



Hopewell Preschool Ministry

Hopewell Mennonite Church
805 N Main Street
PO Box 316
Kouts, IN 46347

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Preschool: (219) 766-0565
Email: preschool@hopewellmc.org

www.hopewellmc.org/preschool.html



PARENT HANDBOOK

Forward

Welcome to Hopewell Preschool Ministry! Our staff is dedicated to nurturing your child through a wonderful early childhood experience. Please feel free to ask questions, make comments, or voice concerns at any time. We are always happy to help in whatever way we can.

God bless your family as He has
blessed us with the privilege of
educating your child.

-- The HPM Staff

Mission Statement

Hopewell Preschool Ministry serves God and the community by welcoming children in Jesus' name, educating and nurturing each child in partnership with families.

This handbook was prepared for the parents or guardians of children who attend Hopewell Preschool Ministry in Kouts, Indiana. It contains information regarding educational philosophy, staff, policies, procedures, and day-to-day activities of the preschool. It is imperative that these guidelines be applied and upheld fully and equally by all parties in the interest of fairness, and to preserve the integrity of the program.

Hopewell Preschool Ministry and Hopewell Mennonite Church, including the building, parking lot, and playground, is a smoke- and alcohol-free facility. It is prohibited to use either of these substances on our grounds or around children, including but not limited to field trips and other activities. Use or possession of illegal substances or misusing other legal toxic substances are prohibited and will be reported to authorities.

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Revisions or additions to any part of this handbook will only be made with the approval of the Hopewell Mennonite Ministry Board. Parents will be notified immediately of any such changes.

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds. Teach them to your children so that your days may be as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (paraphrased)

GENERAL INFORMATION

PHONE: The preschool phone number is (219) 766-0565. Please leave a message on our voice mail if no one is available to take your call. We will call you back as soon as possible. Our **email address** is preschool@hopewellmc.org.

HOURS: Beginners meet on Tues. and Thurs., 8:15 am – 11:00 am
Pre-Kindergarten meets on Mon., Wed., and Fri., 8:15 am – 11:30 am

EMERGENCY CLOSURES: In the event that the East Porter County Schools are cancelled, we will be too. If East Porter County Schools announce a two-hour delay we will begin at 9:30 and end at the regular dismissal time.

CLOTHING: Please dress your child for active play in comfortable clothes and shoes. Shoes should have a back so they will remain on the child's feet during active play (no flip-flops!). We will try to protect clothing from stains, but we do get messy! Most of our winter days are spent indoors enjoying gym time, but if the weather permits, the children will spend some time outdoors.

COMMUNICATION: Please give any important messages to teachers or administrative staff in writing. Communications from the preschool will most generally be in your child's backpack, handed directly to you, or sent as a text or email. Make it a habit to check your child's backpack each day! And, check your email and text messages regularly.

PARENT VISITS: Parents of children enrolled in the program are encouraged and welcome to visit Hopewell Preschool Ministry. Parent participation in their child's experience is encouraged as long as it does not interfere with the children's classroom learning.

OUR STAFF AND MINISTRY: We only seek employees who benefit your child by challenging their intellectual ability as well as their problem-solving skills. Selection of staff is a top priority at HPM. Our staff members are Christian people who love Jesus! On occasion, a substitute may be hired to fill in for a faculty member. These temporary replacements will be hired with the utmost care, as are the long-term workers. Our staff consists of conscientious people who will strive to provide exceptional experiences for your child. If you have any question about a teacher's qualifications, please feel free to speak with the Hopewell Preschool Ministry Board, or the teacher personally.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION: A fee of \$50.00 is required at the time of registration. The fee covers the cost of processing the application as well as some of the costs of required supplies throughout the year. *This fee is non-refundable.*

TUITION AND FEES: All tuition is due the first of each month unless otherwise noted on the monthly invoice. A \$10.00 late fee will be assessed for any payments not received by the 10th of the month. A fee of \$20.00 will be charged for a check written on insufficient funds. Two such occurrences may result in acceptance of cash or money orders only.

ACH SERVICES: Automatic Clearinghouse (ACH) services are available for those parents who wish to have their child's tuition automatically withdrawn from a bank account each month. An authorization form with instructions will be mailed with the initial back to school invoice and is available on our website. A fee of \$20.00 will be charged for any ACH transaction that is rejected by your bank. For further information or questions, contact the church treasurer at treasurer@hopewellmc.org.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM: If you decide to voluntarily withdraw your child from the program, please notify the office two weeks prior to your child's last day.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS: The Hopewell Preschool Ministry will follow the same holiday schedule and make up days schedule as the East Porter County Schools. When East Porter is closed due to a holiday, we will also be closed. A calendar will be issued at orientation with anticipated closings listed. The preschool program begins the day after Labor Day, and ends the Friday prior to Memorial Day.

