

1st School at FUMC LLC

**Parent Handbook
2026-2027**



**2416 West Cloverdale Park
Montgomery, Alabama 36106**

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Philosophy

The congregation of First United Methodist Church believes that each child is a child of God and should have every opportunity to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially to the fullest potential.

In response to this call of Christ to reach out in love to meet the needs of families and children, we are committed to a childcare ministry based upon the principles of the Christian faith as taught by Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “let the children come to me.” (Mark 10:13-16) He also said, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” (Matthew 18:5) Paul reminds us that we are the “Body of Christ.” (Romans 12:5) As Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them we, as his body today, are called to invite the children into our fellowship and bless them.

Statement of Mission

The mission of FUMC First School is to educate and nurture the spiritual growth of preschool children.

The Objectives of First School

- To provide adequate and supervised facilities for each child.
- To offer loving care in a developmentally appropriate environment for the whole child, thus nurturing children’s physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual development.
- To provide age-appropriate opportunities for cognitive development through child centered curriculums that emphasize learning as an interactive process.
- To supplement the home experiences of the child to help him develop into a well-rounded individual through group experiences.
- To provide an environment for children that will serve to enrich their understanding and appreciation of the world around them.
- To help children develop self-reliance and self-discipline.
- To provide effective and open communications between parents and teachers concerning the welfare and development of the child.
- To begin to develop a positive self-concept by helping the child make use of his abilities and talents in accord with basic knowledge of principles of child development.

Policies and Procedures

Services Offered

Ages: Two months- Kindergarten

Hours: 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

School Calendar: We begin our school year based on the start date of the schools in the area. We follow most public school holidays.

(See schedule at the end of the packet.)

Registration

Registration for the Fall Session (*Au - May*) is in January and for the Summer Session in February. This is only open to those currently enrolled into the program and members of First United Methodist. It is publicized in the church bulletin as well as notices posted in the Education Building. Notices are sent home to parents of children in the program. The following week, registration is open to anyone wishing to enroll. A waiting list begins when the classes fill. Half the amount of the non-refundable registration fee is required to hold a spot on the list. The spots fill according to the position on the list. First School and MMO will not be able to accept a child with an infectious disease, due to the intensive care required of a child with such a diagnosis. Children with special needs, taking into consideration the limitations of the church facility and staff, may be accepted into First School after a consultation with the Director. All applicants are subject to space availability restrictions. *We do follow the September 1 birthday cutoff when planning for classroom placements.

FUMC MMO/First School Tuition Information

All tuition is due on the first day of the month and is delinquent after the 10th. There is a \$10.00 late tuition charge. If you miss a tuition payment one month it must be received by the first of the following month for your child to be able to attend school. Those families with an outstanding balance before a registration cannot register until tuition is paid in full. Those families with an outstanding balance at the end of a session cannot begin the next session until the tuition is paid in full. After the second returned check you must pay by cash, money order or cashier's check. If a check is returned for any reason, there will be a \$30.00 return check fee that will be assessed. (Tuition remains the same with no deductions for absences or scheduled vacation days or holidays).

Tuition is as Follows for the 2026-2027 School Year:

2 months-2 years

Fall Registration Fee - \$110.00 (non-refundable) prices effective 09/01/2026

2 days per week \$252.06 per month

3 days per week \$289.87 per month

5 days per week \$359.19 per month

*There is an activity fee of \$150 due in August which is non-refundable. The registration fee is also non-refundable.

3 years- K5

Fall Registration Fee - \$110.00 (non-refundable) prices effective 09/01/2026

3 days per week \$295.60 per month

5 days per week \$358.63 per month

Kindergarten \$371.22 per month

There is an activity fee of \$150.00 due in August for 3-year-olds through kindergarten, which is also non-refundable. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Summer Registration Fee - \$80.00 (non-refundable)

4 days per week \$573.00 for the summer

(Summer session consists of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.)

There is a \$50.00 activity fee due the first week of summer which is non-refundable. The \$80 registration fee is also non-refundable.

(You will not be allowed to register for summer until you are current on tuition payments.)

*Activity fees help to provide curriculum workbooks, art supplies, crafts, paper products, snacks, and other necessities while your child is in our care.

*A discount of 5% of regular tuition will be applied to a family's second child, and a discount of 5% of regular tuition will be given to families with a third child enrolled in the program during the school year.

*A family will not be permitted to register for a new session until the last session tuition is paid in full.

*Drop-ins are accepted only after talking to the Director and are permitted only when there is space available to children already in the program. The cost is \$30.00 per day.

Early Room/Extended Day

When you sign up for Early Room or Extended Day, you are doing so monthly. This can change as your schedule changes. You can sign up for the year and the total will be added to your monthly tuition.

