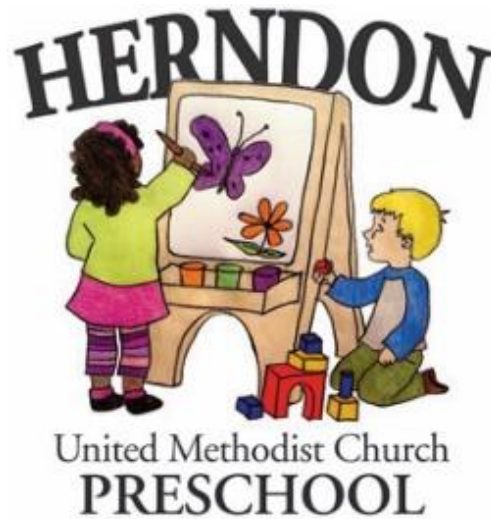


Parent Handbook



Educating Young Minds in Herndon for over 25 Years

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WELCOME

Our Program

HUMC Preschool welcomes 2–5-year-old children without regard to race, color, creed, or religion. The school year runs from September through May, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm (with an optional extended Lunch Bunch Day until 2:00), and generally follows the Fairfax County Public School calendar. Children must be toilet trained, except for our 2-year-old classes.

Philosophy

Preschool children develop in many ways, including physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. At Herndon United Methodist Church Preschool, the goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment, giving each child the room, the guidance, and the encouragement to develop confidence through active participation in carefully designed activities. There will be opportunities to play and learn; to be curious creatively; to feel success through achievement in an atmosphere of faith, hope, and love.

Goals

To emphasize the importance of relationships with peers, teachers, staff, and other adults by:

- learning to share and work in a group setting
- promoting, modeling, and supporting appropriate social behaviors
- feeling care and acceptance from his/her peers

To focus on a healthy self-image, a sense of worth, and providing the security children need by:

- promoting their creativity and self-expression
- supporting children in experiencing success and developing self-confidence
- helping children develop self-control and independence

To prepare each child for future learning experiences socially, cognitively, emotionally and physically by:

- making a successful transition from home to school
- developing an interest and joy for learning
- learning through their senses through developmentally appropriate activities

To experience the environment around them and to better understand their place in it by:

- feeling success through achievements in an atmosphere of faith, hope, and love
- honoring the many cultures our preschool welcomes
- becoming active participants in their preschool community

Facility

Herndon United Methodist Church built its original building in 1987. The addition to HUMC was built in 2006 and houses the Sawyer Education Center consisting of a library and church classrooms, the Doe Fellowship Hall, and a kitchen. The Preschool occupies thirteen of the classrooms in the original building with occasional use of other rooms in both buildings.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum

At Herndon United Methodist Preschool, we believe that young children learn best through play. Our curriculum is centered around a play-based learning approach, where children engage in meaningful, hands-on experiences that promote their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

What Is Play-Based Learning?

Play-based learning combines child-led exploration with intentional teaching. While children are encouraged to follow their interests and imagination during play, educators provide guidance, structure, and rich learning opportunities through carefully designed environments and activities.

This approach helps children:

- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Strengthen language and communication abilities
- Practice cooperation, empathy, and emotional regulation
- Explore early math, science, and literacy concepts in a natural way
- Build confidence, creativity, and independence

How It Works in the Classroom

Each day, children have access to a variety of learning centers, both indoors and outdoors, including:

- Dramatic play
- Blocks and construction
- Art and sensory exploration
- Literacy and storytelling areas
- Music and movement
- Nature and science investigation

Our educators observe and interact with children during play, using open-ended questions and gentle guidance to extend their thinking and deepen their understanding. Activities are thoughtfully planned around themes and skills aligned with early childhood development benchmarks.

Why Play Matters

Play is the natural way children make sense of the world. When they pretend, build, explore, and create, they are:

- Practicing real-world skills
- Making decisions and solving problems
- Expressing themselves and their emotions
- Building foundational academic knowledge in meaningful ways

Through play, your child becomes an active learner—curious, capable, and confident. In addition to planning for play-based learning experiences we weave the following research based curriculum supports into our daily routines:

[Handwriting Without Tears](#) is a developmentally appropriate handwriting program designed to help preschool children build foundational writing skills through fun, multisensory activities. The program emphasizes correct pencil grip, letter formation, and pre-writing skills using hands-on tools. HWT focuses on teaching capital letters first, which are easier for young learners, and gradually introduces writing through structured play and simple, consistent strategies. The goal is to make handwriting joyful and accessible while supporting fine motor development and classroom readiness.

[Conscious Discipline](#) is a social-emotional learning program that helps preschool children develop self-regulation, problem-solving, and healthy relationships in a safe, supportive environment. Conscious Discipline teaches children how to identify emotions, express them appropriately, and resolve conflicts. Through daily routines, modeling, and classroom practices children learn empathy, cooperation, and responsibility. Conscious Discipline also fosters a strong school family culture, encouraging connection between teachers, children, and parents to create a nurturing foundation for lifelong learning and emotional well-being.

[The Ages and Stages Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#) is a developmental screening tool used to monitor a child's growth in key areas such as communication, motor skills, problem-solving, and social-emotional development. Completed by parents or caregivers, the ASQ provides a quick and accurate snapshot of a child's progress and helps identify any areas that may need extra support. It is a valuable way for parents and teachers to work together in supporting development.

Typical Daily Schedule

Morning Meeting	Welcome, greeting, calendar, weather, songs, sharing, stories, classroom jobs, exploration of theme
Centers	Blocks, manipulatives, dramatic play, library, writing, easel painting, sensory table, science, music, listening, art, etc.
Project Time	Small group or one-to-one activity to extend thematic learning and develop fine motor, language, and cognitive skills
Snack	Each child shares in the fun of being the "snack passer" when it is his/her turn to provide the class with a healthy snack.
Playground	Outdoor playground or gym if weather does not permit outdoor play
Imagination Garden	Open-ended play nature-based activities in our outdoor classroom
Art & Music Classes	Weekly time with a dedicated Art or Music teacher for art exploration or music and movement fun
Monthly Story Time	Monthly stories and song with the church staff
Lunch Bunch	An optional program that allows the student to stay until 2:00, eat their lunch, and play with friends.

Supporting Positive Behavior

At Herndon United Methodist Church Preschool, our discipline policy is based on our belief that positive interactions between adults and children is essential. Children develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline when adults and others communicate with them in a positive and understanding manner. We use [Conscious Discipline](#) to support students social and emotional development:

- Adults model positive behavior. We show that we can accept, control, and express feelings in direct and helpful ways; we let children know that it is okay to experience intense emotions and we can use strategies to foster self-regulation.
- Teachers design the physical environment to minimize conflict. We provide multiples of toys and materials for groups of children, define classroom and outdoor areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play.
- Teachers maintain age-appropriate expectations for children's behavior. We minimize waiting and transition times and limit the length of large group and teacher-directed activity times according to children's developmental levels.
- Teachers establish simple rules, or expectations, for the classroom community. Children participate in this process early in the school year. When issues arise, adults and children problem solve together.
- Adults closely observe and supervise children's activities and interactions. With our high ratios of adults to children and our emphasis on attentive observation, we can support social emotional learning.
- Adults help children verbalize their feelings, frustrations, and concerns. The staff will help children describe problems, generate possible solutions, and think through logical consequences for their actions.