***Hopewell Preschool Ministry relies on your financial commitment.
Please make your tuition payments in a timely manner.
Thank you, and God Bless!***

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

AGE REQUIREMENTS: Children enrolling in the Beginners class must be 3 years old on or before July 31 of the year they are enrolled.

Children enrolling in the Pre-Kindergarten class must be 4 years old on or before July 31 of the year they are enrolled.

CLASS LIMITS: The Pre-Kindergarten classes will generally be limited to 15 students. Two classes will be offered in the morning; a third class will be available in the afternoon *if enrollment warrants*. Classes will be held 8:15 – 11:30 am (12:00 noon – 3:15 pm for the afternoon class) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

The Beginners classes will be limited to 10 students. Two classes will be offered in the morning and will be held 8:15 – 11:00 am on Tuesday and Thursday.

FIELD TRIPS AND SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Field trips and other school related activities are meant to be an extension of the classroom, and as such are not designed as family vacations or family outings. Chaperone selection and usage shall be determined by the teachers based on the purpose of the trip, and those who accept the responsibility to serve as chaperones should not plan to bring younger children or other relatives unless their inclusion is an expressed part of the announced function of the trip. Teachers will send permission slips home prior to each trip, and those who wish to volunteer are requested to indicate their willingness to assist in writing. Parents who cannot subscribe to the following qualifications and restrictions should not volunteer to assist.

QUALIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS:

1. A limited number, if any, which the teachers will announce in advance
2. Selection based on need and prior participation
3. Volunteering does not automatically result in selection
4. Must be the parent or legal guardian of a child attending the trip
5. May not bring other siblings or family members
6. Must follow all school rules and pay the required field trip fee
7. Use of alcohol and tobacco products is strictly prohibited
8. Cell phone usage is to be limited to emergency use only

Transportation for field trips will be determined by the purpose and destination of the trip, and may include passenger vans, personal vehicles, and/or a school bus. Children traveling in passenger vans will be buckled in according to current regulations. In the event chaperones are asked to drive they will use their own vehicle, take their own child, and follow the bus or van(s). Children will never be placed in someone else's vehicle without prior arrangements of all parties involved. In such cases, chaperones are encouraged to carpool to limit the number of vehicles at the trip destination.

You, the parent, are an important part of our parent/child/staff team. Mutual sharing of your child's interests and feelings will help us give your child a rewarding experience. When attending trips, it is the parent's responsibility to pay attention to the guide, listen to the information being relayed to the children, and cooperate with the teachers in charge. Parents who are disruptive and/or uncooperative on field trips will be requested not to attend in the future.

DISCIPLINE

It is our goal to always speak to your child in a positive way. The goal of discipline at Hopewell Preschool Ministry is to help children establish and develop self-control. Discipline will be based upon love of and respect for the child. It is an opportunity to discuss possible scenarios and outcomes with regards to behavior. Most of the time, intervention provides an opportunity to use problem-solving skills with the child and encourage positive behavior outcomes. In most cases, a gentle reprimand and a brief explanation of why the behavior is inappropriate will suffice. Other forms of discipline may involve time outs, withdrawal of privileges, logical consequence, or, if all else fails, withdrawal from the program. All rules are enforced to ensure child safety and well-being.

In the event a child aggressively harms or in any way compromises the safety of other children in the group, Hopewell Preschool Ministry reserves the right to temporarily or permanently remove the child from the program. This would also be the case in the event of chronic or excessive class disruptions. These situations would involve parent/teacher discussion and the approval of the HPM Board before any permanent action would be taken.

The uses of incentives such as stickers, stamps, etc., are used to encourage good behavior and foster positive attitudes. The teachers work to set up situations in which the children can make small achievements, which in turn help to increase self-esteem. This is a building process that goes on from day-to-day for life.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE POLICY:

1. We use a “1, 2, 3, You’re Out” procedure. Each child is given two chances to stop negative behavior. When a “3” is reached, a time-out is initiated. Upon completion of the time out, the teacher will discuss the behavior with the child and discuss ways in which the behavior can be changed.
2. Difficult problems will be discussed with the parents. We will work together as a team to rectify poor behavior and set up a behavior management program for children with difficult behavior.
3. If discipline problems continue to disrupt the class and/or daily routine at Hopewell Preschool Ministry, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. Parents will be included in the process with notes, phone calls, emails, and/or meetings,
 - b. If extreme problems continue to exist, the child will be dismissed with a one-week notice to the parents.
4. Parent/Teacher Conferences can be set up on an as-needed basis. Please feel free to call for an appointment any time during the year if you would like to talk with the teachers. Communication is the key to a positive experience.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FIRE DRILLS: We will practice fire drills. At that time, children will:

1. WALK to the closest exit.
2. EVACUATE and meet at the playground fence on the south side of the building.

An ALTERNATE MEETING PLACE has been arranged with the Kouts Town Hall. In the event of an actual fire, children will be transported to the Kouts Town Hall where they will be kept until parents have been contacted for pick up, using information provided by the parents during enrollment. For this reason it is extremely important that parents keep the teachers informed of up-to-date contact information.

TORNADO OR OTHER SEVERE WEATHER: In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, the children will gather in the basement hallway with classroom doors closed to shield the children from windows and wind-blown objects. The children will be instructed to sit on the floor next to the wall, put their head between their knees and their hands over their heads. With very small children, the staff will be responsible for shielding these children with their own bodies in the same sitting position outlined above. Tornado drills will be conducted seasonally.

SERIOUS ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES: Immediately following a **serious accident or injury**, 911 will be called, after which the parent will be notified. A staff member will relay information of the incident, the degree of injury, and any pertinent hospital information to the parent. Any medical costs incurred are the sole responsibility of the parent. Hopewell Preschool Ministry provides for staff training in CPR, First Aid, and Universal Precautions. CPR and general First Aid will be administered as needed and staff shall be protected under the Good Samaritan Law for acting in good faith in an emergency situation. If a child has been **slightly injured**, the parent will be notified by telephone or written note based on the teachers professional assessment of the situation.

BUILDING SAFETY: All entrances to the building will remain locked. Parents who visit during school hours will need to signal their presence by using the doorbell at the south entrance, and wait to be recognized before being admitted. In the event of a terrorist situation, children will remain in the locked building until the threat has passed, or they have been released to the safety of their parent or guardian.

ILLNESS, SERIOUS INJURY, OR DEATH OF A PROVIDER: In the event a staff member is not in attendance because of illness or serious injury, a qualified substitute will take their place until such time as they can return. In the event of a death, the preschool will close for two days for the visitation and funeral and will reopen the following day. Intervention will be available for those children needing assistance during the grieving process.

MEDICATION, HEALTH, AND ILLNESS

IMMUNIZATIONS: Your child's immunization record must accompany the fully completed registration form or be submitted prior to attendance at Hopewell Preschool Ministry. Required vaccinations must be received before entering the program, or the parent must submit a note from the doctor indicating the timeline for completion. It is very important to report any changes in health information so your child's records remain current. If you choose to exempt your child from immunizations on the basis of religious grounds, a written statement signed by the parent is required to be submitted with registration paperwork. An "Immunization Religious Exemption Letter," based on current guidelines of the State of Indiana, is available on request.

MEDICATION: Hopewell Preschool Ministry staff will not administer medications to students. If it is necessary for the child to receive medication that cannot be given before or after school, the parent or guardian must come to the school at the appropriate time to administer it.

MEDICAL EXCLUSION: Children will not be accepted at the preschool with any of the following conditions:

- Fever above 100 degrees F (without the use of Tylenol or other pain reliever)
- A potentially serious illness with behavioral changes such as lethargy
- Diarrhea
- Frequent vomiting
- Mouth sores due to germs and if the child is salivating
- Pink eye with or without discharge
- Impetigo and streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after treatment
- Croup
- Head lice or scabies until after treatment and all nits have been removed
- Chickenpox until all lesions are crusted
- Pertussis until five days after antibiotic therapy has begun
- Mumps, measles, and Hepatitis A

NOTIFICATIONS: If your child will not be in attendance due to an illness, or for any other reason, please contact the school to inform the staff of the reason. It is imperative, although it may be embarrassing, for you to notify the school immediately of any situation which may impose a health threat to other children and staff such as contagious diseases or head lice.

A parent will be notified immediately if a child is ill or seriously injured at the preschool. A sick child must be picked up within one hour after the parent has been notified.

No children will be accepted at the preschool until they are free of fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for at least 24 hours. Children with communicable illness will be excluded from the preschool until a physician recommends their return and provides a written statement that the child is free from disease and is not a carrier.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

1. Staff members with communicable diseases will be excluded from work.
2. We do our best to keep children healthy, including cleaning and disinfecting tables and bathroom facilities. We also teach the children to wash their hands after using the bathroom, sneezing, coughing, and before snack time
3. Bodily discharges are properly disposed of to prevent the spread of disease.

