (*see medication section*). **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR CHILD.**

### **-Personal Items-**

Children need to become engaged with classroom experiences and materials. Bringing special toys from home can unduly complicate school day activities. Therefore, no toys may be brought from home, except for a single comfort item to be used at naptime. Your child's teacher may make exceptions to this rule if applicable to the teaching lesson or Show & Tell, but please limit your child to the specific item or category that the teacher requests. **No toy guns or weapons are EVER permitted in our school for any reason.**

Preschool children staying for nap will need to bring a crib sheet to fit over their rest-time mat and a small blanket. These items need to be small enough to fit in our nap bags. Sheets and blankets will be sent home regularly to be washed and then need to be returned. Sheets for the toddler cribs are provided.

### **-Behavior Guidance-**

The goal at our center is to help children develop a positive self-image. We hope to encourage children to exhibit self-direction and self-control. To do this, children need the opportunity to build self-esteem. Therefore, such practices that would humiliate or shame a child will not be used. Young children, due to their developmental age, are not capable of understanding the ramifications of many of their behaviors. They need to be encouraged to make good choices and prevented from harming

themselves or others. This can best be accomplished through close supervision, gentle guidance, praise, and most importantly, redirection. A very brief separation from the group may be necessary if redirection fails. This will be an age-appropriate amount of time, which is one minute for each year of a child's age. Time out is not used for children under the age of 2, but a child may be separated from the group for the protection of himself/herself and the other children if necessary.

Redirection might also be used when children struggle to share. Children are very egocentric and therefore may not be capable of understanding the concept of sharing and taking turns. It is our responsibility to lend guidance through redirection to other activities when conflict situations occur. With guidance, we will help children understand their importance in their classroom community and help them communicate effectively with others.

Caring for young children requires a lot of patience and praise as they often need to be reminded about safety rules repeatedly. Each ground rule will be presented clearly and precisely. The child will then be helped to follow the rule by demonstrating other acceptable, safe behaviors. We will state clear directions in a positive manner, knowing that young children struggle to comprehend the word "don't." Any child who is having difficulty with physical violence toward other children may be asked to leave for the remainder of the day. Often, a child may need time to regroup before rejoining the class in activities. Through these disciplinary procedures we hope to encourage independence and self-control while promoting the development of a child's positive self-image.

### **-Dismissal from the School-**

If, after admission, a child has difficulty functioning within the structure of our program, staff will first notify parents and work towards resolution of the problem. Thereafter, if the child's needs cannot be met, or if the child becomes a threat to other children or to himself/herself, staff will recommend a withdrawal.

The following sequential steps will be taken when an undesirable pattern of behavior causes concern and until it has been resolved:

1. The teacher and a listening witness will have a private talk with the child. The parents will be notified.
2. The teacher and a listening witness will have a private talk with the child again. The parents will be notified.
3. The director and a listening witness will have a private talk with the child. The parents will be notified.
4. The teacher and the director will schedule a meeting with the parent(s).
5. A behavior specialist will be contacted. Parents will be asked to give consent.

Parent cooperation is vital to getting problems solved. If a parent is unwilling to take these steps, the child may be dismissed from the program. If, after admission, a parent causes undue hardship on the staff or unreasonable distraction from the teachers' regular duties, the staff will ask the parent for resolution of the problem. If the parent's needs cannot be reasonably met, the child will be disenrolled.

## **-Biting Policy-**

Biting is a common occurrence in facilities that serve children under 3-years-of-age. Some toddlers simply have more of a sensory need and tend to put everything in their mouth and may be more apt to bite than others. In these cases, many chewable toys are provided. A verbal toddler who is communicating through biting is encouraged to use words instead. Appropriate words will be given to the child such as, "John, tell Sue, 'That's mine'." A child who is chosen often as a victim is encouraged to be more assertive. If a child is biting to get attention, the staff will find appropriate times during the day to give that child extra attention. Biting is never appropriate, but it is normal behavior for toddlers; however, we understand that this is an issue that concerns many parents of toddlers.

The school's staff deals with biting with the following steps:

1. The child bitten always gets the first response. They receive attention, consoling, and first aid that might be necessary.
2. The biter is dealt with firmly but lovingly. They are told that biting hurts and it is not allowed in the classroom. To help develop empathy, if the victim allows, the biter may be asked to hold an ice pack on the bite mark.
3. An Accident Report is filled out and presented to the bitten child's parents. The biter's name will be kept confidential to avoid any negative retaliation.
4. If a child bites, the biter's parents will be notified through an Incident Report and/or a parent/teacher conference may be requested.
5. A log is kept on all bites that occur at the school to help us find patterns and determine what preventative measures to take.

All children are always closely supervised; however, just as all falls cannot be prevented, all bites cannot be prevented. It is **not** our policy to revoke enrollment of a child for biting. Each child will be evaluated individually to determine the best course of action to handle the biting.

