

The Merry Hearts Preschool

2025-2026 Parent Handbook



Bethesda Presbyterian Church

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Aberdeen, NC 28315

(910) 944-1319

Director: Scarlett Roth (910) 944-1319

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Teachers:

Rebecca Dunn and Haley Bigham (Pre-K)

Scarlett Roth and Sarah McDonald (Threes)

Kim Clark and Angie Underhill (Ones and Twos)

Mission Statement: The goal of our program is to demonstrate and encourage Christian values in a safe and nurturing learning environment for preschool-aged children. Through age-appropriate activities including music, art, hands-on learning centers, and indoor and outdoor play, children will grow and develop academically, socially, spiritually, and physically.

Enrollment/Registration: The Merry Hearts Preschool is open to children who are the age of the class they are entering by August 31, 2025. Once your child is enrolled in The Merry Hearts (TMH), you will be required to pay a **\$150.00 non-refundable registration fee**. This should be paid right away to secure your spot. Your child's registration is complete when his/her registration form has been submitted and non-refundable registration fee has been turned in to the preschool director. Bethesda Presbyterian Church members and past or present preschool families will have priority to any available slots.

Class size:

Ones - Class size will not exceed ten children. We will maintain a 5:1 student/teacher ratio.

Twos/Threes/Pre-K - Class size will typically not exceed twelve children and will never exceed 13. We will maintain a 6:1 student/teacher ratio.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

TUITION:

Ones Class \$1900 annually or \$190.00 per child/month (2 days a week)

Twos Class \$2600 annually or \$260.00 per child/month (3 days a week)

Threes/Pre-K Classes \$3400 annually or \$340.00 per child/month
(5 days a week)

Tuition: Tuition will be due by the 15th of each month from August to May. Payment is accepted by auto draft, cash or check made payable to The Merry Hearts Preschool. With cash payment, please use exact change and place in an envelope. No late payments can be tolerated. **A \$20.00 late fee will be added to tuition paid more than five days after the due date.**

A \$25.00 returned check fee will apply.

Parents should anticipate a modest annual tuition increase of roughly 3%. This adjustment helps us keep pace with the rising cost of living while ensuring we can continue to offer competitive wages for our dedicated teachers and maintain an enriching classroom environment!

Withdrawal: We require thirty days notice, **in writing**, if your child will be leaving the program so that we can fill his/her spot. **Parents/guardians are responsible for any fees due during this four-week period regardless of whether or not the services were used.**

The following must be turned in to the preschool director or submitted on-line prior to the first day of school:

- ✦ 2025/26 Student Registration Fee
- ✦ Copy of Immunization Record (only if not on file OR if updates have been made)
- ✦ Children's Medical Report (only if not on file)

Please make sure that you have completed and submitted all on-line forms prior to first day of school.

**Please supply the following items on your child's first day of school.
Thanks!**

- ✦ **Play-doh brand** play dough (4pack/4 Oz tubs)
- ✦ 1 tray **Crayola** watercolor paints
- ✦ 1 package Card Stock (white or multicolored)
- ✦ 1 bottle **Elmer's** school glue
- ✦ 1 package baby wipes
- ✦ 1 roll of paper towels
- ✦ 1 bottle **foaming** hand soap/refill
- ✦ 1 box of tissues
- ✦ 1 container Clorox Hydrogen Peroxide or other disinfecting wipes (no Seventh Generation please)
- ✦ 1 photo of your child

Throughout the year many parents ask about contributions they can make to the classroom. These contributions are always greatly appreciated! Please speak to your child's teacher or the preschool director about needed items. Thank you!

Daily Supplies: Please label personal items (sweaters, jackets, and hats etc.) with your child's name. Send a labeled, large, zip lock bag with your child that contains a change of clothing (outerwear, underwear, and socks).

Diapering: Ones and Twos Class ONLY You must provide an adequate supply of disposable diapers and wipes for your child. The program does not supply wipes for the purpose of changing diapers. If your child uses cloth diapers please let us know.

