



Kids First

Day School

First Methodist Church of Trussville

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Trussville, AL. 35173

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2023-2024

Parent Handbook & Policy Manual

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Your Kids First Day School Handbook

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with *Kids First Day School* Policies and Procedures at the First Methodist Church of Trussville, and to offer suggestions for making your child's adjustment to school easier and more pleasant.

After reading the handbook, **please sign and return** the *Kids First Day School* Parent Handbook & Policy Manual Acknowledgement Form on page 29.

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Welcome to Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville

The First Methodist Church of Trussville has established *Kids First Day School* as a church ministry that seeks to serve the community in the spirit of Christ. The tuition and fees support the salaries of the Kids First staff, teachers, and the operating expenses of the program. The operation of the center is subject to all Church policies and the supervision of the Church. In accordance with state family childcare licensing regulations, childcare services are available without discrimination based on sex, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, or ancestry.

This ministry is an integral part of The First Methodist Church of Trussville's total program. Our Christian staff has a deep concern for the total development of each child and for the well-being of the family of each child. Well-trained and dedicated teachers, enthusiastic and cooperative parents, and the committed support of the members of The First Methodist Church of Trussville are the necessary ingredients for our outstanding program.

We welcome the opportunity to have you and your child in our program. If you should have any questions regarding these policies, please feel free to contact the director.

Values, Mission, and Vision of Kids First Day School

We value:

- Children
- Safety
- Authentic Stimulation
- Parental Confidence
- Loving Environment
- Spiritual Development
- Excellence
- Constant Improvement
- Family
- Community
- Outreach/Mission
- Students Who Are Prepared for Public Kindergarten
- Diversity
- Social Interaction

Mission Statement

The Mission of *Kids First Day School* is to develop children who are spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally prepared for future growth. We will accomplish this mission by providing a **loving and disciplined** environment that encourages growth through an excellent and engaging curriculum, delivered by dedicated, qualified teachers and staff.

Vision Statement

When you walk onto our campus, you will see:

- Children working independently and together in pairs or small groups, sharing with each other;
- Staff interacting with the children in a prepared and consistent manner;
- Church members and staff enriching the children through spiritual learning and growth;
- Parents involved in program activities;
- The building attractively decorated in a child-centered manner, emphasizing spiritual and educational activities. The playground free of litter and with safe, attractive play equipment;
- Children captivated by lesson presentations; and
- A variety of instructional materials available for use with the children.

Registration for Kids First Day School

Registration for each school year begins in February. Registration progresses in this order:

February	Presently enrolled children, their siblings, First Methodist Church of Trussville Staff
Early March	First Methodist Church of Trussville active members (for a minimum of 6 months)
Late March	Trussville Community and the general public

Kids First Enrollment Requirements

The amount of the annual registration fee will be determined by the director in conjunction with appropriate committees such as Finance or the *Kids First* Board. The \$125.00 Registration Fee is non-refundable and must be paid at the time of registration. Additionally, an annual Activity/Supply Fee of \$225.00 is due with the Kids First Contract. All required forms must be completed and returned to *Kids First* Day School Administration along with the registration and supply fees prior to the child's first day of attendance.

Forms to be returned before your Registration is complete include:

1. **Registration Form**
2. **Child's Preadmission Record (please print clearly)**
3. **Current Immunization Form (Completed by a Physician)**
4. **Child Medical Report (Completed by a Physician)**
5. ***Kids First* Day School Signed Contract**
6. ***Kids First* Day School Parent Handbook & Policy Manual Acknowledgement Form**
7. **Signed, Notarized Form of Affidavit (required by State Department of Human Resources)**
8. **Video Consent Form**
9. **School Cast Notification Form**
10. **(Optional) Live Streaming Video form (additional fee of \$5.00 per month)**

Children accepted in the *Kids First* Day School Program are those who can benefit from group experiences in our setting. *Kids First* Day School Program reserves the right to disenroll any child from enrollment. Kids First Day School will provide a two-week notice, unless the child is a danger to the staff or other children or unreasonably disruptive. In the rare case that this becomes necessary, the director will try to assist parents in assessing the possible needs of the child and will offer suggestions for further evaluation.

