

Family Policy and Procedure

Handbook

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**In order to ensure a smooth transition into the new school year, please read over the policies and procedures in this handbook. These policies are enforced for the safety and well-being of every child and outline parental rights and responsibilities within our program.**

Philosophy and Goals

Avondale United Methodist Church offers Child’s Day Out “CDO” as an outreach ministry to the people of this community and church. We operate to provide a loving, caring, Christian environment for your child to learn and grow in, with a concentration on social, physical, emotional, and intellectual areas. We believe that by allowing the child the freedom to play, explore and discover the world around him/her, and to learn to share and take his turn, a child develops readiness for other school and life experiences. We also believe that the quality of these early experiences will greatly influence a child’s potential.

Our program falls under the United Methodist umbrella in regards to policies and procedures.

Admission Policies

Eligibility:

Child’s Day Out admits students 12 months to Pre-K of any race, sex, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in attendance at this school.

Classes Offered:

VPK classes meet Monday thru Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. VPK children must attend Monday thru Thursday (see VPK attendance policy).

All other Children may be enrolled in our program one, two, three, or four days a week; 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m.

**Fun After One** is available with limited space from 1:00pm – 3:00pm.

**Early Arrival** is available at 8:30am.

Links to Early Learning curriculum is used in the three and four year old classrooms.

Foundations for Success curriculum is used in the one and two year old classrooms.

Enrollment Procedures:

In order to enroll in any class, the following forms are required:

* Enrollment Application with registration fee.
* Updated Immunization and Student health forms. CDO required children to have immunizations for the well being of everyone. We will accept exempt forms if child is receiving vaccines at a delayed schedule but not if they are opting out of vaccinations. These forms are available from your child’s physician.
* Emergency Treatment form and Permission slip.
* Emergency Contacts - names and phone numbers (we need at least 2)
* Family Policy and Procedure handbook are available on our website.
* Any addendums or updates are either given as a hard copy or e-mailed to parent. Parents may ask for an additional copy of the Policy and Procedure handbook at any time.
* Enrollment information will be kept on file at all times.

Priority for Enrollment:

Class enrollment for the fall begins in February. Priority is given on the following basis:

* Students currently enrolled in the program, and their siblings along with AUMC members have one week to enroll before we open registration to the public.

**YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO OBSERVE THE ENROLLMENT DATES FOR YOUR PRIORITY STATUS AS CLASSES FILL QUICKLY!!**

We typically do not move children up to the next age classroom during the year. If for some reason it is considered, we would first speak with the parents to see if they agree and the child would spend some time each day with the new class and teacher prior to the move. At the end of the school year children will have a “Field Trip Visit” to the classroom that they will be in next school year.

Staff Information

Our teachers and assistants are loving, caring people who are dedicated to our children at CDO. All staff receive 45 hours of initial training from Department of Children and Familiies (DCF) along with annual in-service training. A criminal check is done on each new employee and updated every five years. Staff are mandated to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment of a child.

Volunteers

**Volunteers must sign in and out at the front office on each visit**. If you volunteer more than 10 hours a month you must have background clearance and training. No volunteers are allowed to be left alone with children.

Financial Arrangements

Tuition and fees are based on the actual cost of operating the school. Facilities are provided to the school as part of the mission and ministry of the Church. However, the school is responsible for costs associated with offering the program and up-keep of the classrooms.

Fee and Tuition Schedule:

Registration fee is due upon enrollment and is non-refundable. This fee secures your child’s space in school.

Our school year is in accordance with the Duval County Public School System. Our first day and last day differ, but we take the same holidays as the school system.

Please see yearly school calendar for more information.

Tuition Due Date:

Tuition is due the first day of each month. Checks should be made payable to

**AUMC-CDO** and put in the tuition box in the office.

A $10.00 late fee will be assessed for any tuition payment not received in full by the 10th day of each month and a statement sent home. In the event your family has a hardship situation that may prevent you from meeting this obligation, please contact the Director prior to the 10th to make special arrangements. Any student whose tuition has not been paid by the 20th of the month will be disenrolled unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

Returned Check Charge:

There is a $20.00 fee for any check returned for insufficient funds. Consistent problems will result in the tuition payment being due in cash only.