Please dress your child in **play** clothes and shoes. If your child is still in diapers, one piece clothing with snaps is best for quick diaper changes.

Provide all necessary hats, mittens, sweaters and coats for cool/cold weather. Do not overdress your child in warm weather. Put sunscreen/bug repellent on your child before he/she arrives at school.

***Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school.** There will be times through-out the year when children will be asked to bring special items from home to share with the class.

Water Bottles: Each child should bring a labeled, reusable water bottle to school each day. Please fill with WATER ONLY.

Ones Class: Children in the Ones class may bring a "sippy cup" but NO baby bottles please.

Snack: We ask that at the beginning of each four weeks (when you pay tuition) each child bring in:

1 class size snack item - Students attending 5 days a week should bring enough snack for 2 days at the beginning of each 4 weeks. Example: One big carton of Goldfish, 2 boxes of Ritz crackers, 2 bunches of bananas...etc.

We love to be able to offer and encourage parents to send in fresh food items as well. If you would like to bring fresh fruit, cheese, yogurt or other perishable food at any time, a refrigerator is available.

Allergies or Special Diets: Please discuss food allergies, other reactions and dietary concerns with us. Depending on your child's situation, you may need to provide a special snack or drink for him/her.

Please note: If a child in your class has a food allergy you will be provided with a "safe snack" list

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:

Drive-thru Drop Off will begin on the first day of school for Twos, Threes and Pre-K students. Students must remain buckled while in the drop off line. Drive thru drop off will begin on Tuesday, September 2nd for students in the Ones Class. Children may be dropped off between 8:25 and 8:35. A map of the traffic pattern for drop off is available if you need it.

Parents **should not** walk their child through or around the drop-off line to the outside door. This is very important to maintaining a safe drop off system.

Drive thru drop off helps to maintain a calm environment and makes it easier for the children to quickly get started on their morning activities.

Preschool hours of operation are from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. The courtyard door will remain locked until the teachers have arrived and set up for the day. Please **do not** use the church office door to enter early. Your child will be dismissed one at a time by the teacher at the classroom door or playground. Please arrive **on time** to pick up your child. We reserve the right to add \$1 per minute for late pick up.

* All classes will hold **"Circle Time"** starting at 8:45 each morning. This is an important part of our day as it sets the tone and theme of the day's activities. We ask that children arrive **prior** to the start of circle time. Preferably during the drop off period between 8:25 and 8:35. We understand that unexpected events can result in late arrival from time to time, however habitual tardiness disrupts this core learning time for all of our students. If a child's tardiness becomes habitual we reserve the right to ask that child's parents to wait until 9:15 or the end of circle time to enter their classroom.

Once your child has been released to you at the end of the school day please make sure that they are directly supervised. For their safety, **no child should be unattended** in the classrooms, hallways, picnic shelter, etc..

Release to Non-Parent: We will not release your child to anyone but a parent without advance notice. Please let the caregiver know your intentions to have a non-parent pick up your child. If someone other than you drops your child off and will be picking him/her up, please notify the caregiver when the child arrives.

Parents in the Classroom: We love to have parents volunteer in our classrooms. Throughout the year there will be many opportunities for you to come in and help out with special events or activities.

Inclement Weather Procedure: The Merry Hearts will follow the Moore County Schools Traditional Calendar for holidays and their policies on inclement weather. If they are 1 hour delayed we will open from 9:30 - 11:30 am. If they are two hours delayed we will open from 10:30 - 11:30. **Days off due to inclement weather will not be made up and tuition will remain the same.**

Illness: Sick children may not under any circumstances attend school. If your child is coughing, sneezing, has a runny nose or a fever they may not attend. The child may only return to class after 24 hours without fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or symptoms of illness. Parents are required to notify the preschool whenever a child has been exposed to or contracts a contagious disease such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc. or has been found to have head lice. Please respect the other children and families by not sending a sick child to school.