A child may be taken to the Preschool Office for a brief time if he/she needs a space outside of the classroom to calm down. If the child remains upset or out of control for an extended period, a parent will be called, and the child may be sent home for the day.

STAFF

Staff Qualifications and Continuity

Staff members are carefully selected for their previous teaching experiences, early childhood education background, and dedication to the unique needs of the young child. All staff participate in continuing education classes to stay current on best practices.

The continuity of HUMC Preschool's staffing is important for children, families, and the school's team. Teachers are assigned to a specific classroom. Substitute teachers provide necessary coverage within a specific room as needed to cover staff absences and unexpected emergency situations. This provides the opportunity for teachers to develop relationships with the children and other teachers. All staffing assignments are based on the school's needs.

Licensing Requirements

HUMC Preschool is licensed under the *Commonwealth of Virginia Code of Licensing* by the Department of Social Services. Based on licensing:

- The Preschool ensures that there will be an EMAT (Emergency Medication Administration Training) certified person on the premises during school hours, allowing for the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Most of the staff are EMAT certified, allowing for the administration of emergency injections of epinephrine. It is the goal of the Preschool to certify all new staff members in EMAT as soon as possible. The EMAT training received was approved by the Virginia State Board of Nursing and meets all VA Dept. of Social Service Requirements.
- Staff receive CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) & Rescue Breathing training.
- Staff receive First Aid training and Daily Health Observation training.
- All staff are screened for Tuberculosis.
- All staff are required to obtain 16 hours of continuing education each year.
- Criminal Record Finger Printing and Child Abuse/Neglect registry checks are conducted on all employees.
- The Preschool meets fire, safety, health and building codes.
- Staff-child ratios requirements are met.
- Record keeping requirements are maintained to provide a safe and secure environment.
- Staff qualifications are documented.
- The Preschool complies with all requirements for equipment and materials as mandated by the VA Dept. of Social Services
- The Preschool is subject to announced and unannounced visits by licensed staff within the Department of Social Services
- Any teacher employed in a private school who has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately to the local Department of the County or City wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline.
- Our center stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families, and our teachers. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our center. This practice is in accordance with one of the primary ethical principles of professional behavior in early childhood settings.
- If you have a concern and feel that you have not received satisfactory results from the HUMCP staff and administration, you may call the Department of Social Services of the Commonwealth of Virginia: 703-934-1505.

ENROLLMENT

Registration

Current students, alumni and members of Herndon United Methodist Church have priority registration. Priority registration for these children begins in late January or early February for the coming school year. Following the priority registration, a lottery registration is held to fill any remaining openings for the coming school year and will continue throughout the year if space is available.

Toilet Training

Children must be in underwear (not pull-ups) and be able to handle their own bathroom needs to be considered toilet trained. Toilet-trained children are expected to be able to do the following on their own:

- Decide when they need to use the toilet
- Get their body onto the toilet
- Pull down and up own pants/skirt/underwear
- Wipe/clean with toilet paper
- Have sufficient "aim" to keep clothing and floor dry

Because children should be able to independently pull up and down their pants, please be sure they wear clothing that they can manage themselves. Elastic waist bands are encouraged. Difficult buttons, overalls, and belts are discouraged.

We expect that three and four-year-old children will have occasional accidents. Teachers will keep a record of the accidents, inform the family of them, and discuss with the family what might be causing them. If accidents continue to occur, a meeting may be scheduled to discuss goals and suggest prevention methods that can be put into place. If excessive accidents continue to occur, the child cannot remain enrolled. Families will have the option of paying to hold the space to complete the toilet training process.

Forms and Documentation

All forms are available on our website www.herndonumcpreschool.com.

The following forms are required for your child to be ready for school:

- Application
- Contract
- On-line Registration and Emergency Health
- Proof of Identity

ORIGINAL Birth Certificate or Passport presented to a HUMC Preschool office staff member. Due to licensure, we need to see the original copy. We do not keep originals or copies on file. If you are a returning student and we have already verified identity, you do not need to provide this again.

- Virginia School Entrance Health Form

For returning students who have already submitted this form, it is only required if there are updates.

Additional forms that may be required:

- HUMC Preschool Medication Administration Form

Required if your child needs to have medication at school (i.e., requires an EpiPen). Detailed instructions are included with the form.

Optional forms:

- ACH for automatic payments (recommended)
- Lunch Bunch

Termination policy

It is Herndon United Methodist Church Preschool's policy to review continued enrollment at the Preschool. If the experience is no longer positive for the child or the Preschool, we reserve the right to restrict attendance or terminate enrollment if the situation cannot be resolved.

TUITION & BILLING INFORMATION

Fees and Payments

Standard annual fees include:

1. Application fee
Not refundable if class placement has been made.
2. Advanced Tuition
The Advanced Tuition payment is due no later than May 1st prior to the start of the school year (unless enrolling after that date, then it is due immediately). This payment will be credited to your May tuition. If this payment is not received, your child's place in the Preschool will be forfeited.
3. One-time Activity Fee
Nonrefundable fee due with your September tuition payment.
4. Monthly tuition, September through April
Tuition payments received after the 1st, or past the first day of the month your child attends, will incur a \$25 late fee.

How to make payments:

1. Sign up for ACH automatic payments
2. Check to HUMC Preschool
3. Cash

If you are not using the automatic payment system, you may drop your payment in the secure drop box by the Preschool entry, place in your child's school bag, or mail to 701 Bennett St., Herndon, VA 20170.

Additional information about fees:

- Siblings will receive a discount on the monthly tuition.
- There will be a \$25 charge for any returned check.
- We reserve the right to assess a \$25 fee, per occurrence, for children who are repeatedly not picked up on time.
- If your child is withdrawn from the program during the school year for any reason, and you wish to reenroll him/her, there will be a \$100 reenrollment fee.

Scholarships

A scholarship program is available for those in need of financial assistance. Please contact the Preschool Director for information.

Withdrawals, Extended Leave, and Refunds

You must provide **written notice** of any intent to withdraw or take an extended leave. Without written notice, any type of refund will be voided.

Withdrawals

Before July 1 st	Full refund of Advanced Tuition.
After July 1 st , but prior to the start of the school year	No refund.
After the start of the school year, and prior to March 1 st	A thirty-day period will still incur charges. Advanced Tuition may be applied to cover this charge.
March 1 st and after	You will be responsible for 30 days of tuition and will also forfeit the Advanced Tuition.

Extended Leave

With notification to the school	Tuition must be paid to retain the child's place.
Without notification to the school	The Preschool reserves the right to begin termination procedures after 2 weeks. If termination occurs, 30 days of tuition from the termination date is due and Advanced Tuition will be forfeited.

