

**SUNTREE UNITED METHODIST
SCHOOL HANDBOOK
2019 – 2020**



**SCHOOL TELEPHONE: 321-254-3866
7400 N. WICKHAM RD.
MELBOURNE, FL 32940
LICENSE #C18BR0149**

WELCOME

Dear Families,

Welcome to Suntree United Methodist School! We are so excited to be celebrating our 29th year as a school. We are happy to welcome you for the first time or welcome you back as part of our school family. As a ministry of Suntree United Methodist Church, we are committed to sharing the good news of God's love throughout our school.

The mission statement of our school is "to provide a safe and nurturing environment with developmentally appropriate experiences so that children can develop mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially to their greatest potential". We pride ourselves on our use of a curriculum that is engaging, challenging and differentiated. We will be encouraging your child to grow in his/her relationship with God, ask questions, explore his/her own ideas, work collaboratively and become an independent learner.

For your child to enjoy and benefit from all of our learning opportunities, we ask you to partner with us by preparing them for each day. This handbook will help explain how you can support them, what you can expect from us and what we can expect from you. On occasion, we may find it necessary to add or change information in this handbook. In that case, we will provide you with a printed addendum.

We welcome your questions, comments and ideas. Our preschool is a learning environment - not only for children but also for parents and staff. We look forward to partnering with you in your child's education. Our pastors, Annette Stiles Pendergrass and Allee Wilcox, also welcome you to our church and we invite you to worship with us on Sundays if you do not already have a church home. We are dedicated to serving the families of our church and community, and if we can serve you in any way, please let us know.

Blessings,

Kelly Dwenger, Ph.D.
SUM School Director



OUR PHILOSOPHY

Each child is a unique gift from God and will be accepted for who he/she is and will be respected and loved.

As adults, we are responsible to God to see that our children are nurtured and allowed to grow in an atmosphere true to the principles Jesus taught. This includes growth in these areas: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Each child will have the opportunity to build positive learning experiences, grow in self-concept and self-esteem, and to gain ability in problem solving. These areas of learning will be used to help the child become all that they can become and will help to lay a foundation upon which they can build.



OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

Our program stresses a positive approach to learning including centers, creative play, and many hands-on experiences. Research shows us that, for the early childhood years, children learn best through experiences that utilize all their senses. **Worksheets are not appropriate at this age.** Our curriculum, “Wee Learn”, incorporates a variety of multi-sensory approaches to address the following curriculum areas:

Bible Stories
Pre-Math
Language Arts
Dramatic Play

Christian Concepts
Social Studies
Science Experiences
Creative Art

Pre-Reading
Creative Cooking
Music
Sensory Explorations

You will receive a schedule of themed units that will be presented in your child’s class throughout the school year.



OUR TEACHER STUDENT RATIO

The ratio in our Wee Three and Three Year Old classes is two teachers per twelve students. The ratio in our VPK classes is two teachers per twelve to fifteen students. The ratio in our Kindergarten is two teachers per thirteen students.

OUR ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Here at SUMS if a child turns 3 on or before September 1st and is potty trained, he/she can attend our Three Year Old Program. If your child turns 4 on or before September 1st and is potty trained, he/she can attend our Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program. Enrollment in our VPK Program also requires a Certificate of Eligibility from the State of Florida.

Our Wee Three Program is the only exception to that policy. The children in our Wee-Three program turn 3 years old between September 2nd and December 31st. The children in this class do not need to be completely potty trained when they start school in August. We do, however, have the expectation that the parents are diligently working with the children at home and our teachers are doing the same here at school. By January of the school year, we expect the little ones in our Wee Three class to be fully potty trained.

Florida Law requires each child to have the DH 3040 Form and the DH 680 Form filled out by a physician and parent or guardian. Both completed forms must be given to the school front office or your child's teacher before the start of school.



ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN

If a 3 or 4 year old child has an accident and can change him/herself, then our teachers can oversee this. If they are unable to help themselves, it will be necessary to call Mom or Dad to come and change them so they may return to class. We do not by any means consider this a punishment and would never punish the children for these accidents. We remind the children of the importance of going like a big girl/boy in the bathroom.

If a child has more than three accidents in quick succession, we may ask for them to leave school for a week or so to enable the families to work with them on a more constant basis to ensure they are fully potty trained. This is usually highly effective. Unfortunately, due to the strict guidelines dictated by the state, if a child consistently has accidents, our only recourse will

be to suggest that they are not ready for preschool at this time. This situation is very rare and will only be our last resort.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All of our classes follow the Brevard County School Calendar.