Parents may withdraw their child from enrollment upon request by giving a **thirty (30) day written notice**. Tuition will not be prorated for partial month's attendance unless a thirty (30) day written notice is given to the director. Parents will be responsible for one month's tuition if a thirty (30) day written notice is not given.

Tuition

Kids First Day School Program is a **full time**, self-supporting and self-sustaining entity and, as such, cannot afford to accumulate delinquent revenues from student fees. **Tuition is due before the 15th of each month.**

Monthly tuition for Infant/Toddlers:

Beginners, Creepers, A Step Up, Explorers, Seekers and Adventurers is \$811.00

Monthly tuition for 3 and 4K: (children must be potty-trained)

Early Learners, Navigators, Pioneers, and Challengers is \$770.00

Monthly tuition for our School Age program:

Monthly tuition for *After Care* for School Age Children is \$300.00.

Daily tuition for School Age Children during *Trussville City Schools* holidays/break is \$32.00.

Weekly tuition for the School Age Summer Program is \$160.00.

Note: The tuition figures provided above represent the current tuition rate as of the effective date of this handbook. These rates are subject to change.

Discounts: A 10% monthly tuition discount is applied to the oldest siblings enrolled in the program.

Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville has set forth the following policies:

- A \$15.00 late fee will be charged to all accounts not current by the close of business on the 15th of each month.
- Accounts past due after the 15th of each month will receive a reminder letter from the director that tuition is due before the end of the month.
- Uncollected balances: Parents agree to pay all costs of collection, including a reasonable attorney's fee, if services of an attorney are utilized, whether or not suit is filed. Parents agree that if, and as often as any account is given to an attorney for collection, parents will pay *Kids First* its reasonable attorney's fee, together with all court costs and other expenses paid or incurred by *Kids First*.

- Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville reserves the right to dismiss any student whose tuition or other fees are not paid by the last business day of the month.

Miscellaneous Fees

- A yearly \$125.00 Registration fee
- A yearly \$225.00 Activity/Supply fee
- Optional \$5.00 monthly Video Fee. This service allows parents access to live streaming video of their child's classroom on their mobile device.
- Mat fee (a one-time charge for children aged 18 months old through 4K at enrollment) is \$44.00.
- A Technology fee of \$50.00 per year will be collected over two semesters. \$25.00 will be charged in August and \$25.00 in January.
- 4K classroom children may incur the cost of a field trip. Cost will be determined upon the field trip that is taken.
- School Age children enrolled in our summer program will have a Field Trip fee of \$200.00
- School Age children may incur a cost of a field trip during Holiday Care. This cost will be determined upon the field trip taken.
- \$15.00 Late Fee on tuition if the payment is not received by the 15th of each month.
- Late departure fee (per minute) if your child has not been picked up by 6:00 p.m. This fee is \$1.00 per minute for the first three offenses and then \$5.00 per minute after that.
- A \$25.00 "No Call" Fee will be added to School Age accounts if the center is not notified by 2:00 each day that a child will not ride the bus/van.
- \$36.00 Return check fee
- \$1.00 bank draft fee (ACH) per transaction for online checking account payments
- A 2.85% (current rate) transaction fee for online credit card payments

Payments

Viewing your account information and balances can be made through our *Smartcare* Parent App or via the Parent Web Portal. Payments may be made by Debit Card, Credit Card or by Checking Account. Payments will directly be posted to your account. Please note, there is a \$1.00 bank draft fee (ACH) per checking account payment and a current rate of 2.85% transaction fee for online credit card payments.

Another method of payment is by check. Please make checks payable to *Kids First*. Check scanners are used so only use blue or black ink. Please place all tuition payments in the tuition lock box located outside of the director's office. Be sure to include the name of your child and the time period the check covers in the memo section of the check. There is a \$36.00 charge for all returned checks. *Kids First* will not resubmit a returned check through the bank a second time. Payment for that month (including the \$36.00 charge) must then be made by cash, cashier's check, or money order.

There is no reduction in tuition for holidays, absences or other related closures due to weather or infectious disease outbreak. There is no prorating for partial month's attendance, except in the case a child begins attending in the middle of a month and upon withdrawal if a thirty (30) day written notice is given to the director.