DAILY ROUTINES & NEEDS

Attendance and Timely Arrival

Consistent attendance is critical to the success of your child. While we understand that illnesses and travel may occasionally prevent your child from attending, we ask that you prioritize their attendance so that they can fully access the curriculum. The school day begins at 9:00am. Please make every effort to arrive on time so that your child can participate in important morning welcome, routines and rituals. If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent your children from arriving on time, please let his/her teacher know.

School Bags

Each child will receive one tote bag from the school. Encourage your child to carry it to school each day to bring home papers and projects. Children may bring toys to school only on his/her designated sharing day. Sharing days will start later in the school year, with procedures in place to keep materials clean. Please do not allow your child to bring weapon-oriented toys and articles to Preschool. Please do not send hand sanitizer in or attached to your child's school bag.

Clothing

Washable play clothes that can get dirty are ideal for Preschool. Each class has playground time daily, so please keep the outside temperature in mind when dressing your child for the day. **Please send appropriate outdoor wear for the season, such as hats, hooded jackets, and mittens.** Students should also wear suitable closed toe shoes for outdoor play. *We discourage cowboy boots, clogs, backless shoes, and sandals.* Umbrellas are not allowed for safety reasons. We request that jewelry remain at home, as it tends to get lost or broken. A change of clothing for every season should be kept at school (shorts, pants, t-shirt, long sleeved shirt, socks, several pairs of underwear). **Please label all items of clothing clearly with your child's name.**

Sunscreen and Insect Repellant

We will not apply sunscreen or insect repellant to a child. If a parent wishes to have these applied to their child, they should apply them before coming to school.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is an optional program that requires advance registration and payment. Lunch Bunch will be offered every day beginning the first full week of school. It offers the opportunity for your child to stay until 2:00 PM, eat lunch, and play with friends. Lunch is brought from home and must be nut free. Space is limited, with sign-ups offered on an annual, semi-annual, monthly, or weekly/drop-in basis. If you are signing up for a weekly or drop-in, you must contact the Preschool office to confirm availability. Lunch Bunch Registration Forms are posted on our website, and pricing is dependent on when you register. If you choose to register for Lunch Bunch, complete the registration form and send it to the Preschool office with payment. If you are signed up for ACH, you can elect to pay your Lunch Bunch fees automatically by writing 'use ACH' on your form.

Refunds or credits will not be given for absences. If we are closed because Fairfax County Public Schools are closed for inclement weather, we will offer credit for another Lunch Bunch session if available. Prorated refunds will only be given to families who are withdrawing from the Preschool program, have given a 30-day notice, and all other financial obligations have been met.

Snack and Food Allergy Procedures

HERNDON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS A NUT FREE BUILDING. ALL SNACKS ARE TO BE FREE OF NUTS AND NUT PRODUCTS. PLEASE READ THE INGREDIENTS CAREFULLY. IT IS OUR POLICY TO NOT SERVE A SNACK THAT LISTS ANY NUT AS AN INGREDIENT OR THAT STATES IT IS PROCESSED IN A PLANT THAT PROCESSES ANY NUT PRODUCTS.

Parents are required to provide a snack from home. Please send in healthy and nutritious snacks (examples: fresh fruit, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, etc.). Please do not send in anything that needs to be refrigerated. Keep in mind snack time is only ten to fifteen minutes long. When sending in snack, please keep your child's snack in a separate container clearly marked with your child's name and the date written on the container.

Nut free foods

We will not serve food that lists any nut as an ingredient or that states it is processed in a plant that processes any nut products as this can be a potentially life-threatening situation for a child with a nut allergy. Please read ingredient labels carefully and avoid peanuts, tree nuts, coconut, peanut butter, nut oils, and nut traces. Food that does not contain nuts in its ingredients may be processed in a plant that processes foods that do contain nuts, which causes cross-contamination. Cross-contaminated foods are inappropriate for people with nut allergies. For children with food allergies, strict avoidance is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction. If your child brings in a snack labeled that it has nuts or is manufactured in a plant that processes any nut products, we will have to send that snack back home with your child and an alternative snack will be served. We often get donuts for celebrations or fast food at Lunch Bunch. Please be mindful that most fresh donuts are processed in a facility with nuts and nearly all fast-food products are cooked in peanut oil or oil that has a risk of nut contamination. Therefore, we cannot serve donuts or fast food.

Choking Hazards

Per licensing regulations, children three years of age or younger may not be offered foods that are potential choking hazards. Please be mindful when sending in fresh fruit or vegetables that they need to be cut and sliced in a manner to reduce choking hazards. Here are some alternative food choices:

Instead of popcorn-----puff corned snacks
Instead of whole grapes/fruit -----quartered grapes/fruit
Instead of large apple slices----thinly sliced apples
Instead of baby carrots/celery-----matchstick sliced veggies

Birthdays

Students may bring a special treat to share with the class to celebrate his/her birthday. The snack must be in an individual, prepacked container and not in need of refrigeration. Options include fruit snacks, Little Bites Muffins, cookie packs or special granola bars. Due to Department of Health regulations, home baked goods are not permitted.

Each classroom manages summer birthdays in a unique manner, some choose to celebrate mid-year, others choose to squeeze the summer birthdays all into May (in addition to other birthdays). Since each teaching team handles summer birthdays in a unique manner they

share their approach during their back to school night presentation to families. ***Party invitations and goodie bags may not be sent into school by parents for distribution to classmates when celebrating birthdays or other holidays.***

Parties and special occasions

Classes will have special events throughout the year, and some may involve parent helpers. Your child's teacher will provide information about special events and if help or items are needed. Please check with your child's teacher before sending food or materials into the classroom. It is our school policy that we will not send any outside food items home with children.

Food Allergies

The Preschool will maintain a list of all children who have any type of food allergy. Medication Authorization forms will need to be completed for children who have any type of medication, such as an EpiPen or Benadryl.

Screening and Referral Policy

HUMC Preschool works closely with Child Find. Child Find is a program connected with the public school system that identifies, locates, and evaluates children who may need special education and related services. Child Find resource teachers and other specialists consult with our teachers, helping individual children increase their success in present and future school activities. Our teachers are experienced with working with children all along the developmental continuum and can recognize signs that your child would benefit from additional support. If a teacher has any reason to believe that your child's success in school is affected by any factors, they will ask you to call Child Find. **This needs to take place within two weeks of the request.** Parents will be sent questionnaires to complete and then schedule an appointment for developmental screening to be completed. After the parent has met with Child Find, they will schedule a meeting to discuss with the child's teacher. Students will then be assessed to make sure our preschool is the best place for the student. Early intervention is the best as it provides tools and strategies for the child and the family.

Fairfax County Child Find: 703-456-2200

Loudoun County Child Find: 571-252-2800

Additional Classroom Support

Based on the outcome of parent/teacher meetings, the school reserves the right to recommend a privately trained "shadow," to be paid for by the parent, to work one-on-one with their child in order for them to continue their child's education at HUMC Preschool. Should recommendations be made in reference to your child's behavior, the Director and your child's teacher will meet to share any additional referral services.

CARPOOL: ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Carpool

We encourage all parents to use the carpool drop off, as it has been designed for the safety of our children as well as your convenience. Please familiarize yourself with the carpool procedures and map prior to the start of school.