In the VPK classes, if your child exceeds Florida State guidelines and it results in Suntree United Methodist School not being paid for specific days, your child can be removed from our school. All VPK students must attend the first and last days of school.



HEALTH POLICY



Children are to be kept home when they show any of the following symptoms: runny nose, open sores, sore throat, fever, rash, excessive coughing, diarrhea, or earache. If you feel your child is unable to play outside that day, he should not attend school, as outdoor activity is part of our daily school program. A child, who has been absent because of a contagious disease, must be examined by a doctor before returning to school. Children should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

You will see many symptoms and illnesses showing up in school. Please keep children at home if they do not feel well enough to participate in school activities. We want to keep our environment as free of contagions as possible for the sake of all that attend. Here are some guidelines for when your child should not attend school:

Vomiting – 1 or more times in the past 24 hours

Fever – Oral temperature over 100°.

Impetigo* – until 24 hours after treatment is started

Suspicious Rash* – with fever or behavioral change

Uncontrolled Diarrhea – increased number compared to child's normal pattern

Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis – redness of the eye(s) with drainage

Head Lice/Scabies* – 24 hours after treatment has begun and no live lice or nits are present.

Only Scabies requires a doctor's note.

Chicken Pox – 6-10 days after onset of rash and until all lesions are dried and crusted

Ringworm – must be able to be covered, if on scalp needs oral medication

Signs of Possible Severe Illness* – unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, stiff neck, unusually dark urine & gray/white stool

Hepatitis A Virus/Jaundice* – yellow skin or eyes, excluded until symptoms are gone

Guidelines obtained by the Child Care Association of Brevard County, Inc.

HEALTH POLICY cont.

The staff cannot give your child any medication without the parent having filled out and signed a consent form. If your child needs medication on a regular basis, please see the Front Office for these forms. Medication should be in the original container and it will be kept in an area inaccessible to children.

Please do not send hand sanitizer into school with your child or on/in their backpack. The sanitizers can be as much as two-thirds ethyl alcohol — the type of alcohol found in beer, wine and liquor — and isopropyl alcohol, better known as rubbing alcohol, which is toxic. Ingestion can cause stomach upset and nausea, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Household Products Database. People who swallow the product are advised not to induce vomiting and to call their doctor or a poison control center. We have children wash their hands many times throughout the day.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline comes from the same root as “disciple”, which has to do with teaching and learning and is not synonymous with punishment. There is no place for punishment in our Christian program. Our policy will be to use a loving guidance approach to discipline.

The goal of our discipline approach for young children is to help them learn appropriately through the preschool years so they can mature and function as responsible, ethical, well-adjusted persons.

We will seek good discipline through self-control. The children will practice self-control as they use words instead of hostile actions. They will be encouraged to talk about their problems, as they are allowed to express their feelings, and as they learn to redirect their actions. Inappropriate language in our school will not be allowed. The children will gain in the knowledge that they belong to a social group that accepts or rejects certain behavior.

The staff will provide an atmosphere of loving guidance by providing guidelines, nurturing positive behavior in the child, intervention when needed, and personal training.

Children who are having a difficult day will be given the choice of leaving the group (accompanied by a teacher) to a “safe place” and will be free to return to the group at their own discretion.

We will approach a loving guidance approach to discipline in the following manner:

1. Provide a “safe space” for the child to calm himself.
Lots of positive strokes such as hugs and pats will be included.
2. Discuss alternative behaviors with the child who needs guidance.
3. Hold a child who is causing harm to self or others.
4. Remove a child who is in physical danger (example- a child who climbed too high).

Discipline Policy cont.

After October 1, if any child in our program hits, kicks, bites, spits or shows violent behaviors to anyone, that child’s parents will be called and they will be asked to take their child home for the day.

The above policy statement is for your information, and we are required by Florida state law to provide a copy of this policy for each parent to read. The Director is empowered to remove a student from the room and/or from the program whose presence threatens the health and safety or orderly conduct of the Suntree United Methodist School program.

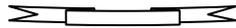
On occasion, a program is not an optimal fit for a child or family. SUMS is a school that will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to resolve any challenges that arise. Additional resources may need to be used to support a child’s success in the school environment. If, after all reasonable efforts are exhausted, and it is determined that SUMS is not the best fit for the needs of a child, SUMS reserves the right to suggest an alternative placement.