DAILY ROUTINE

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL: A day at Hopewell Preschool Ministry begins with parents entering the north drive, proceeding around the building to the south entrance, and stopping under the canopy. During preschool hours, your child will be removed from and placed into your car by a staff member. In the event you are arriving after admittance or release time, the parent must enter the building and must escort the child to the classroom to be received by the teacher. Please hold your child's hand for safety while in the drive or parking lot! No child, regardless of age, may be dropped off at the door. Please make goodbyes warm and affectionate, but brief. Your child's adjustment to preschool will be accomplished much sooner if parents do not stretch out the separation process.

AUTHORIZATION TO PICK UP CHILDREN: If someone other than the parent or guardian is picking your child up after school, we need a written note from the parent. If a situation develops after the school day begins where someone else needs to pick up your child, please call and advise us of the situation, providing us with the name of the person. Your cooperation in this matter is a necessity.

IDENTIFICATION: Please do not be offended if identification is requested by any staff member. Safety is our number one priority, and we would rather be safe than sorry!

COMMUNICATIONS: Please send all messages in writing. Messages to teachers or other personnel should be hand-delivered. Communications between the school and parent will generally be placed where the parent will successfully find it, either hand carried, or in the child's backpack. *Please check backpacks daily!*

WHAT TO BRING

TUITION: When making tuition payments, please hand these directly to the teacher. To insure proper credit, please write your child's name on the memo line of your check. We prefer not to receive cash payments, but if you must pay by cash please place it in a sealed envelope with your child's name and the amount of cash included written on the outside. Please do not place tuition payments in your child's backpack. The teachers do not go through the backpacks on a daily basis to retrieve items.

WEATHER APPROPRIATE CLOTHING: Please send weather appropriate clothing for outdoor play, such as coats, hats, gloves, and boots. We will try to spent time outdoors when the weather is acceptable; otherwise we will have indoor gym time.

BACKPACKS: Please provide a large enough school bag to carry papers, art projects, etc., to and from school. Remember to put your child's name in their school bag for easy identification.

PERSONAL ITEMS: It is very important that you label all items you send to preschool. If this is not done, it is very likely the item may not get back to you. Please do not permit your child to bring toys or other personal items to school. We will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.

SNACKS



1. Our intent in involving children in this non-academic area is to promote responsibility. To accomplish this, we ask that each child in preschool select a snack and a drink (cereal, crackers, snack bar, juice box – something healthy!) the night before school and place it in his or her backpack. It is also important that you choose a place in your home to keep your child's backpack so it can always be found and will be ready for school. If something is always placed in the same spot, you should be able to find it!
2. You may bring a special treat for your child's birthday. If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate it on your child's "half-birthday:" e.g. if your child's birthday is July 10, we will celebrate it on January 10 at school. Please check your orientation package to identify the day your child's birthday will be celebrated in class.
3. You may be asked to donate store-bought cookies and/or juice for parties during the year, including but not limited to Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.
4. Please notify the staff if your child suffers food allergies so we can make everyone aware of the need to eliminate such foods from snacks and parties. The enrollment form has a place for you to include information about allergies.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

MISSED DAYS DUE TO WEATHER OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

The Board of Hopewell Preschool Ministry (HPM) recognizes that there may be days for which school is canceled due to weather or other circumstances that are beyond the control of either the preschool or the parents. This policy reflects the need to meet HPM's financial obligations, while at the same time addressing both the loss of educational opportunity for students and the financial impact for parents.

1. Costs of maintaining the preschool are carefully examined each year. A yearly dollar amount is determined, and parents are billed one-ninth of the cost each month that school is in session, September through May, regardless of the number of days attended.
2. The Board considers one week of absence due to weather or other circumstances, without reimbursement, as being fair and equitable to both parties.
3. For the Beginner class, which normally meets two days per week, one week will be defined as two days. Up to two additional days will be made up the week after school is dismissed for the year. Any days beyond that will be credited on the May invoice at the rate of \$10 per day to students of record on the excessive canceled days.
4. For the Pre-Kindergarten class, which normally meets three days per week, one week will be defined as three days. Make up days will be scheduled to coincide with weekday make up days established by the East Porter County School Corporation. In the event that additional days need to be made up, for each day missed five consecutive school days will be extended thirty minutes. The extended days will begin on the last day of the school year and be counted backwards as needed during the month of May. Any days beyond that will be credited on the May invoice at the rate of \$10 per day to students of record on the excessive canceled days.
5. This policy will be reviewed annually.