Carpool Procedures

Using the Carpool Line

Drop Off

- **Safety is our primary concern during drop-off.**
- Enter the church parking lot from Bennett Street and drive single file around the building to the set of double doors (door #7) at the back of the building.
- Reduce speed to 10 miles per hour as soon as you enter the parking lot and until you've exited the parking lot.
- Carpool is a single file line. Do not pass other cars waiting in the line.
- End all cell phone conversations.
- As you are progressing through the line, please unbuckle children prior to their turn to exit.
- Be sure your car is in 'park' when it is your child's turn to exit.
- Staff members will open car doors and assist children. Do not open doors for children or allow children to exit the car without a staff member.
- Children will only be removed from the right side (passenger side) of the car.

Pick Up

- **Safety is our primary concern during pickup.**
- The pickup line is formed the same way the drop-off line is formed, and safety protocols are the same.
- You will be given a card with your "carpool number."
- Have your "carpool number" visible.
- A staff member will bring your child to your car.
- Afternoon (dismissal) carpool begins at 12:25.

Please adhere to Virginia's Child Restraint Device Law: Child restraint devices are required for children through the age of seven (until 8th birthday). Safety seats must be properly used and approved to meet Department of Transportation standards. Children can no longer ride unrestrained in the rear cargo area of vehicles. Children age 8 through age 17 (until age 18) must be belted correctly in vehicle safety belts.

If carpool has been completed, you must walk to the door, ring the call button, and wait for a staff member.

Walking Your Child to the Door

Drop Off

- If you are driving, please enter through the Dranesville Road entryway. DO NOT drive around cars waiting in the carpool line to park your car. Do not park in handicap spots.
- Park your car and carefully cross the parking lot to the far end (closest to the blacktop cul-de-sac area) of the sidewalk.
- If you are walking and are coming from the Bennett Street side, use the sidewalk that goes past the playground to walk around the building.
- Walk your child all the way to the Preschool door and wait until a staff member can greet your child and help them enter the building. Do not let your child walk by themselves down the sidewalk.

Pick Up

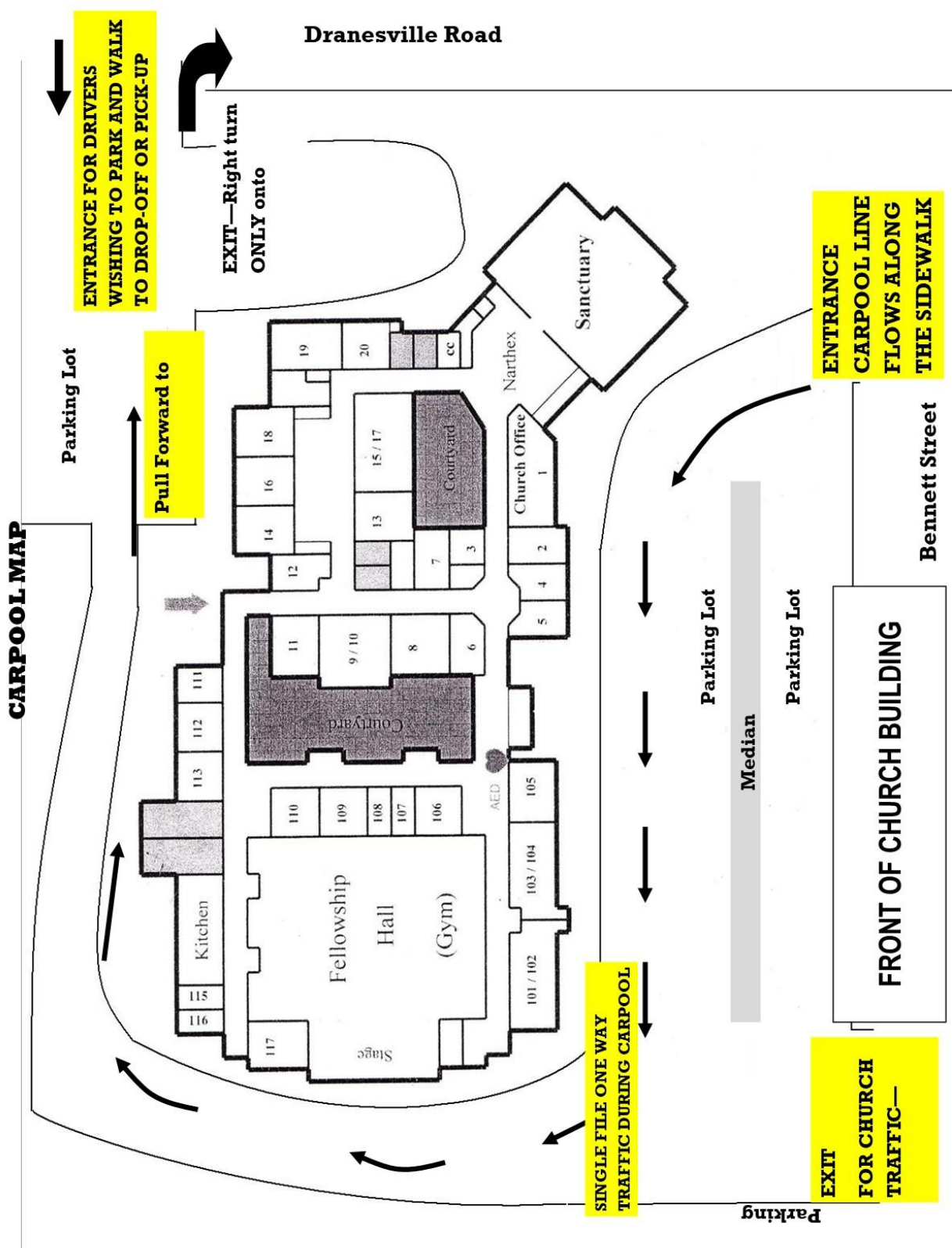
- If you are driving, please enter through the Dranesville Road entryway. DO NOT drive around cars waiting in the carpool line to park your car. Do not park in handicap spots.
- If you are walking and are coming from the Bennett Street side, use the sidewalk that goes past the playground to walk around the building.
- Wait outside the preschool doors in front of the handicap spots.
- Be sure you have your carpool number and hold it up for staff to see.

Changes in Pick Up Routine

- When someone other than your regular carpool person is picking up your child, you must notify us in writing. Your child will only be released to persons you have authorized in writing on your Registration Form/Emergency Care Form, or written notice and identification will be required from these persons.

If you need to pick up your child early from school, we ask that you arrive before 12:15

Carpool Map



Authorization for Pick Up

Children will only be released to those people included on their authorized pick-up list.

Late Pick Up

Any child remaining at the end of carpool dismissal will be brought to the Preschool office to wait to be picked up. The pickup person must ring the call button and come to the office to pick up the child. We reserve the right to assess a \$25 fee per occurrence for children who are repeatedly not picked up by school dismissal time.