Payments designated for fees other than tuition (such as special field trips, activity/supply fees, pictures, nap mats, etc.) must be made separately from tuition payments. Please indicate the item or event that you are paying for and your child's name on the memo section of your check or on the envelope if you are paying in cash.

An annual statement will be issued at the end of the year to be used for income tax records. After withdrawal from the program, a statement may be requested during the month of January, following the year in which the child attended *Kids First*.

SmartCare tm

Smartcaretm is the Kids First Day School cloud-based management software. *Smartcaretm* allows our parents to scan their child in/out (handwritten sign in/out signatures will still be required by the state of Alabama), to view app for teacher communication, to view billing and account information and to pay an account balance online by debit, credit, or checking account. A yearly Technology fee of \$50.00 will be collected over two semesters: \$25.00 will be charged in August and \$25.00 in January.

Parents/Guardians should upload pictures of your child and family to the SmartCare app. This will assist the Kids First Day School staff with an extra identification verification.

Please update the Center or the SmartCare app immediately with new phone numbers, addresses, people to add or remove from pick up, or other contact information.

Kids First Day School Program

- Our Day School Program serves children 6 weeks through 5 years of age during the **hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., Monday through Friday**. Children will be placed in classrooms according to their date of birth as of September 1, 2023.

- Please send a change of clothes, with all items labeled, in a Ziploc bag. Place the child's name on the outside of the bag. Please dress your child for play and comfort.
- Your child will not be released to anyone who is not listed on your information form or who does not show proper identification. (Proper identification is a picture I.D. such as a driver's license.) Please keep these names current. Written permission must be sent if any persons are sent to pick up your child that is not on your approved list of pick-up persons. *Kids First* will call the parent to confirm that a person has permission to leave with your child.
- *Kids First* Day School will provide lunch daily. Parents are responsible for bringing snacks.
- For the safety of the children, please park, turn off your car, and walk into the building to drop your child off and pick your child up. Children are NOT allowed to walk in/out of the building alone.
- Parents must sign their child in and out each day. This is a requirement from the state of Alabama. Please sign your name instead of just your initials. Parents must walk in with your child to their classroom.
- In order for your child to benefit from the complete day's schedule, it is important that you arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. each day.
- Please honor our hours. ***Kids First* Day School closes at 6:00 p.m. Parents should arrive by 5:45 p.m.** to pick up children and have enough time to collect their belongings and speak with teachers. **All persons should leave the building by 6:00 p.m.** A late fee will be charged to your account if your child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m. The late fee is as follows: The first three times in a calendar year that your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m., a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child will automatically be charged to your account. After the third late pickup after 6:00 p.m., a late fee of \$5.00 per minute per child will automatically be charged to your account. A child can be dismissed from the program if a parent continues to be late.
- Vinyl mats are required at naptime for our children aged 18 months old through 4K and are available for purchase through the center for **\$44.00**. Each child must bring a crib sheet, blanket, or roll mat to use on top of the mat as requested by classroom needs. Please label each of these items, take them home to be laundered each Friday and bring them back to school on Monday.

Holidays

Because we must meet payroll expenses, full fees will be due for the days in which *Kids First* Day School observes holidays. Please refer to your calendar for Holiday closures.

***Kids First* will be CLOSED on the following days:**

- **Labor Day (Monday, September 4, 2023)**

- **Thanksgiving Holiday (Wednesday, November 22, Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24, 2023)**
- **Christmas Holidays (Monday, December 25, and Tuesday, December 26)**
- **New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (Monday, January 1, and Tuesday, January 2, 2024)**
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Monday, January 15, 2024)**
- **Teacher Workday (Thursday, March 28, 2024)**
- **Good Friday (Friday, March 29, 2024)**
- **Memorial Day (Monday, May 27, 2024)**
- **Independence Day/Summer Break (Wednesday, July 3, Thursday, July 4, and Friday, July 5, 2024)**
- **Teacher Workdays (Thursday, August 1 and Friday, August 2, 2024)**
- **OPEN House 2024-2025 (Friday, August 2, 2024)**