Absence and Withdrawal Policy:

Tuition is due in full for each month regardless of your child’s attendance. There is no tuition credit due to illness or vacation. If a student withdraws for a month and plans to return, tuition must be paid for the missed month to insure the student’s place. Otherwise, the vacancy may be filled.

Please notify the Director in writing as soon as possible (at least 2 weeks in advance) if you must withdraw your child from the program. This allows us time to fill the vacancy.

Legal Custody Notification

In compliance with Florida State Statutes, we require documentation regarding which parent has legal custody in the case of separation or divorce. If there is no legal documentation, then both parents have the right of access to CDO records and pick-up of their children. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide legal documentation verifying custody arrangements. Custodial parents are responsible for notifying CDO, in writing, of any special circumstances with regard to the rights and obligations of the non-custodial parent. This includes providing written permission for the non-custodial parent to pick-up a child on a regular basis or for a special occasion.

Attendance Policies

School Hours:

Doors open to the children at 8:50 a.m. Classes begin promptly with specific routines and activities to assist the children in transitioning into the school day. **It is very important that your child arrive on time to participate in these special activities.** If your child arrives late, you may be asked to wait with them until an activity is finished before entering the class, so as not to interrupt the teacher and children. Parents should say their good-byes and leave their children with the teacher at the door. This is less disruptive for the rest of the children who are already in the class. We ask that you let us know if your child will be absent: this can be email, phone call or written note. If we do not hear from you regarding an absence – we are required (by DCF) to contact you if your child is an hour late. **If we cannot reach you we are required to then contact your emergency contacts.**

Pick Up Procedures:

All classes dismiss at 1:00 p.m. Again, the daily class schedule consists of specific routines to provide the children with a smooth transition from school to home. Children are released, individually, to properly authorized **ADULTS**. If your child is not picked up promptly at 1:00pm **A LATE FEE WILL BE CHARGED.** It is very scary for a child whose parent or caregiver is late.

Persons picking up your children from school should be **at least 18 years old and listed on your child’s registration form; we must have written permission for anyone picking up your child.**  Persons unknown to the staff will be required to show I.D. In the event you have an emergency that prevents you from picking up your child on time, call the Director at once to discuss arrangements that you have made for your child.

Absences:

It is very important that your child attend school on the days that he or she is scheduled unless he or she is ill or there is a family emergency. Each school day introduces new skills and builds on skills already introduced. Routines are a very important part of a child’s life and provide security in their ever-changing world. Please try to inform the teacher when you know that your child will be out of school.

**VPK children please refer to the attendance policy.**

Communication

Communication is the key to a successful program and to a good relationship between the school and parents. The school relies on a wide variety of written and verbal means to share information about your child’s classroom and school activities. Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled twice yearly. Look for Newsletter, Calendar, E-Mails and special fliers in child’s lunch box or backpack.

Assessment of Students

Our teachers continually assess each child in our program to monitor their strengths, learning style, needs and interests. Teachers compile portfolios on each child and do developmental check lists to review your child’s progress. Parents have the opportunity to contribute and give input on their child’s assessment. ASQ’s (Ages and Stages Questionnaires) will be sent home for parents to complete and/or your child’s teacher will complete the ASQ and this tool will be shared with parents. Parent/Teacher conferences occur twice per year but parents may request a conference at any time. If a child needs additional support, we can refer them to the appropriate agency; such as Child Find.

Child’s Day Out has an open door policy. CDO parents are welcomed anytime to visit or volunteer in their child’s classroom. If you are interested in volunteering please speak to your child’s teacher or the director regarding opportunities and policies required to participate.

Behavior Policies

* Children are required to behave appropriately with teachers and peers.
* Children will learn to act responsibly and respectfully towards teachers,

 peers and others.