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Communication

HUMC Preschool encourages open communication between staff, parents, and the Director. There will be an opportunity for you to schedule parent-teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring. In addition, a parent may request a conference anytime during the year. While we strive for open communication, arrival and departure times are not appropriate times for Parent/Teacher conversations. If there is an urgent situation that you feel would be beneficial for your teacher to know before the start of the school day, please notify the Preschool office and we will be sure to relay the message.

Teachers will use email as a primary way to communicate with families. Monthly calendars and weekly or biweekly updates will be sent. Paper copies of calendars will also be sent home. During the school day, teachers have limited access to communication devices. Should you need to get a message to a teacher during the day, please contact the main Preschool office. During the week please allow at least 24 hours for staff to return messages or answer emails. Over weekends and holidays, please allow 24 hours after the return to school.

To reduce our thumbprint on the earth, HUMC Preschool communicates mainly via email and postings on our website. Please be sure we have your correct email address and notify us of any changes. We are happy to provide paper copies to those who request them.

It is our policy to only send home information related to HUMC Preschool or HUMC. We are unable to send home information from outside sources. HUMC has many activities which may be of interest to our preschool families. If you would like to be added to the Church email distribution, please send an email to the church office at office@herndonumc.org.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to participate in the child's Preschool experience. The staff looks forward to developing a partnership with parents to create unity and continuity in the child's life. Parents may assist by helping in the classroom or office and by sharing their individual talents and interests in many other ways.

Preschool Parent Association

We welcome and encourage all parents to be active in our Preschool Parent Association (PPA). The PPA organizes special events for the children and Preschool parents and assists with Preschool activities.

Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we are not always able to invite siblings to Preschool events. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing siblings to a preschool event.

Classroom Parents: Each class will have a designated Classroom Parent(s). This parent will be the Preschool Parent Association (PPA) representative to the class and will help to coordinate PPA activities. The Classroom Parent will attend the PPA meetings in order to share information with their class. The parent may be asked to coordinate other activities by the classroom teacher. Teachers will ask for a volunteer(s) for this position at the beginning of the school year.

TECHNOLOGY

School Pictures

All children will have an opportunity to have their school pictures taken during the school year. The purchase of individual or class pictures is optional. In addition to school pictures, photographs are taken throughout the year during the school day and at special events. Occasionally, pictures may be used in classroom photo albums, slideshows, school promotional material, school website or our Facebook page. When using photos of our children, names will not be used to identify them. **If you do not want your child's picture to be taken or used for any of these purposes, please notify the Preschool office in writing.**

Social Media

For the safety and well-being of the whole Preschool community, please use discretion and do not use the name of the Preschool or the names of other children when sharing photos or information online.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should be put away during drop-off and pick-up and when volunteering in the school. There will be special occasions when the use of cell phones and taking pictures will be permitted.

HEALTH

When to Keep a Child Home

The guidelines that follow are designed to tell you when your child must stay home from school. However, if your child feels unwell, is uncomfortable, and cannot participate in class, the HUMC Preschool staff will send your child home even if fever, vomiting, or other significant symptoms are not present. For the safety of our community, children who have been ill should not return to school until they are 100% symptom free for the specified period as indicated in the guidelines. If a child comes back to school too soon, he or she will be sent home. We know children are eager to return to their friends, but it is hard to learn when they are still tired and feeling unwell. We will look forward to welcoming your child back when they are fully well!

Illnesses Guidelines:

If your child feels unwell, we may call you to pick up your child even if these guidelines are not met.

1. Fever- Your child must be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication and have no other symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. A fever is a temp over 101.
2. Vomiting – Any occurrence of vomiting will result in your child being sent home. Your child must be able to keep food and liquids down for 24 hours and have no other symptoms before returning to school.
3. Diarrhea – Any occurrence of diarrhea will result in your child being sent home. Your child must be diarrhea free with no other symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.
4. Strep Infection or on an antibiotic – Your child must be on a prescribed antibiotic for 24 hours and be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If unmedicated, the child's health care provider must provide written documentation stating the child is not contagious and is able to attend school.
5. Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye – When a child has red eyes or eyes with drainage, they are required to see their doctor and have the condition diagnosed and treated for 24 hours before returning to school.
6. Rashes – Any rash on your child that is unidentifiable will be required to be diagnosed by your physician. If the rash is contagious, we require that your child be treated for a minimum of 24 hours or the amount of time that your physician prescribes before returning to school.
7. Runny nose – If a child has a thick green and gunky nasal discharge they must stay home.
8. Cough – If a child has a severe cough (gets red or blue in the face, makes a high-pitched croup or whooping sound while coughing) they must stay home.
9. Earache, red eyes, and sore throat – A child should be kept at home if they exhibit any of these symptoms. If any of these symptoms develop during the school day, they will be sent home.
10. Head lice – If live lice or nits are discovered you must notify the preschool office. A child who has head lice may not return to school until the child has been treated with an appropriate head lice treatment and is nit free.
11. New medications – to be aware of any adverse reaction, please keep your child home for 24 hours before sending them to school when they are taking a new medication.
12. Please inform your child's teacher of any allergies your child has so we can accurately observe symptoms.
13. If your child is uncomfortable or overtired and unable to participate in class, regardless of other symptoms, they should stay home.

Child Becomes Sick at School

The Preschool staff has been trained in Daily Health Observations. On arrival, teachers are assessing children to determine if there is cause for additional attention. Cold-like symptoms, rashes, temperature, etc. will all be assessed and re-evaluated throughout the day if necessary.

If your child becomes sick at school, a staff member will take care of them until you arrive. The school will first call parents at home and/or at work. If parents cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts that you provided.

Health Check

You may be asked some health-related questions before leaving your child in our care. If your child has a fever or other symptoms at drop-off, they will not be allowed to attend school until they are symptom free for the specified period in the guidelines. You must not use fever-reducing medications before bringing your child to school. So that we can track the presence of illness within the school, if your child is sick, you must contact the office to inform us of your child's symptoms. This allows us to be aware of illnesses occurring in our student population.

Communicable Diseases

All communicable diseases (i.e., chickenpox, fifth disease, hand-foot-mouth disease, strep throat, lice, influenza, COVID-19, etc.) should be reported to the office as soon as possible. We follow the recommendations of the Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School Personnel provided by the Virginia Department of Health regarding exclusion and admission to school.

Pandemic Outbreak

The Preschool will follow the *Fairfax County Pandemic Response Plan* if the need arises. If all county schools are closed, Herndon United Methodist Preschool will also close. The Preschool will also close if the number of ill students at Preschool exceeds 20% or if an appropriate teacher/student ratio cannot be maintained. If HUMC Preschool is closed, school days will not be made up.

COVID Specific Health Information

Due to the changing COVID situation, we must all take precautions to protect our community from illness and be flexible with our procedures. We will follow best practices as outlined by the CDC and the Fairfax County Health Department when making decisions surrounding our COVID policies. We understand and acknowledge that young children are often unable to wear a well-fitting mask effectively or for extended periods of time. When applying CDC guidelines, we will consider your child's capacity to wear a mask. **These are subject to change at any time.**

SAFETY

Security

Preschool doors will be kept locked at all times. This policy has been instituted for the safety and protection of our preschool children. Though our doors are physically locked, we retain our “open door” policy. When coming into the Preschool, parents will need to press the call button located outside the Preschool main entrance and a staff member will let you in.