Infant Classrooms

- Parents must send prepared formula or breastmilk in LABELED plastic bottles. No glass bottles are allowed.
- In the event that breast milk is spilled or unsuitable to serve to breastfed infants, Parents are required to fill out a written plan of action regarding the nutritional requirements and feeding of the breastfed infant.
- Parents of infant children must provide diapers, baby wipes and several changes of clothing. In the event your child runs out of diapers or other essentials, you will be notified so you can bring them the following day.
- Cloth diapers are prohibited unless the child is allergic to disposables. A physician's statement documenting the allergy will be required.
- The staff caring for infants will provide daily written information concerning each child's social behavior, sleeping, eating, and toileting habits.
- Parents must sign infants in/out each day. Parents shall inform staff of last feeding time and discuss/note any changes in feeding, development of rashes, or sleeping schedule, or any other important information to allow a successful day.
- All diaper bags, bottles, pacifiers must be CLEARLY labeled with the child's name.
- Parents of infant children must bring a can of liquid formula to use for an emergency situation only.

Toddler Classrooms

- Parents of toddler age children must provide diapers/ pull ups, and baby wipes. In the event your child runs out of diapers or other essentials, you will be notified so you can bring them the following day.
- Toddler Classroom staff will assist parents in potty-training children. *Refer to the Kids First Day School Toilet Training Policy.*

- Children should wear easily changed clothing. Do not send toddlers in snapped on one-piece clothing. Parents are responsible to send extra sets of clothing and replenish as needed.
- Toddler children are required to wear supportive, comfortable shoes.
- The staff caring for Toddler children will provide daily written information concerning each child's social behavior, sleeping, eating, and toileting habits.
- Children must be toilet trained before entering the Kids First Day School 3K Program.
- Parents must sign Toddler children in/out each day. Parents shall inform staff of any changes in eating, development of rashes, sleeping schedule, or any other important information to allow a successful day.

3K and 4K Preschool Program

- Preschool children should arrive before 8:30 a.m. to achieve beneficial instructional time and routine.
- Preschool children will be involved in Music Programs.
- 4K children will participate in a Graduation Ceremony.
- Please refer to the Kids First Calendar of Events and the Classroom Lesson plans to discuss and prepare for the children's daily activities.
- Parents of Preschool children should discuss evaluations with their teachers as we prepare them for the school system.
- Parents should address inappropriate behaviors and assist staff with a behavior plan of action.
- Children should dress in appropriate clothing and shoes for comfort. Shorts should be worn under dresses or skirts.
- 4K classroom may schedule field trips throughout the year to accompany their curriculum. Field trip fees cost will be an additional charge.
- Join our staff to praise and show enthusiasm in the progress of your child's development skills.
- Remind your children to take care of manipulatives, books, and other important learning tools.
- Prepare children for school readiness by allowing them to open bags and containers, pour their own drink, dress themselves (including socks and shoes), and other independent self-help skills.
- Keep any items such as toys, purses, jewelry, money, gum, or candy at home. These items are not allowed at *Kids First Day School* unless permitted for a special purpose requested by the teacher.

After Care for School-Age Children

Parents of children enrolled in Trussville City Schools, grades K – 5 may enroll in our After Care Program for their school-age children. **The School Age After Care Program begins in August and ends the last week of May.** A separate registration form is required for our School Age Summer Program.

Monthly tuition for School-Age Children in After Care is \$300.00.

The daily fee for School-Age children during Trussville City School holidays or breaks is \$32.00 or \$160.00 a week.

After Care: Children will be picked up and transported to the church from Paine, Magnolia and Cahaba Schools by church bus/van/TCS School Bus. Kids First will also pick up children from all Trussville Schools on early dismissal days. At the church, children will be provided a variety of small group activities including reading, homework time, art, drama, sports, and seasonal projects. Children may stay until the After Care Program **closes at 5:45 p.m.**

- Children in After Care are asked to bring their homework assignments to work on after school each day. The School Age children will also participate in group games, structured activities and outside/gym play.
- Electronic games, phones or other toys are not permitted.

Parents must notify Kids First if their child will not be riding the van/bus. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged if you do not call to let us know of their absence.

Summer Care for School-Age Children

Summer Care for School-age children (between the grades of K-5 and 5th grade) will be offered during the months of June, July and August. A separate information brochure and registration will be provided in April.