FEES

Registration Fee will be payable at the time of registration. This fee is **non-refundable** and will be used to buy expendable goods for your child such as paper, paint and glue in addition to our enrichment staff comprised of Dr. Diana, Fun Trail, and Music.

Activity Fee Donation can be paid at the time of registration. This fee is **non-refundable** and will be used to pay for our extra programs at our school such as Dr. Diana, Fun Trail, and Music. The Activity Fee Donation is not a requirement for the child's participation in our programs.



TUITION

Tuition is due the first school day of every month. You may bring in your tuition and put it in the tuition box at the school front desk or if you use the drive-by method for drop off, you may give it to the assistant there.

A full tuition payment for August will be due on the first day of school. The tuition for September through May is due on the first of each month. If tuition is not paid by the 5th of each month, a \$20 late charge is assessed. If your child will not be here on the 5th, you will need to pay prior to the 5th of the month. If tuition has still not been paid after the 10th of the month, your child will not be allowed to return to school until that balance and late fee is paid in full. If you should have a specific and unavoidable problem, please contact the Director immediately.

Tuition pays for staff salaries, educational aids, and building usage. SUMC offsets part of the building, utilities, and playground expenses as a ministry to our community so that we may offer a quality program at a reasonable cost.

A scholarship fund is established each year through gifts and some fundraising. Disbursement of scholarship money is handled through our pastoral staff. Please speak with the Director or Administrator if you feel you may be eligible for some assistance.

Parents need to notify the school 30 days in advance if withdrawal is necessary. There can be no reimbursement for children withdrawing during the month. There will be a \$20.00 fee charged for all checks returned from the bank. Cash payment for the check and the \$20.00 fee will be due one week from the date the check was returned to the school.

TUITION cont.

The fee schedule for the school year 2019 – 2020 is as follows:

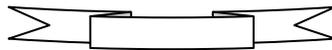
Class	Registration/Activity Fee	Tuition
Wee Three	\$190.00	\$190.00
3 Year Old		
2 Day	\$190.00	\$190.00
3 Day	\$240.00	\$240.00
VPK 4 Year Old		
3 Day	\$215.00	Fully State Funded
5 Day	\$215.00	Fully State Funded
5 Day Extended Day	\$215.00	\$215.00
VPK Self-Pay**		
3 Day VPK/5 Day VPK	\$290.00	\$290.00
5 Day VPK Extended	\$375.00	\$375.00
Kindergarten	\$295.00	\$395.00

**VPK Self-Pay — Fees are for children that have previously utilized the VPK Program and the funding is no longer available.

If your family has two or more children enrolled in our school, you may take a 5% deduction from which ever child's tuition is the lowest being paid each month. If your child attends our school during the month of April you must also pay tuition for May if applicable.

For income tax purposes, if you claim child-care expenses, our "Provider Tax" number is #59-2424288.

Please note: Above fees and tuition are good for School Year 2019 – 2020 only.





LUNCH BUNCH



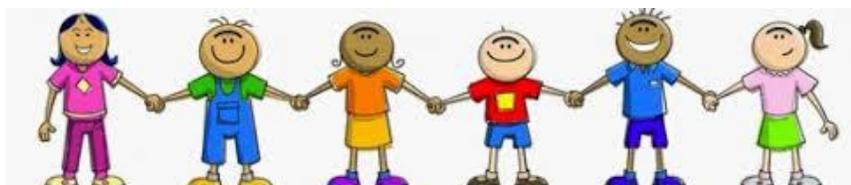
Lunch Bunch will be until 2:00 p.m. and will be offered each and every school day (with a few exceptions, such as party days, staff meetings and etc.) beginning the second week of school. If you need for your child to stay on certain days each week throughout the year, you can sign up on our permanent list at Parent Open House night at the school front desk. This will be done on a first come, first served basis, as there are limited spots available in the Lunch Bunch Program. Your child will be required to come on the days you signed up for, unless we are otherwise contacted. If your child is sick, you must call the school front office at 321-254-3866, first thing in the morning, for the fees to be waived. If your child does not come to school on the assigned day and we do not receive a call, you will be charged for that day. If your child is in school on the day he or she is signed up for, and they do not stay, you will be charged for that day. If you do not need Lunch Bunch for a specific day, you will need to remove your child from the list at least 24 hours in advance.