* The following behaviors will not be tolerated: biting, kicking, hitting, spitting, abusive behavior towards others, and/or inappropriate language.
* Any other behavior that interferes with the safe enjoyment of the school environment by all staff and students will not be tolerated.

Discipline and Expulsion Policies

All children are expected to behave in a manner that is acceptable to our classroom standards. If a child behaves in an unacceptable manner, the child is redirected, shadowed, or removed from the activity for a brief period. Positive guidance and positive reinforcement are used as much as possible when the child is behaving in an acceptable manner. Unacceptable behavior is defined as that which is disruptive to the group as a whole during structured activity time, behavior which may be harmful, or behavior compromising the safety of the group or individuals. Physically or verbally hurting other children and/or faculty members is unacceptable. In the event that a child continues to be disruptive or harm others, the school reserves the right to dismiss that child from the program. CDO has a written Behavioral and Disciplinary Policy along with an Expulsion policy which each parent receives along with the Policy and Procedure Handbook. (attached to end of this policy)

The staff complies with all federal, state, and other relevant laws which prohibit corporal or abusive punishment in child care settings. Additionally, staff are expressly prohibited from using unproductive, abusive or shaming methods of punishment.

Health Policies

In order to prevent the spread of disease and to insure the safety of the children, who attend the school, staff use appropriate sanitary practices. Anti-bacterial soap, gloves, and bleach are examples of the items used to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

Children will receive a basic health check when they arrive at school. This is for the well-being of your child as well as our staff and the other children. This basic check is required by DCF to screen for any illness or condition that may interfere with your child’s enjoyment and participation in our activities.

If a child comes to school when he or she is not feeling well, he or she will be more vulnerable to infections. It is in the best interest of your child, and other children at the school, to keep your child at home when he or she is ill.

You will be contacted to come and pick up your child in case of illness. If you cannot be reached, we will contact your emergency numbers. PLEASE KEEP THESE PHONE NUMBERS UPDATED. Any child who is sent home with an illness may not return until he or she is free of symptoms for at least 24 hours, or a physician’s release is submitted. If a child becomes ill while at CDO, he or she will be taken to a designated isolation area.

Diapers are required at CDO until your child is fully potty trained. Pull-ups will be considered on an individual basis after a parent/teacher conference. The teacher is certainly willing to take your child to the potty on a regular basis to assist you in potty training your child.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL:

Any child, child care personnel, or other person in the child care facility suspected of having a communicable disease must be removed from the program or placed in an isolation area until they can be picked up from center. Such person may not return without medical authorization, or until the signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present.

If the local health department official or primary health care provider suspects that a child or staff member is contributing to transmission of the illness, is not adequately immunized when there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, or the circulating pathogen poses an increased risk to the individual; the child or child care personnel must not return until the health department or primary health care provider determines the risk of transmission is no longer present.

PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF HE OR SHE:

* Has a fever (100.4 degrees and above) or has had one during the previous 24 hours.
* Has a green or yellow nasal discharge when accompanied with fever.
* Has a constant cough, asthma symptoms, or any difficulty breathing.
* Head Lice – child cannot return until all of lice and eggs are completely removed.
* Is fussy, cranky, out of sorts, or is tired. Rest, along with your comfort and attention, might prevent a more serious illness.

Has Symptoms of any communicable disease such as:

* Severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
* Difficult or rapid breathing.
* Stiff neck.
* Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool with in a 24 hour period).
* Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher in conjunction with any other signs of illness.
* Pink eye.
* Exposed, open skin lesions.
* Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
* Yellowish skin or eyes; or any other communicable disease symptoms.

Upon returning, parents may be required to present a doctor’s statement that the child is not contagious. Please call the Director at once if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease so that other families may be notified that their child has been exposed.

Each child is required to have a current Immunization and Student Health Form from their physician on file. A child will not be allowed to attend if this is out of date.

CDO will only accept exemption forms for children that are getting their immunizations on a delayed track. We do not accept children whose parents are exempting them from ALL immunizations.