Summer Care for School-Age Children is \$160.00 per week and will have an additional field trip fee.

Kids First Curriculum

Our teachers plan and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on *Pinnacle*, a faith-based curriculum that brings a Bible focus to each classroom. Our curriculum promotes the social, emotional, and spiritual development of each child, as well as the development of language skills, math, science skills, reading readiness, interest in music and art, cognitive skills, self-help skills, problem-solving skills and fine and gross motor skills. Developmentally appropriate activities are implemented in all aged classrooms.

The children spend their day in large and small groups, and in learning centers where they may play alone or interact in groups using music, art, books, science, or other manipulative materials.

Kids First Day School strives to reach the standards for childcare and preschools set by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) as well as meet the Alabama PK Standards.

Your child will participate in the following activities:

1. Learning Center Activities
2. Large and Small Group Activities
3. Outdoor, Indoor (Activity Room) and Outdoor Sensory Area Play
4. Music
5. Creative Movement Activities
6. Chapel/Bible
7. One-on-One Time with a Teacher or Instructional Assistant
8. Spanish (3K and 4K)
9. Technology (3K and 4K)

Field Trips

Parents of the 4K classroom will be asked to send money for their child to attend field trips. Field trips for the 4K are primarily planned to correspond with the units of study and provide an opportunity for learning experiences outside of the classroom. Our staff urges parents to share some of these experiences with the children. During these trips, parents are expected to take an active part in the supervision of the children. Therefore, siblings are NOT allowed on these trips.

Each child must bring his/her own car seat for use on field trips. The State of Alabama Law requires all children less than six years of age to ride in a full car seat unless they weigh over 40 pounds. It is very important for the safety of your child that they ride in an approved car seat appropriate for their weight and height.

Children involved with the School-Age Program may have a field trip fee during Trussville City School Christmas/Spring Break. You will be notified of cost two weeks prior to any field trip. Children enrolled with our School-Age Summer Program will have a Field Trip Fee of \$200.00. This fee will be due during School-Age Summer Registration in April.

Transportation to and from field trips will be provided by approved drivers of the First Methodist Church of Trussville vans and/or bus. Proper procedures to ensure the safety of all children will be followed by the staff and parents accompanying the children on these field trips.

Teachers and Staff

The teachers and staff at *Kids First Day School* are experienced professionals, trained to guide your child's development and education. To maintain that high level of professionalism, *Kids First* provides regular, ongoing training for all our teachers. A teacher/staff member with a current *CPR and First Aid* training will be on the premises at all times.

Your child's teacher develops schedules so that your child can better benefit from a daily routine. Children are with familiar teachers all day. The ratio of teachers to children meets the requirements set forth by DHR, and the First Methodist Church of Trussville, Ministry Safe Policy.

The teachers and staff of *Kids First Day School* invite you to visit your child's class whenever possible, so that you may see what wonderful learning experiences your child is offered each day. If you are not able to visit your child's classroom, conferences and regular conversations with your child's teachers will enable you to evaluate your child's progress and education.

The director and each employee of *Kids First Day School* **are required under law** to report evidence of suspected child abuse or neglect to DHR, local law enforcement and will record such evidence in the child's records.

First Methodist Church of Trussville, Ministry Safe Policy

The First Methodist Church of Trussville seeks to create a safe environment for children and youth in which opportunities for abuse are minimized by the provision of proper enlistment and supervision of those persons working with them. All persons at *Kids First Day School* and the First Methodist Church of Trussville who intend to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults at church sponsored events, including overnight or longer events, shall be properly screened and attend an age-appropriate orientation/training session on child protection and abuse and have a current national background check.

Discipline Policy

Kids First Day School utilizes positive discipline founded on God's love and a respect for the rights of others. *Kids First Day School* staff shall also model and coach the desirable behavior. Rules and limits are established at the beginning of the year so that the children will understand what is expected of them. Adult assistance and guidance are offered to help the children develop self-discipline and self-control during their physical and emotional growth.