## **-Grievance Procedures-**

First School policies are determined by the First School Commission, which has parent representation. The director is responsible for ensuring that the policies established by the commission are followed. Any concern about a commission-established policy may be expressed in writing directly to the commission. The commission will consider parent input, but First School is a ministry of First United Presbyterian Church, and policies and decisions of the commission are final, and must be honored by all parents who enroll their children in First School.

## **-Concerning a Teacher-**

The grievance should be discussed with the teacher. If contact with the teacher is unsuccessful or undesirable, the grievance should come to the attention of the director. The director will discuss the grievance with the parent(s) and take whatever necessary action with the teacher and/or other parties. The parent(s) shall be informed in writing of resolution of the matter.

## **Concerning the Director:**

Any grievance should be discussed with the director. If contact with the director is either unsuccessful or undesirable, the grievance may be submitted in writing to the pastors of the First United Presbyterian Church. The grievance is then to be handled in the following manner:

1. The parent(s) should detail the nature of the complaint or problem in writing to the First School Commission.
2. The director will be provided with a copy of the written grievance and shall submit to the Commission a written response within 5 days.
3. The moderator will conduct whatever investigation he/she deems necessary. This investigation will include a meeting with the parent(s), the director, the moderator, and potentially the entire Commission.
4. The moderator will prepare and submit a report with his/her recommendations to the Commission.
5. The Commission will determine the disposition of the grievance based upon the recommendation from the moderator.
6. Disposition of the grievance will be communicated in writing to the parent(s) by the moderator of the First School Commission.
7. Any grievance requiring disposition will be handled in the above-described manner on an expedited basis at the discretion of the moderator.

## **-Withdrawal-**

When you are certain your child will no longer be attending, First School requires that you notify the Director and fill out the "Withdrawal Form" located in the back of this Family Handbook at least two weeks in advance. If no notice is given, all tuition and fees will continue to be charged. No tuition reimbursements will be given for early withdrawals, and registration fees are non-refundable.

## **-Conferences-**

It is important that our parents and First School staff work as a team for the benefit of each child's development. During the school year, the teachers will offer two parent-teacher conferences. These conferences will take place during the school day. If at any other time, you feel the need to request a conference with your child's teacher or the director, please feel free to do so. We will be happy to meet with you at a mutually agreed upon time and discuss any questions that you may have.

## **-Communication-**

First School utilizes Brightwheel to communicate with First School families. Parents will be invited to Brightwheel to receive daily notes, photographs and communicate with their child's teacher and the director. Look for additional school and class information on signs on the front door, classroom entrances, and lobby bulletin board.

## -Illness at School-

At First School we strive to maintain a clean, healthy environment for our children and staff; however, one ill child can infect the whole classroom and ultimately the whole facility. We are not licensed to provide care for children who are ill. If your child displays any of the following symptoms, they must be kept home until they are **without symptoms for 24 hours** or a physician's note is provided. Specifically, students may return to school if they have no fever ( $< 99$  degrees), without having fever reducing medication, for a period of 24 hours. Students may return to school if they have no vomiting or diarrhea, without having antidiarrheal and antiemetic medication, for a period of 24 hours. This will minimize the spread of infection and allow appropriate recuperation time for your child. Even though your child may appear fine at home, they may not be ready for the active day they will have in their classroom. If your child is kept home because of illness, we ask that you call the office or post it on the Tadpoles app so that the teachers will know. Knowing what a child is ill with, i.e. strep, croup, flu, etc. helps us look for symptoms in other children to help control the spread of infectious diseases. Health alerts can be posted to keep parents informed of illnesses to which their children may have been exposed. Children with the following, but not limited to, list of illnesses may not come to school.

**SUDDEN CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:** lethargy or lack of responsiveness; unexplained irritability or persistent crying; difficulty breathing; a quickly spreading rash.

**FEVER:** Any child with a temperature of 100.4 degrees taken tympanic (ear) or temporal (forehead).

**DIARRHEA:** defined as watery/runny stools, if frequency exceeds 2 or more above what is normal for the child and not related to a change in diet or medication. Blood or mucus in stools (unless caused by hard stools).

**VOMITING:** Vomiting 2 or more times in the past 24 hours.

**ABDOMINAL PAIN:** lasting more than an hour.

**MOUTH SORES:** with drooling.

**RASH:** Body with fever or behavior change.

**SORE THROAT:** If associated with fever or swollen glands.

*If children display any of the above symptoms while at school, we are required to contact you to pick them up. If a child is without any of these symptoms but still appears ill and is unable to participate in the group's activities, we will notify you that your child is not feeling well. Please have contingency plans worked out in advance for such occasions, and make sure that your child's file indicates other relatives or friends who could pick up your child if needed.*

Please do not bring ill siblings into the building. Call the office at 571-4516, and we will be happy to come out to your car and pick up a well student when they arrive and/or deliver him/her to your car at departure. We try very hard to keep our center healthy, safe, and sanitized. All children must wash their hands upon arrival in the morning and during the day before eating, after toileting, after outside playing, or anytime they return to the classroom.