If your child does not use their permanent Lunch Bunch spot for more than two consecutive weeks, unless it is due to illness or vacation, we will inform you that we will be forced to find a permanent replacement.

A monthly calendar sign-up is posted on the hallway bulletin board, and space will be limited to the amount of openings we have available on that day. Therefore, sign-up will be on a first come, first served basis for those not already on our permanent list. If the class that day is full, you can place your child on a waiting list and we will call you if there is an opening. Please do not move up names on the waiting list. Our staff will call you first. If you need to sign your child up for Lunch Bunch or take your child's name off the list, you will need to come into the school to do so.

Lunch Bunch will cost an additional \$10.00 per session for preschool children. A Lunch Bunch statement will be sent home monthly, based on attendance. Payment must be made by the 10th of the month or a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged. If your child does not come on the 10th, you will need to pay before the 10th. Payment may be made, by placing your child's money in his or her class communication folder, or at the school front desk.

Children must be picked up on time from Lunch Bunch. Parents will be assessed a late fee of \$1.00 a minute beginning 10 minutes after the child's dismissal time. After five late charges you will be charged \$2.00 per late minute. If the school tuition has not been paid by the 5th of the month, you cannot use Lunch Bunch until it has been paid in full.



DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES & DIRECTIONS

Parents are welcome to walk their children to the classroom in the mornings. Parents can also walk in and wait at the designated area to pick up their children when they are dismissed at the end of the school session. Students are encouraged to walk to the classroom instead of being carried to foster independence. We also offer a well staffed, drive by drop off and pick up service, for your convenience.

Children in the 200 Building can be dropped off and picked up at the South Door. Please enter according to the Drop Off and Pick Up Map. If you choose to walk your children to their classroom in the morning, please use the North Door. If you choose to walk in to pick up your children, please use the door shown on the map as the North Door and wait in line across from the school front desk area.

Children in the 300 Building can be dropped off and picked up in the parking loop in front of the 300 Building. Please enter according to the Drop Off and Pick Up Map. If you walk your children in please use the door shown on the map as the West Door. If you choose to walk up to get your children, please line up against the outside wall by the West Door.

At Pick Up time you must have your child's Pick Up Card for the inside line or the outside Drive By line. At Drive By, please leave your Pick Up Card in your car window until your child is brought to your car. We will ask to see identification if the person picking up does not have the Pick Up Card.

For the safety of your children and our staff, the teachers will unload and load from the curbside only.

Please help us make the drive by time more efficient and safer by following the following rules:

1. Please drive through the school campus **SLOWLY**. Children are out among cars and we need your full driving attention for the safety of our students.
2. Stay in your vehicle and hold up your child's name card. Leave your child's name card in your window until your child is brought to your car, because at times we have substitute teachers working. For the safety of your children and our staff, the teachers will unload and load from curbside only. The teacher will bring your child to your car for you to buckle them into their car seat. The teacher must hear the child's seat belt "click" before you drive off.
3. Please refrain from pulling around a car that is in line.
4. In an effort to keep dismissal moving, please refrain from talking to the teachers. If you need to talk to them, please come in or give them a call.



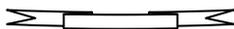
DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES & DIRECTIONS cont.

5. Please refrain from using the front doors to walk in during the morning drop off or at pick up. If you want to come in, use the North Door. Your child can be picked up at the school front desk area.
 6. Please refrain from talking on your cell phone when going through drive by for safety reasons and because your child cannot wait to tell you about their day.
 7. Keep children in their car seats, not on your lap while waiting for drop off.
 8. Please remember there is no smoking on our school campus which includes drive-by.
- We do not want you to ever feel that you are not welcome at our school. Our school has an open door policy and you are always welcome. Please help us as we strive to make this a safe, happy year.



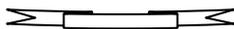
LATE DROP OFF

If you arrive at school after the staff has left the drive by area in the 200 Building, you will need to enter the school through the North Door and walk your children to their classroom. Your child's class may not be in the room at that time, so please walk your child into the classroom. If your child's class is in the 300 Building, you need to enter through the North Door of the 200 Building, and go to the school front desk. The front desk staff will call your child's assistant teacher to open the West Door for your child. Please do not knock on the classroom windows. For your child's safety, all school doors will remain locked during school hours.