Insurance

HUMC Preschool has liability insurance.

Child Abuse and Neglect/Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma

Child abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of a child. The abuse may come from many sources including parents, siblings, and caregivers outside the home. The injury or harm done to children in today's society is of great concern to us all. Child abuse may take the form of physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse. Our staff is trained to recognize any abuse and to help to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma. Staff will be trained to recognize the potential signs and symptoms and learn strategies for coping, including a crying or distraught child. As part of our licensing requirements, our staff are trained annually in child abuse and neglect reporting. The school staff has a moral and legal responsibility to protect children from suspected abuse.

Inclement Weather and Delayed Openings

We typically follow the Fairfax County Public School schedule for closings due to inclement weather, however the final decision is at the Director's discretion. Fairfax County schedule changes due to inclement weather are broadcast on most major radio stations, local network TV stations and Fairfax County School TV (cable TV – Channel 21). You can also sign up for the Fairfax County Public School Keep in Touch Service, which delivers email messages to you regarding school closings and delays. To sign up for this service, visit www.fcps.edu and click on the “Keep In Touch” button.

HUMC Preschool will make every effort to email families when we have a change in our schedule. In general, here is the schedule we will follow:

Fairfax County Public Schools	HUMC Preschool
Closed	Closed
2-hour delay	1-hour delay (10:00 AM start) 12:30 regular dismissal
2-hour early release	Regular hours

It is our policy NOT to make up days lost due to inclement weather. However, should the number of days be excessive, holiday and/or year-end schedules may be adjusted, based on availability.

Outdoor Play Policy

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily program and provides children with opportunities for physical activity, exploration, and fresh air. Whenever possible, children will go outside each day. Families should ensure that children come to school dressed appropriately for the weather, including coats, hats, gloves, and suitable footwear.

Cold Weather Guidelines

To help ensure children's safety and comfort, outdoor play will follow these temperature guidelines based on the "feels like" temperature (wind chill).

Green Zone – 30°F and Above

- Outdoor play will take place as scheduled.
- Children should wear weather-appropriate clothing, including layered clothing, coats, hats, and gloves when needed.
- Staff will monitor children for signs of discomfort or becoming too cold.

Yellow Zone – 20°F to 29°F

- Outdoor play may be shortened based on weather conditions.
- Children should be dressed in warm layers, coats, hats, gloves, and other appropriate winter clothing.
- Staff will closely monitor children for signs of cold-related discomfort.

Red Zone – Below 20°F

- Outdoor play will be canceled, and children will remain indoors in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Hot Weather Guidelines

During periods of high heat or poor air quality, the school follows FCPS policy which makes decisions based on guidance from the National Weather Service (NWS) and local health authorities.

When a **Heat Advisory**, **Extreme Heat Warning**, or unhealthy air quality alert is in effect, we will:

- Cancel outdoor play and recess.
- Move activities indoors when appropriate.
- Encourage frequent water breaks and provide opportunities for children to cool down.
- Monitor children closely for signs of heat-related illness.

The health and safety of our students are our highest priority. Decisions regarding outdoor play are made with careful consideration of current weather conditions and guidance from public health and weather agencies.

Pets

Due to insurance regulations, pets are not allowed at school.

Emergency Procedures

In the case of serious medical emergency (such as unconsciousness, broken bones, serious cuts, foreign objects in eye, nose, ear, etc.), the following procedures will be followed:

1. Call 911 and ask for an ambulance. (One staff member remains with the child, while another staff member makes the call, when possible.)
2. Alert the Preschool Office Staff.
3. Call the parents.
4. Pull health and emergency forms from file in office. These forms will accompany the child to the hospital. Be sure to inform another staff member which hospital the child is being taken to so that this information can be conveyed to parents.
5. The staff member who knows the child best will remain with the child and ride to the hospital with the child, unless the parent has arrived and feels that it is unnecessary. The staff member will stay at the hospital until a parent arrives and feels comfortable being left.
6. Notify the Preschool with an update of the situation as soon as possible.
7. Upon return to the Preschool, the staff member will complete an accident report and give it to the Director.

When a less serious injury occurs, parents will be notified by phone or written note, depending upon the degree of injury.

Emergency Preparedness

HUMC Preschool will do everything in its power to protect your children should an emergency occur. Your child's safety and well-being are of utmost importance to the staff at HUMC Preschool. We will make decisions based on the knowledge provided by our community of professionals but welcome any thoughts or suggestions you may have to offer for our consideration. Our complete Emergency Preparedness Manual is available in the Preschool office for anyone wishing to review it. Please see Appendix A of this handbook for our Emergency Preparedness Plan, including evacuation routes.

Appendix A

Emergency Preparedness Plan

HUMC Preschool staff will do everything in our power to protect your children in an emergency. The Preschool Emergency Preparedness Manual is our guide in responding to emergencies. Our complete Emergency Preparedness Manual is available in the Preschool Office for parents to view. In addition to the Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Manual also includes a staff emergency contact list, a student emergency contact list, responsibility charts for emergency scenarios, letters of agreement with emergency evacuation sites, and information from the Northern Virginia Regional Commission Guide to Emergency Preparedness, FEMA, the American Red Cross, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

All staff members will receive annual training on the Preschool Emergency Preparedness Plan prior to the start of the school year, and practice drills will be held monthly to familiarize staff and children with our procedures. The plan will be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

We are prepared to respond to many different types of emergency scenarios. The major response plans are Evacuation of the Building, Severe Weather/Natural Disaster Shelter, Lockdown, and Shelter in Place.

I. Evacuation of the Building:

A. Non-Emergency Evacuation of the Building:

Possible Scenarios: Loss of Power, Loss of Water, Weather Conditions

- If a non-emergency evacuation of the building is required, teachers and assistant teachers will be notified by office staff.
- Email and/or text message will be sent to all preschool families as soon as safely possible. Emergency updates and announcements will be posted on our website – www.herndonumcpreschool.com when possible.
- Teachers will notify the parents of the children in their class by using their cell phones, when possible.
- Assistant Teachers will supervise the children while parents are being contacted.
- An orderly dismissal will take place from the Preschool's main entrance.
- Children will remain in their classrooms with the Lead Teacher and Assistant Teachers.
- The office staff will collect children from classrooms and walk them to their cars as their parents arrive.

B. Emergency Evacuation of the Building:

Possible Scenarios: Fire, Gas Leak, Bomb Threat, Chemical Spill

If emergency evacuation of the building is required, a constant, steady alarm will sound. At this point:

- All walkie-talkies should be tuned to channel 1
- Teachers will take an immediate head count.
- The lead teacher (or designated trained staff member) will take the class's emergency backpack and lead their students in an orderly fashion to the designated meeting place (see attached evacuation routes). The last teacher out of the room will turn off

the lights and close the classroom door. Once at the meeting place, teachers will take a second head count and distribute emergency ID badges.