If your child becomes ill or we feel your child is too ill to be at school, we will call you immediately to pick him/her up. In case of any serious illness/accident where the parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached, the teacher and/or any church assistant will seek medical treatment as stated on your child's registration form.

Any student returning to school before the 24-hour time limit for fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or severe cough and cold symptoms MUST show the teacher a doctors note before being dropped off for the morning.

Our staff, as a general policy, will not administer medication. If you have an exceptional case please contact us to discuss your situation.

Immunizations: In coordination with The State of North Carolina and their immunization laws, it is the policy of The Merry Hearts Preschool that all enrolled children must present documentation of up to date immunization status, including month, day, and year of each immunization prior to their first day of school. Questions about state-required immunizations should be directed to the Moore County Health Department by calling (910)947-3300. Additional information is available through the [NC Department of Health and Human Services](#).

Potty Training: We require that children entering the 3 year old class be potty trained. For health reasons it is our policy that no child's clothes be wet. If dry clothing is not available then we will call you to pick up your child. Children are taken to the restroom at scheduled times during the morning and when they tell the caregiver. Please let your child's teacher know about any special potty needs he/she may have. Teachers are always available for encouragement and assistance.

If your child is in the 3 year old class and is not potty trained and in underwear, you will be required to keep them home until they are trained.

Tuition will remain the same while you are at home training. In a school setting this policy is necessary in order to protect teaching time for the other children in the class. A 4-week paid written notice is still required prior to withdrawal from the program. Thank you for your understanding.

Napping: There are no facilities to provide naps for your child. If your child is still taking a morning nap, please pick up your child prior to the morning nap. We will work with you to help your child transition into staying for the entire session.

Merry Hearts Preschool

Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of the behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, the staff of The Merry Hearts Preschool will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy:

We:

- DO praise, reward and encourage the children.
- DO reason with and set limits for the children.
- DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
- DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
- DO listen to the children.
- DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
- DO provide children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
- DO treat the children with respect in responding to their needs, wants and feelings.
- DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
- DO explain things to children on their levels.
- DO use short, supervised periods of "time-in"
- DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.

We:

- DO NOT spank or otherwise physically punish the children.
- DO NOT yell at, criticize or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
- DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
- DO NOT deny food as punishment.
- DO NOT leave the children alone, unattended or without supervision

"Time-in" is the removal of a child for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes) from a situation in which the child has not responded to other discipline techniques. The "time-in" space is located in the classroom seated with the teacher. During "time-in," the child has the chance to talk about what led to his/her removal from the group. The teacher discusses the the incident and helps the child recognize alternative problem solving strategies. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown the other children.

The Merry Hearts School Policies

Any violation of these policies will result in a written warning to be kept in your file. A second violation could result in immediate dismissal from the program.

1. Child behaves aggressively (biting, hitting, pushing, etc.) and does not respond to the classrooms Behavior Management Strategies. Any incidents occurring, resulting in physical harm, will be documented with an incident report for all students involved. For example: If a biting occurs, an incident report will be completed for the student who bit and the student who was bitten. The incident report will be kept in the child's file
2. Child's behavior is frequently disruptive and is a distraction for other children in the group.
3. Dropping your child off before 8:25 a.m.
4. Failure to pick up your child promptly at 11:30 a.m.
5. Dropping off children who are not enrolled in TMH.
6. Bringing a sick child to school.
7. Failure to pay tuition by due date.
8. Failure to provide required forms/paperwork.
9. Bringing pets into the building or onto the premises of TMH playground.
10. Failure to comply with any requests that the teacher/director makes of you that she believes to be in the best interest with respect to your child's participation in school (behavioral issues, etc.).
11. Any abuse of the teacher's time, blatant disrespect for the teacher or any lack of parental cooperation in keeping with the spirit of the program not specified above. Warnings will be issued to parents who do not comply with the friendly and respectful spirit of The Merry Hearts.