LATE PICK UP POLICY

Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. Drive By accommodations are available for 10 minutes after school ends. We allow 10 minutes in case there are differences in your clock and ours. Parents arriving later than 10 minutes after our dismissal time will be charged \$1.00 per minute that you are late. If you are late more than 5 times, the fee will be doubled.



CAR SEATS

We are happy for parents to leave car seats at school if someone else is picking up their child after school. Because of the high number of families that need to do this, we are requesting that parents come into the building to retrieve their car seat and then put it in their own car. As you know, the number one liability with car seats is incorrect installation. Since there are many different styles of car seats, we feel that it is in the best interest and safety of your child if you install it correctly.



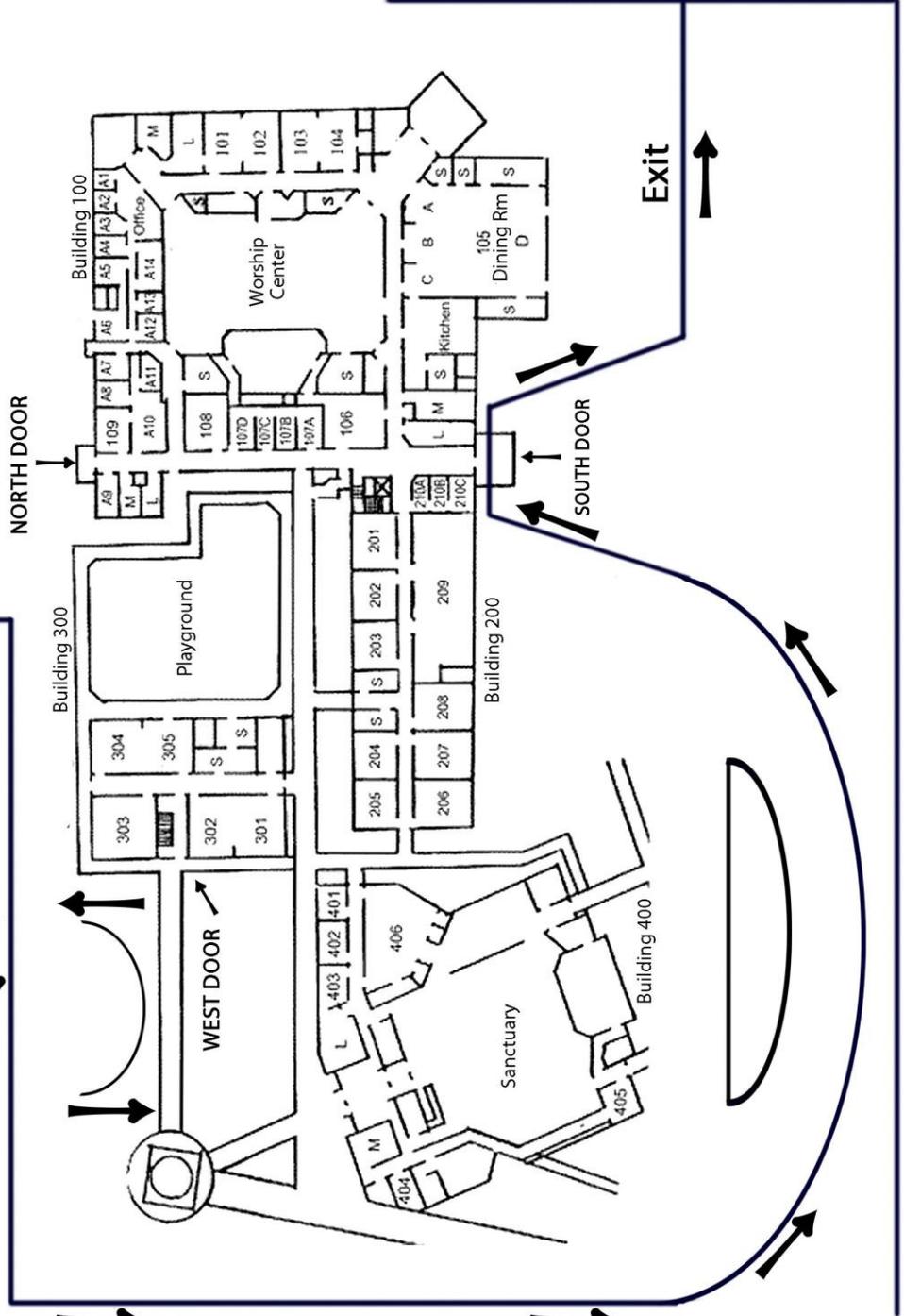
Suntree United Methodist Church Pick up and Drop off map

Pinehurst Avenue

Enter



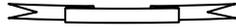
Suntree United Methodist Church
7400 N. Wickham Rd.
Melbourne, FL 32940
321-242-2585



Wickham Road

VERBAL MESSAGES

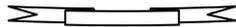
The staff cannot accept verbal messages brought by children. All changes must be in writing with a parent signature and date. Please put notes to teachers or school staff in your child's communication folder.