Early Room- 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.	1 day \$22/month
	2 days \$38/month
	3 days \$55/month
	4 days \$70/month
	5 days \$90/month

Extended Day- 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	1 day \$25/month
	2 days \$46/month
	3 days \$68/month
	4 days \$87/month
	5 days \$115/month

*Your child can bring their own napper or use an extra if they are in the nap room for extended day.

As with regular classes the number is limited due to student to teacher ratios. The drop-in rate is \$15.00 per day, per room, per child. If your child drops-in, you must put your check in the drop box outside of the Director's office on the day of the drop-in with your check labeled. You are obligated for the session regardless of absences or short months.

Withdrawal

When a parent decides to withdraw from the program, tuition must be paid in full, as well as the following months tuition is due. For example: A parent withdraws September 15, October tuition is due. A spot is not guaranteed if the family wishes to return.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

2 months-2-year-olds

All children in the building before 9:00 a.m. are to be either with their parents or in the early room. School does not begin until 9:00 a.m. Teachers are using this time to prepare for the day. If you need earlier care, please utilize our Early Room. All children in the 2 - 9 month, 9 - 18 month, and 18 - 24 month must be accompanied to their class by an adult. That adult is to sign the child in leaving a number where the parent or responsible adult can be reached during school hours, if the number is different from ones on file with the Director.

All children must be picked up at 1:00 p.m. The parent or responsible adult in charge of a child must come into the building to pick up younger children, except for the 2-year-old classes. We will not release your child to anyone other than a parent or adult that has been given written permission by the parent. We must have either verbal or written permission from the parent if someone else is to pick up a child. If we are not familiar with the adult, the child will wait in the office until a parent is reached.

3 years-K5

Any child in the building before 9:00 a.m. should be in early room or with a parent, but not in the classroom. At no time should a child ever be let out at a door and allowed to enter the building unaccompanied. Make sure those bringing a child to school are aware of this policy (ex. grandparents).

Written authorization is required if a child is going home with another child. If anyone other than the child's parent is to pick a child up, we must have written permission. If the person is not known to the teacher or Director, the child will stay in the office until a parent is reached.

All children must be signed in and out during the day by the parent bringing them and picking them up. If you are bringing them into the building, please make sure you sign your child in with their teacher. When you pick them up in the afternoon, please make sure you sign them out. We must have accurate accounts of who is in the building, as well as who has dropped off and picked up the children in our program.

There are no "make-up" days when your child misses his or her regular day.

Extended Day

School is over at 1:00 p.m. All children should be picked up by 1:00 p.m. There is a 10 minute “grace period” until 1:10. **A child picked up after 1:15 p.m. is considered late.** You will be charged a late day fee of \$5.00 from 1:16 p.m.- 1:30p.m. At 1:15 p.m. your child will no longer be under the supervision of their teacher, as the workday has ended. Your child’s teacher will take your child to the Extended day room. After 1:30 p.m., you will then pay the Extended Day drop-in fee of \$15.00, plus the \$5.00 late fee. This is due either the day of, or the following day. If you need to make arrangements for late day, please call or email the Director as soon as you can.

Safety Procedures

1. Speed in the drive should not exceed 2.5 m.p.h. at any time, whether school is in session or not. Please adhere to this even if arriving late.
2. When crossing from the parking lot, please use the crosswalk only. Crossing anywhere else in the drive is prohibited. You may not cross under the portico during carpool.
3. Do not send older children to pick up preschoolers.
4. If you arrive at school after 9:15 a.m., do not send a child to his or her class unsupervised. The class may not be in the room, and you would be leaving the child alone in a situation in which the school is unaware.
5. Make sure children are supervised while walking through the parking lot before and after school.
6. Do not park in front of the playground gate.

7. Do not tell anyone, including your child, the door code to get into the building. This helps to protect your children while they are in our care.

8. Please do not visit the playground during school hours. We are not allowed to have “visitors” on site during school hours as it conflicts with our student to teacher ratio.

Weather Policy

Church wide we follow Montgomery Public School weather closings. We have tornado drills to prepare the children. If Montgomery is under a bad weather warning, such as a tornado, school may not start on time due to teachers waiting for the warning to be lifted to leave for school. Please be mindful of this especially for those in the 8:00 early rooms.

Health and Medical Information

Every child must have a current Medical Emergency Card and Certificate of Immunization, or exemption, on file in the Director’s office beginning in September of every year.

Children must be free of the following to come to school: severe colds, undetermined rashes or spots, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other indications of infection. **A CHILD MUST BE FREE OF FEVER WITHOUT ADVIL OR TYLENOL FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.**

Parents will be called if a child becomes ill while at school. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will use the emergency names on file.