- The Assistant Emergency Director will take a roll call of classes to ensure all children and all staff are present.
- If the building may not be re-entered in a timely manner, we will evacuate beyond the school property.
- Email and/or text message will be sent to all preschool families as soon as safely possible. Emergency updates and announcements will be posted on our website – www.herndonumcpreschool.com as soon as possible.

Evacuation of the Building Beyond the School Property:

If we need to move beyond the school property to protect the safety of the children, we will either:

- a. Evacuate on foot to our nearby alternative shelter, The Children's Place, or
- b. Evacuate by car to our more distant alternative shelter, Herndon Community Center.

The most appropriate plan of action will be decided by the Emergency Director (Preschool Director/ Designee) based on the nature of the emergency and the advice of local emergency officials.

a. Evacuation on Foot Beyond the School Property

Alternative Shelter: The Children's Place, 860 Dranesville Road

- If the instructions are given to evacuate the property on foot, teachers will lead their students as directed in an orderly fashion from the meeting place to The Children's Place, where we will begin contacting parents. Identification may be required to pick up a student. HUMC Preschool staff will stay at The Children's Place until all students are picked up.

b. Evacuation by Car Beyond the School Property

Alternative Shelter: Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave

- If the instructions are given to evacuate the property by car, the lead teacher in each class will distribute emergency contact packets, one for each staff member.
- The students will be assigned in advance to a specific staff member for evacuation purposes. All children having medication at school will be assigned to the lead teacher (or a designated staff member trained to administer medication), who will take the backpack containing the medications.

I. Evacuation of the Building:

1. Evacuation of the Building Beyond the School Property:

b. Evacuation by Car Beyond the School Property

- The emergency contact packets will consist of the Authorization for Emergency Treatment forms, a class emergency contact list, staff emergency report, a student emergency contact list, a copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan, and map/directions to Herndon Community Center.
- Each staff member will transport their designated students by private vehicle to Herndon Community Center.
- Once assembled there, the staff will begin notifying parents of the evacuation and await pickup of students by the parents. Identification may be required in order to pick up a student. HUMC Preschool staff will stay at the Herndon Community Center until all students are picked up. (See map)

II. Severe Weather/Natural Disaster Shelter:

Possible Scenarios: Tornado, Derecho, Earthquake

If it is necessary for the Preschool to provide a severe weather shelter to protect the safety of the children, **no one will be allowed out of or into the Preschool building until the danger has passed.** The Emergency Director will sound an alarm which will consist of several quick sound bursts with a pause between each burst (different from an evacuation alarm). The teachers will know that this alarm notifies them to listen to their classroom two-way radios for directions. At this point:

- All walkie-talkies should be tuned to channel 1.
- One classroom teacher will do an immediate roll call.

1. If the instructions are given to report to the bad weather shelter:

- The lead teacher (or designated trained staff member) will take the class's emergency backpack and lead their students in an orderly fashion to the designated meeting place (see attached evacuation routes). The last teacher out of the room will turn off the lights and close the classroom door. Once at the meeting place, teachers will take a second head count and distribute emergency ID badges. Students will be instructed to duck & tuck until the all clear is given.
- The Assistant Emergency Director will take a roll call of classes to ensure all children and all staff are present.
- Staff and students will remain in the duck and tuck position until the threat has passed and the all clear signal is given.

2. If the instructions are given Drop, Cover & Hold:

- One classroom teacher will close their windows and doors.
- Students will be instructed to move away from windows & furniture.
- Students and staff will drop to the ground, cover their heads, move under tables if possible, and hold on to tables if possible.
- Communication with the classrooms will be through the school walkie-talkie system.
- Classes will remain in their rooms in the drop, cover, hold position until the all-clear is given.

III. Lockdown:

Possible Scenarios: Intruder, Terrorism

If it is necessary for the Preschool to go on Lockdown to protect the safety of the children, **no one will be allowed out of or into the Preschool building until the danger has passed.** The Emergency Director will sound an alarm, which will consist of several quick sound bursts with a pause between each burst (different from an evacuation alarm). The teachers will know

that this alarm notifies them to listen to their classroom walkie-talkie for directions. At this point:

- All two-way radios should be tuned to channel 1
- One classroom teacher will do an immediate roll call.
- If the instructions are given to lockdown:
- Walkie-talkies should be turned off immediately.
- The teachers will lock, close and cover their classroom windows and doors.
- Teachers will move children away from doors and windows and take measures to cover and conceal with tables or other available items.
- Communication with classrooms will be through personal phone text message.
- Classes will remain in their rooms until the all-clear signal is given by the Preschool Office

IV. Shelter in Place:

Possible Scenarios: Chemical or Biological Hazard

If it is necessary for the Preschool to Shelter in Place to protect the safety of the children, **no one will be allowed out of or into the Preschool building until the danger has passed.** The Emergency Director will sound an alarm, which will consist of several quick sound bursts with a pause between each burst (different from an evacuation alarm). The teachers will know that this alarm notifies them to listen to their classroom two-way radios for directions. At this point:

- All walkie-talkies should be tuned to channel 1
- One classroom teacher will do an immediate roll call. If the instructions are given to report to the activity room:
 1. The lead teacher (or designated trained staff member) will take the class's emergency backpack and lead their students in an orderly fashion to the activity room. The last teacher out of the room will turn off the lights and close the classroom door. Once at the meeting place, teachers will take a second head count and distribute emergency ID badges.
 2. The Assistant Emergency Director will take a roll call of classes to ensure all children and all staff are present.
 3. Staff and students will remain in the activity room until the threat has passed and the all clear signal is given.

For all indoor emergency situations, if a class is not in their classroom at the time of the emergency/drill, the class should quickly report to the following locations based on their current location:

If Class is in:	Class should report to:
Activity Room	Preschool Office/Classroom
Fellowship Hall/Gym	Room 109
Playground	Children's Place*
Sanctuary	Children's Place*

*If it is not safe to return to the building; otherwise, follow radio instructions.

**Essential
Stored** **Items
in**

Classroom Emergency Backpacks:

- Emergency Medications
- Emergency Contact Packets containing the Authorization for Emergency Treatment forms, a class emergency contact list, staff emergency report, a student emergency contact list, a copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan, and map/directions to Herndon Community Center
- Snacks for children with allergies

Supplies in HUMC Preschool Evacuation Kit:

- Battery powered radio with fresh batteries and spare batteries
- Walkie-talkies with spare batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Flashlights with spare batteries
- Baby wipes, Clorox wipes, latex gloves
- Tissues
- Blankets
- HUMC Preschool Emergency Preparedness Manual, including Staff and Student Emergency Reports
- Authorization for Emergency Treatment forms

Supplies Stored At School For Shelter In Place:

- Bulk Food enough for 120 children and 20 adults for up to 24 hours*
- 2 gallons of water per classroom (kept in classroom)
- An additional 2 gallons of water in Activity Room
- Plastic Sheeting and Duct Tape
- Corded telephone

*Children with food allergies will be asked to bring a small supply of snacks (labeled with their name) to be kept with the classroom emergency backpack.

How To Stay In Touch and Informed:

Everyone needs to stay as informed as possible through the emergency broadcast system on the radio or television. It is recommended that every home have a battery-operated radio that can be tuned to a local news station (such as WTOP 103.5 FM) to receive general information concerning major local emergencies.