PERSONAL ITEMS

Children may not bring personal items such as toys to school. We will have a large assortment of toys and activities each day for the children. They may bring educational items to share on "Show and Tell" days, which will be announced by your classroom teacher.

Children may not bring toys of violence to school. Toys of violence will be taken up by the Director and returned to the parent. These toys include any play item such as swords, knives, guns (in any form), and action figures who use such items. We realize these toys have a useful place in the play-acting of young children, but here at school we will be stressing the biblical principal of "love one another". (John 15:17)



PARENT CONFERENCE

Parent Conference will be held during the year. A note will be sent home in advance to notify parents of the date. The conference is intended to better inform you about your child's school progress and the education of young children in general. We hope the conference will be attended as it takes parents and teachers working together for the quality education your child deserves.



VOLUNTEERING

If you volunteer in your child's classroom or school-wide, we ask that you stop by the front desk and check-in and check-out in our volunteer computer program. When attending a scheduled class party you will not need to stop by the front desk.



Field Trip!

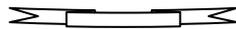


FIELD TRIPS



Several field trips for our VPK, Kindergarten, and 1st Grade classes will be planned during the year. The permission slip for these trips will be given out prior to the trip for you to sign.

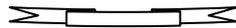
Parents who drive other children from the class on a field are required to provide the teacher with a current copy of their driver's license and proof of liability insurance. Advance notice will always be given for these trips. Parents are encouraged to come along with their child's class.



BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Children's birthdays will be celebrated as their "Special Day". Please plan and coordinate this day with your child's teacher. This special celebration may occur on or around their birthday. However, we want all the children to have a "Special Day", so if your child has a summer birthday, please contact the teacher and together you may choose a convenient day.

It is school policy that party invitations may be given out on the school grounds **IF every child in the class is invited**. Otherwise, classroom rosters with names and addresses will be made available so that invitations to private parties can be mailed.



SEASONAL PARTIES

Seasonal parties such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, take place on the date nearest the holiday. Parties will be planned for these seasonal parties.

As a policy, we do not celebrate Halloween in our school. Please help us with this policy by being sensitive to "share items" that are sent in during this season.

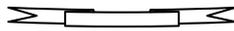
Christmas is celebrated as Jesus' birthday in the individual classrooms. Here at SUMS we feel in our ministry that we should uplift the season for its true reason – that, of course, is the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Parents are invited to many of our parties. Some parties the teachers will ask for only a few volunteer helpers. You can sign up to help at one of the parties on Open House Night.



FIRE, INCLEMENT WEATHER AND LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Our school has regular drills once a month. Our first drill will be in August and they will continue throughout the year. Fire, inclement weather and lockdown drills occur on different days of the week at different times of the day. We have these drills on alternate days so that all of the children can practice being safe. We use pots and pans to alert teachers and children of our fire drills. Once a year we pull the real fire alarm so that the children can hear what the alarm sounds like. Families may also want to practice what to do in case of fire at home!



DRESS

Uniforms are **encouraged** for our preschool and VPK classes on chapel day and field trip days. Our uniforms consist of khaki pants, shorts, jumpers, skirts, and a school monogrammed polo style shirt. On **Mondays or Tuesdays** we ask that preschoolers wear their uniforms for chapel and we ask that children wear their uniform for field trips and special days, as notified by the school or your teacher. Uniform shirts will be available to preorder at our Open House and thereafter at our school front desk.

Since children learn best by doing, please dress your child in comfortable clothes that can get dirty and can be used in painting, cooking, and outdoor play, etc.

For the safety of your children during the outdoor playtime, **closed** toe shoes such as sneakers with nonskid soles are required. Children will not be allowed to participate on climbing equipment with sandals or smooth-soled shoes such as cowboy boots, dress shoes, etc.