Guidelines for Returning to School after Illness

Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)	24 hours following initial use of prescribed medication.
Chicken Pox/Hand, Foot, Mouth	5-7 days after first break out, and/or when all have scabbed over. *Doctors note advised.
Strep Throat	24 hours after antibiotic has been started.
Fever	Free of fever without Advil/Tylenol 24 hours

Diarrhea or Vomiting

24 hours after last episode.

Head lice

Children with head lice are required to remain at home during treatment.

Parents are to immediately notify the school of the infestation. Students will be readmitted to school after treatment has been completed, and the child is nit free.

Ringworm

48 hours after beginning medication.

Impetigo

Must have doctor's note and after on antibiotic for 3 days. All areas must be covered. Must report if staph or strep.

Flu

Free of fever without Advil/Tylenol 24 hours and no other symptoms of illness

RSV

Free of fever without Advil/Tylenol 24 hours and no other symptoms of illness

COVID-19

A student with Covid-19 must be past 5 days from the first symptoms, symptoms improved, and be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever lowering drugs. If anyone in your family or a member of your household tests positive for Covid -19 everyone in the family and/or household who would be attending or entering the school will need to remain out of School and the School building for 5 days. We will adhere to the ADPH most current rules. If someone in the classroom tests positive for Covid-19 we will alert parents and follow ADPH recommendations at that time.

Emergency Medical

Our procedure in cases of emergency is to first render first aid. We then attempt to contact a parent. If that fails, names on the child's information sheet will be used. Only after all reasonable efforts have been made to contact you, will we call your doctor, and only in the most extreme cases will paramedics be called, or your child taken to the hospital. You give us this right when you sign the Medical-Emergency Card to follow the steps listed above. Parents are responsible for keeping current their work and home phone numbers, the name of the child's doctor, and names of other adults to contact in the event a parent cannot be reached.

Medication Policy

We will treat minor scrapes and cuts with wipes and Band-Aids. If for any reason your child has a health issue that may require medical attention, please speak to the Director.

Potty Training

All children entering a three-year-old class in First School must be independently potty trained by August. Children in the 3-year-old class in August must wear regular underwear (no pull-ups or part-time diapers). Your child must have been successfully potty trained for two weeks at home, with no accidents in the 3-year-old class. Your child needs to possess the verbal ability to let the teacher know he or she needs to go to the bathroom and the physical ability to undress and dress him or herself. (Of course, assistance with belts, buttons, zippers, etc. will be given when needed.)

Food

Parents of First School children send their own food to school. There are refrigerators, microwaves and bottle warmers in the baby nursery. Children beginning in the 9 -18-month classes should have food they can easily pick up. Please do not send anything that might stain the carpet if spilled. Beginning with the 18–24-month class, do not send bottles, pacifiers or foods that need to be warmed as the teachers do not need to leave the classroom at lunchtime. (No glass containers or bottles please.)

First School children have a mid-morning snack. This is provided by the parents and coordinated by the teacher. Please do not send anything that will stain the carpet if spilled. Please ask the teacher about any allergies that may be in the classroom.

Birthdays

Each child's birthday can be celebrated at school. If parents wish to send invitations to school all children in the class must be included. If you want to send cupcakes or special refreshments, arrangements should be made with the child's teacher in advance. Birthdays celebrated in the classroom must be simple, no favors, decorations, gifts, or invitations. When sending food for children younger than three please send cookies, not cupcakes.

Clothing

Please dress your child in play clothes that will not hinder their participation in school activities. During potty training and afterward they should wear clothes that they can take on and off. ALL children must wear shoes beginning in the 18–24-month class. Make sure the shoes they wear are the right size. Closed toe shoes work best on our playground. First School children 2 months through kindergarten should keep a change of clothing in their bags to be used for emergencies. Please mark all coats, jackets, sweaters and shoes with your child's name.

Parents of children in diapers must supply at least three disposable diapers each day. Make sure if your child is in diapers all one-piece suits have snaps in the crotch. (No cloth diapers please.)

Conferences

If you would like a conference, contact the teacher in advance. Teachers should not be called to the phone or asked to leave their class for a conference unless pre-arranged. Teachers prefer to schedule conferences before school, however, if you need to call, please limit the time to after 8:00 a.m. and before 6:00 p.m. Impromptu conferences with a teacher at the door, in the hall, or in the classroom with children, or other parents present are unproductive and disruptive.

Discipline Policy

Our program is “*child centered*.” This means that our first concern is what is best for the children. Our purpose is to be loving and sensitive to the needs of the children, while helping them learn what is acceptable, and how to manage their own emotions.