### **-Medications-**

We prefer not to administer medications; however, we will do so when absolutely necessary, but only within State mandated regulations. Medications shall be given to children ONLY WITH SIGNED PARENTAL CONSENT. Please fill out a Medication Request Form for each medication given. These forms are available in the director's office. Permission must contain the date, drug name and type, and dosage. **It must be in the original container, within the expiration date, and labeled with the child's name.** Dosages greater than specified on the label will not be given to any child.

### **-Medical Care Plan-**

Pertinent medical information about your child should be included on the enrollment form. If your child has a severe allergy, medical action plan, or medical condition or information from a doctor, it should be given to the First School office, along with any medication (See above). Staff members will be advised of your child's medical care plan to better serve your child. Allergy alert notice with your child's photo will be posted outside and inside your child's class.

### **-Washington County Early Intervention/NWA Educational CO-OP-**

Washington County has many available resources for children who may need a little extra attention. The Washington County Early Intervention and the NWA Educational Co-op provide services which include speech-language therapy, child development intervention, occupational therapy, etc. A parent (or legal guardian) must request services which are provided free of charge. Based on the screening results, an individualized educational plan (IEP) is shared with the parent(s) and the child's teachers and director in order that the plan may be implemented in all aspects of the child's day. If therapy is recommended a therapist will come to First School to work with your child.

### **-Educational Care Plan-**

If your child requires an educational care plan, please provide the office with a copy. You are welcome to set up a conference with your child's teachers to discuss your child's plan and its role in the classroom. If your child requires early intervention services, we can work with you to accommodate. Early intervention is a service provided by the Northwest Arkansas Education Co-op. If you have concerns requiring your child's development, please let your child's teachers or the director know, and we can arrange early intervention screening. Screening and services are free.

### **-Emergency Evacuation/Safe Places-**

Fire and tornado drills are conducted monthly. During a fire drill the children are evacuated from the building and lined up outside on the parking lot. Toddlers are removed in rolling cribs. During tornado drills, children are moved to the lowest shelter areas in the building. We are fortunate to have areas that are underground. We conduct predator/intruder drills quarterly. We refer to them as "Safety Drills" to children. Classroom doors are locked, and children are moved into the classroom's restroom or to an area in the classroom away from the doors or windows. The state statute prohibiting concealed or



open carry of handguns on the "developed property" of a private or public school, K-12 (A.C.A. 5-73-119). The church also has an established written policy in our building guidelines prohibiting all guns from church property. Violation is a Class D felony.

### **-Suspected Child Maltreatment-**

As a licensed facility, every employee of First School is a Mandated Reporter of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect. If neglect and/or abuse, whether physical or emotional, are suspected, our employees are required to call the Child Maltreatment Hotline (1-800-482-5964) with such information. Arkansas DHS Licensing requires that Childcare Licensing Specialists, DCFS Special Investigations, CACD, and law enforcement be allowed to interview children at any time for investigative purposes and/or for determining compliance with Licensing Requirements. Parental consent is not required for any such interviews.

### **-Family Participation-**

We have an open-door policy at First School. You are welcome and invited to come by whenever you wish. Your child will be made available to you at any time. You may call anytime during the day to check on your child or leave a message for his/her teacher. Below is a list of ideas and possibilities. We encourage you to check with the office or your child's teacher about how to get involved.

Organizing resources      Planning special events

Sharing musical talent, storytelling, or      Classroom parties bringing animals for  
children to see.      Fundraisers      assembling new furniture or equipment.

We offer many opportunities for parents/guardians to be involved outside the classroom as well. One of these opportunities is our First School Commission Board. This group works with the director to oversee the program and makes recommendations for program improvements. You can be as involved as you want to be!

### **-From the Director-**

It is my commitment to offer your child the very best early education program by retaining a qualified, nurturing, professional staff, dedicated to the development of young children. First School maintains the lowest child-to-teacher ratios in the area, providing individual attention in order that children can learn at their own rate. We strive to be a safe, comforting place where children can have their first social interaction away from their parents and where parents can feel completely at ease in leaving their children.  
Cathy Hairston, First School Director



## Withdrawal Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

I wish to give notice of withdrawal for the above-mentioned child. I understand that I must pay my child's tuition through the last day of enrollment listed below.

My child's last day to be enrolled at First School is \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_ I have been very satisfied with the care my child has received at First School.

\_\_\_\_ I have been somewhat satisfied with the care my child has received at First School.

\_\_\_\_ I have been dissatisfied with the care my child has received at First School.

Comments:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Date