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from the building, parents will be contacted to pick up their children. In the event of an emergency evacuation from the preschool property, parents will be notified as soon as possible of their child's location.

Additionally, we will place a message on the preschool's answering machine about our actions.

Emergency Phone Numbers:

HUMC Preschool: 703-435-5688

Herndon United Methodist Church: 703-707-6271

Emergency Director 24- Hour Phone Numbers: 843-425-6730; 571-309-1045

Methods of Communication During Emergencies:

Inside School Building:

1. School walkie-talkies
2. Staff Cell Phones (numbers listed on Staff Emergency Report distributed to each staff member)
3. Email and/or text message will be sent to all preschool families as soon as safely possible. Emergency updates and announcements will be posted on our website – www.herndonumcpreschool.com as soon as possible.

Outside School Building:

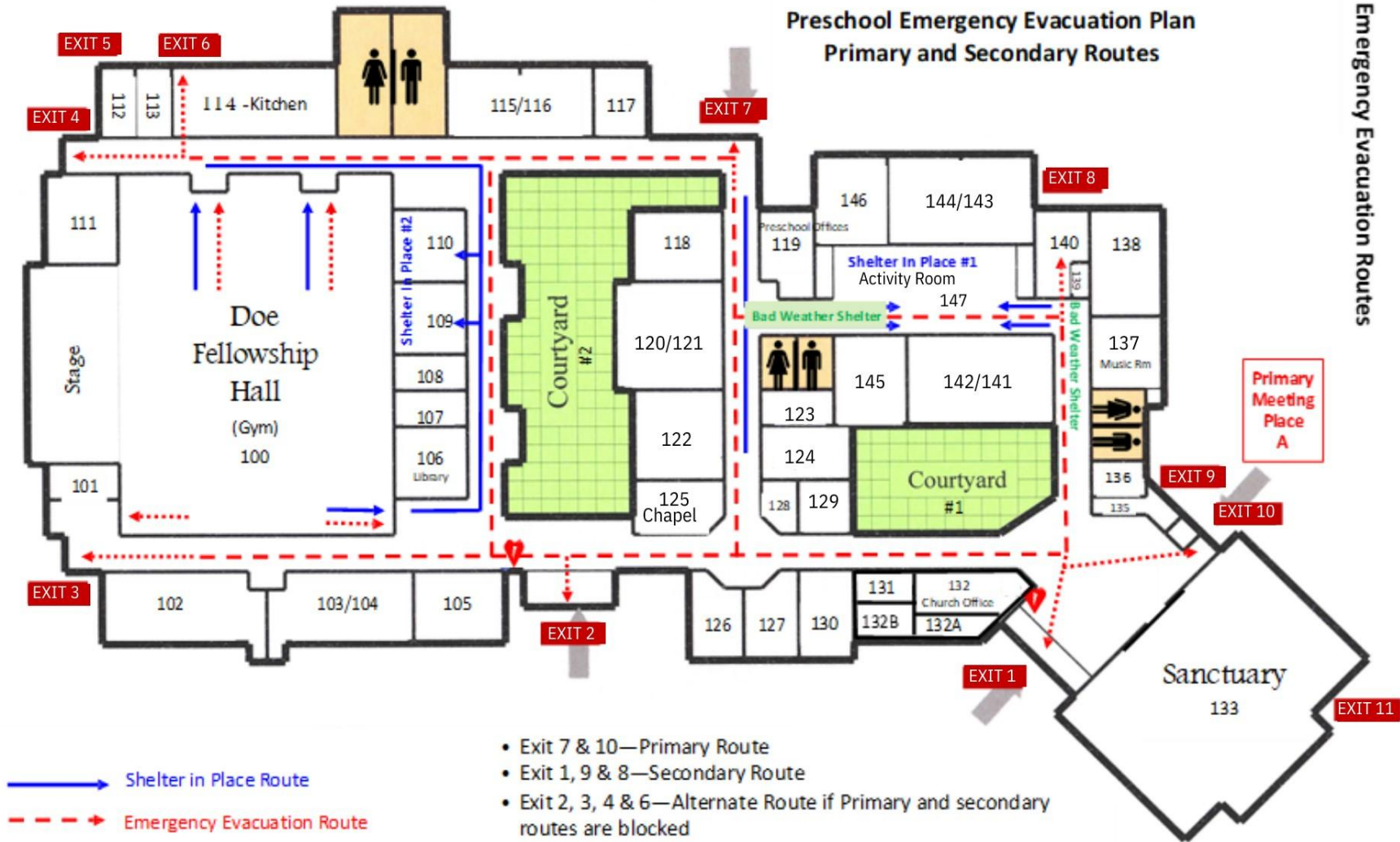
1. School walkie-talkies
2. Staff Cell Phones (numbers listed on Staff Emergency Report distributed to each staff member)
3. Leave information message on Preschool answering machine by remote access
4. Email and/or text message will be sent to all preschool families as soon as safely possible. Emergency updates and announcements will be posted on our website – www.herndonumcpreschool.com as soon as possible.

HUMC Preschool Established Line of Authority

1. Director/Emergency Director I
2. Office Administrator/Assistant Emergency Director
3. Lead Teachers
4. Assistant Teachers

Preschool Emergency Evacuation Plan Primary and Secondary Routes

Emergency Evacuation Routes



- Exit 7 & 10—Primary Route
- Exit 1, 9 & 8—Secondary Route
- Exit 2, 3, 4 & 6—Alternate Route if Primary and secondary routes are blocked
- If classroom exit is blocked, exit through window.
- All Fire Routes meet at Meeting Place A, outside Exit 10.
- If Meeting Place A is blocked, meet at Meeting Place B.
- Unless given other instructions, when sheltering in place meet in Shelter In Place #1.
- If sheltering from Fellowship Hall area, use Shelter in Place #2.

2-Year-Old Addendum

We are so excited to have a 2-year-old program. As we work through the first couple weeks of school, we might need to modify some of the following information to best suit the needs of the class.

If your child wears diapers, please take the time to make sure your child is freshly changed before the school day begins. We ask that they bring 3 diapers in their red school bag. Please do NOT send in pull-ups. The school will provide hypoallergenic wipes for the children. **Diaper rash cream is considered a medication.** Before it can be applied, you will need to fill out a medication authorization form and turn it into the office. The children will be changed on an as needed basis and checked regularly. All children will have at least one diaper change during the school day.

Some children will be further along than others in their toileting/potty training skills and that is fine. There is no pressure. We ask that you let your child's teacher know when you begin the potty-training process at home so that we can follow up at school. Once again, please do not send your child in pull-ups.

Pick-up for the first 4 weeks will begin by 12:15. Should the children appear exhausted or have a hard time adjusting to the new schedule, we may need to continue early pick-up longer. The children are still young and getting used to all the fun and stimulation school brings, so we would like the time to ease them into their new routine. Please plan on picking your child up at the playground, weather permitting, by 12:15. There will be a parent sign-out for you to initial at pick up. Once the last child has been signed out the teachers will be needed back inside the preschool.