All behavioral issues will be handled in a positive and patient manner. Discipline shall not be associated with food, bathroom procedures, or be frightening to the child. No verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child shall be used. No corporal punishment shall be used. A kind, firm voice with positive reinforcement shall be used. Discipline and management are based upon the age of the child.

Aggressive Behavior (biting, hitting, pushing, bullying)

Biting, pushing, bullying will be assessed by the teacher and the Director. The parents of all children involved will be notified. Consequences can include being sent home for the rest of the day; a conference with the parents, teacher, and director; suspension with no tuition credit; or if this behavior continues the school has the right to withdraw the student from the program with no tuition credit.

General Information

2 months-2 years

1. There are no “make-up” days when your child misses his or her regular day.
2. Tuition is required in full even if a child misses several days in a month. The tuition scale is spread out to cover teacher salaries and operating expenses. Therefore, even when we are out for holidays, or have shorter months, full tuition is to be paid.
3. We do our best to keep babies awake for those mothers who do not want their child to take a nap at school.
4. We’ve found the easiest transition of a child coming into a room is for the parents to hand her/him to the teacher over the half door and not come into the room. When a parent comes into a room during the day it generally only upsets the child, as well as others in the room.

5. When a parent is concerned about a crying child, please send another adult back to make a “brief” check. The reappearance of any adult, especially the parent, generally causes the child to be even more upset.

6. Please be patient with the two youngest nurseries. Those in the 9–18-month class have the biggest adjustment of all the children in the program. When the teachers and the Director feel this class is ready to go outside, they will.

7. Mark ALL of your child’s things. This includes cups, pacifiers, bottles, spoons, clothing, bags, etc. Make sure the name is easily seen on the bag. We do our best to get send everything home that comes in.

8. We strongly discourage pacifiers and bottles in the 18–24-month class and up. 18–24-month children need to be able to drink from a cup. This is the age many parents are weaning their toddler from the bottle. When one child comes with a bottle the rest spend the day trying to get it.

9. If you are going to be arriving late with your child and it is after the time when the class has eaten their lunch, you must feed your child their lunch. The teacher cannot stop what they are doing to feed one child lunch after the class has already passed this time in their schedule.

3 years-K5

1. Field trips and school parties depend upon parent participation. Without your assistance the children miss out.

2. We ask that children not bring toys (ex. guns, knives, skates, etc.) to school. It makes your child’s day go smoother if this decision is made at home, rather than in the car as we are trying to unload. If your child has their toy from home, it causes a disruption when others may want it.

3. All children ages 18-24 months and up **MUST** wear shoes. Children are walking back and forth on the sidewalks and on the playground and we do not want them to get hurt.

4. Teachers cannot delay departure for a field trip for a late child. If the parent arrives after the class has left, they must either take the child to the field trip or keep him/her with them until the class returns. We do not have someone to stay with one child while waiting for his class to return.

5. Teacher and classmate requests are considered but cannot always be assured.

6. Arriving at school on time helps the children's day go much smoother. They are on a schedule, and the teacher can't always catch a child up on what he's missed when coming in late.

7. A parent must come early to help children who have activities after school that require changing clothes. The teacher cannot get the class ready to go home and help several change clothes.

8. If you think your child should not go outside during playtime for health reasons, please keep him/her at home that day. We do not have staff to watch one child while the rest in an age group are on the playground.

9. All children must be independently potty trained to be in a 3 and up First School class.

Grievance Procedure

In a preschool setting, a certain amount of conflict and disagreement is likely to occur. If questions and concerns arise, parents are encouraged to discuss issues directly with the Director. In most cases, problems are and can be resolved between the parent and the teacher with no involvement by the Director. If you are dissatisfied with any part of First School, you should take the following steps to make your concerns known:

- Try to resolve the issue with the teacher
- File a written complaint with the Director
- Schedule a conference to discuss your concern with the Teacher and Director to try and solve or correct the problem.

Upon receipt of the written complaint, the Director will make a prompt investigation of the issues and will set a date for a conference with the parties involved as soon as possible. It is in the best interest of all parties for concerns to be solved at the lowest level possible and as quickly as possible. Let's work together to make wonderful memories and help build a strong program!

Class Ratios

At First School we make every effort to keep our ratios in line with DHR, as well as our Safe Sanctuaries policies at First United Methodist Church. We do our best to keep our class ratios even lower to provide your child with more one-on-one attention.

Ratios:

2–9-month classroom- 1:4

9–18-month classroom- 1:5

18–24-month classroom- 1:7

2-year-old classroom- 1:8

3-year-old classroom- 1:11

4-year-old classroom- 1:18

Kindergarten classroom- 1:18

***Please keep in mind these ratios when inquiring to drop-in to a class. If you want to inquire about dropping in, you must discuss this with the Director and not the teacher.**