Child care centers are required to notify the local health department immediately upon any suspected outbreak of communicable disease and must follow the health department’s direction.

Medication

We must have written authorization from the custodial parent or legal guardian to give prescription and non-prescription medications. It must be in the original container and contain the child’s name; the name of the medication to be given; and date, time and amount of the correct dosage to be given. Prescription and non-prescription medication that are used on an “as needed” basis require the parent/guardian to provide additional documentation on the authorization form to describe symptoms that would require the medication to be given. This authorization must be signed and dated by the parent or legal guardian. This includes diaper creams, insect repellant and sunscreen.

Injury at School

In the event your child is hurt at school, appropriate first aid will be administered. Our staff is CPR and first aid certified. We will contact the parents if the injury is serious.

Written accident reports are completed whenever a child is hurt. The staff member who witnessed the accident, along with the person who picks up the child, are to sign and date the form. This is kept on file in the Director’s office.

One of the most common injuries in a group setting is biting. Although all staff members take every precaution to prevent this type of incident, almost every child will be bitten at some time. Young children explore their world with their hands, feet, and mouths. Often, a bite occurs during friendly play as part of the social activity and exploration. Sometimes it occurs when a child is unable to verbalize his or her frustrations. This type of injury occurs in a split second, and there is usually no warning. Biting that continues and hurts others is subject to dismissal from the program (see section on behavior).

In the event a child is bitten, the injured child will immediately be comforted, the bite washed with anti-bacterial soap and an ice pack offered. The biter will be placed in “time-out” for an appropriate amount of time based on their age. After being reminded of the rules, the biter will be helped to re-enter play. An incident report will be written for the parents to sign. The classroom situation will be evaluated to determine if any additional steps can be taken to prevent a repeat incident.

Insurance

Avondale United Methodist Church insurance policy covers your child for emergency procedures while participating in a church-sponsored activity. The church’s coverage is secondary and therefore activated AFTER your medical coverage has been exhausted. Please make sure that the Director has a current copy of your health insurance card on file.

After-Hours Care

Private arrangements between CDO staff and CDO families for child care during non-CDO hours are neither endorsed nor prohibited. Any such arrangement is strictly between the parties involved and does not include CDO.

Lunches

You must provide your child with a lunch daily. Please pack nutritious foods that your child will eat. **Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents must not be served to children UNDER 4 YEARS OF AGE, such as, but not limited to, whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes/sticks and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe.  Food for infants must be cut into pieces 1/4 inch or smaller, food for TODDLERS must be cut into pieces 1/2 inch or smaller to prevent choking.**

**THIS APPLIES TO ALL FOOD, EVEN FOOD PROVIDED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS.**

Please send your child a cup if you would like him/her to have water or you may include a drink for your child. Lunch boxes and drinks must have your child’s first and last name on them. We do not provide refrigeration for lunches, please pack an ice pack in your child’s lunch box.

We also ask that you send foods that do not require heating. Allergy lists are posted in lunch area and all classrooms. Children with severe allergies will be seated at a separate table during lunch time, unless parent request otherwise.

SNACKS/TREATS – VPK children have a weekly treat that goes with the letter they are studying that week. This is provided by parents that sign up for a specific week.

Children will also participate in “special” treats such as Birthdays, Valentines Day, etc. unless you notify us in advance that you do not want your child to participate. If parent’s want to send in cupcakes for your child’s birthday – we ask that you send mini cupcakes instead of regular size.

Miscellaneous Concerns

Our goal is to provide the safest environment possible for every child who enters our doors.

* Sneakers or closed toe shoes are preferred for outside play. Be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor weather. Play clothes are highly recommended. Play is a very important part of a child’s development and we want them to feel free to get dirty if they so choose.
* Please send a complete change of clothes for your child, accidents do happen. You may leave a change of clothes in a bag marked with your child’s name in their classroom. If your child is in diapers, please provide wipes and at least 4 diapers daily.
* **LABEL ALL ITEMS** that you send with your child, lunch box/bag, diaper bags, bottles, etc…
* Children are not allowed to eat or drink in the classrooms, we ask that you please help us by not allowing your child to bring food and drink with them in the mornings. This helps prevent a problem with ants and also of children sharing cups.
* We ask that all toys be kept home. We understand that older children usually have a collection of small items that they like to carry in their pockets, etc… but these items can become a choking hazard for our smaller children if they are left behind in a room that all the children share. We do not allow weapon type toys, i.e. guns, knives, swords.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted once a month as required by law. Emergency evacuation plans are conducted twice a year. Children are made aware of the need to practice exiting the building safely.

Inclement Weather:

School closing is determined by the Duval County School System. If they are closed, we are closed. Weather days may be worked into the calendar (per DCSS) please see yearly school calendar for more information; there is no tuition reduction. Listen to the radio and news channels for school closings. In the event that DCSS closes early, come immediately to pick up your child.

Please refer to our Risk Management Plans for procedures related to emergencies.

Please note that our phone number is 389-4363. Since your children are our first priority, we cannot always answer the phone in a timely manner. Please leave a message and we will check it regularly. If it is an EMERGENCY you can call 389-1175 between 11a.m. - 3 p.m. and leave a message with the church secretary.

The following are available on school website: avondalechildsdayout.com

* A list of school holidays
* A Tuition Fee Form

By my signature below I acknowledge that I have received a copy of and agree to abide by the following:

Family Policy and Procedure Handbook

Behavioral & Disciplinary Policy

Risk Management Plans

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Print Child’s Name**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Print Parent/Guardian Name**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature**

Avondale Childs Day Out Behavioral & Disciplinary

 Policies

The following actions are prohibited and are not used as disciplinary practices:

1. Withholding food or drink
2. Withholding restroom access
3. Threatening physical punishment
4. Physical punishment
5. Humiliating, ridiculing or degrading

All staff members are encouraged to use the following behavior management techniques:

1. Anticipate problems and provide advance intervention
2. Give gentle reminders and explanation of rules
3. Offer the children the opportunity to make choices
4. Offer positive reinforcement (including praise, encouragement and rewards)
5. Redirect the children to areas of interest
6. Clarify instructions to ensure the children understand them
7. Remain consistent with rules, instructions and consequences
8. Allow natural consequences (when not dangerous)
9. Provide renewal times (time out – 1 minute per year of child’s age)

The following have been established in order to address behaviors that go beyond what is considered acceptable in a preschool environment. Since keeping all children safe is our top priority, a pattern of disruptive or abusive/aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.

Examples of abusive/aggressive behaviors that will not be tolerated:

Biting, hitting, kicking, spitting, profanity, disrespect for authority, destruction of property, throwing objects, or other violent acts. If a child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or themselves, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment immediately.

We observe the following procedures concerning inappropriate behaviors:

**1**. Teachers will document all abusive or aggressive behaviors in an official capacity. Any **consistent** negative behavior will be documented on an “incident report” that a parent will need to sign, and a conference will be scheduled with the parent, teacher and director.

**3**. After a behavioral conference occurs, a child will be monitored closely for signs of improvement or for signs of continued abusive or aggressive behavior. If the behavior does not significantly decrease immediately, a parent will be called in for a second conference, and their child will be suspended for three consecutive regularly scheduled school days. There will be no refund or pro-rating of tuition during a suspension.

**4.** After Suspension occurs and a child returns to school, behaviors will continue to be monitored closely for signs of improvement. If the negative behavior continues without improvement, a child will be suspended again. After 2 suspensions and no drastic change in behavior, a child will be removed from the school. There will be no refund or pro-rating of tuition during a suspension or after a child is expelled.

Parental Actions for Child’s Immediate Removal from School

Parents threatens physical or intimidating actions towards children or staff members.

Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of children.

Failure to complete required forms including the child’s immunization and student health records.

Failure to pay/habitual lateness in tuition payments.

Habitual tardiness in picking up your child.