Sometimes it may be necessary to separate a child from the other children, redirect their attention to another activity or simply have a teacher move closer to an area to help control student behavior. For unacceptable behavior (biting, kicking, hitting, etc.), a "time out"

may be used briefly to calm a child. Parents will be contacted concerning unacceptable behavior through an Incident Report, note, email, and/or phone call.

The following is an explanation for discipline guidelines as established by Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville:

Children under two years of age:

1. Try to engage the child and redirect his/her behavior to something more positive.
2. Redirect the child's activity to a more active time or quiet time, whichever seems to be needed.
3. Encourage the child to express his/her feelings in appropriate language.
4. Remove equipment or material if it seems to be bringing about consistently inappropriate behavior in the children.
5. Place the child in "time out" if the behavior continues.

Pre-School (Children two years and older):

Each class will incorporate a visual aide for charting daily behavior. Your classroom teacher will discuss the process and will notify you with any concerns of behavior.

1. Redirection
2. Verbal reprimand
3. Removal from the group for alternative activities or time out
4. If the behavior continues, a "time out" in the Kids First Day School office and a note home to the parent.

School-Age:

When a child uses inappropriate behavior, the following discipline may be employed:

1. Time out where the behavior incident occurred.
2. Time out in the Kids First Day School office along with the child writing an explanation of the behavior.
3. Calling parents to pick up the child.

Time Out

An average amount of time for "time out" is one minute for each year of the child's age. At the end of any "time out" period, the teacher will talk with the child about the incident, why the child was placed in "time out", and problem solve with them about what should have happened and what is expected. Positive reinforcement and recognition will be given for appropriate behavior. "Time out" will not be carried over from one day to the next.

Corporal punishment or withholding food (any food that is not part of a special classroom activity) will NOT be used as disciplinary action under any circumstances.

Serious Behavior Problems

Please keep in mind that there is more than one child to care for in each classroom. If all energy is spent on any one child that continues to be difficult, we will not be able to give the kind of care that the other children require. Immediate action will be addressed between the center and parents to develop an appropriate plan of action if any child is a threat of safety to themselves or other children.

If problems persist so that the child's behavior is disruptive and the center staff is unable to find acceptable solutions, a last resort is to ask that the child be removed from the program. The Kids First Day School program may assist in the recommendation for a more suitable program.

Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville has the right to terminate a parent contract due to any violent action directed from a child/parent toward another child, staff member, parent, or visitor.

Biting Policy

A child biting another child is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors in a group childcare. It can occur without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim and the parents involved.

For many toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem. Young toddlers bite for exploration, teething, to get attention, to become more independent, to get what they want, and sometimes to imitate others. Older toddlers may bite because they are angry, frustrated, seeking attention, or experimenting to see what will happen if they bite.

No matter what the cause, biting in a group situation causes strong feelings with all involved. It does help, however, to be aware of the potential problem before it happens, and to form a plan of action if it does occur. The staff of Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville has developed the following plan of action to be used if and when biting occurs.

For the Biter:

1. The biter is immediately removed from the situation.
2. The staff will avoid any immediate responses that reinforce the biting or call attention to the biter. The caring attention is focused on the victim.
3. The biter is not allowed to return to play area and is talked to on a level that the child can understand.
4. Redirect the child to other play.
5. Write an incident report to notify parents.

For the Victim:

1. Separate the victim from the biter.
2. Comfort the child.
3. Administer first aid
4. Write an accident report to notify parents.

After 3 consecutive bites:

1. Room staff will meet with the Director on a routine basis for advice, support, and strategy planning.
2. Every occurrence including attempted bites, will be charted to determine cause.
3. We inform the parents of the problem and explain the procedures that will be followed to handle the situation. This will include conferences and follow-up meetings. It is our hope that we can work together as partners to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change.
4. An additional staff member (if available) to “Shadow” children who indicate a tendency to bite. This staff member will attempt to lead off biting situations before they occur, teach non-biting responses to situations, reinforce appropriate behavior, and adapt the program, if possible, to better fit the individual child's needs.
5. *Kids First Day School* must protect the safety of our children. If the child continues to bite and no progress has been reached in a reasonable amount of time, we will notify the parent that the child should be removed from *Kids First Day School* and will offer suggestions for a more suitable environment.

Toilet Training Policy

Although there is no magic age for a child to be toilet-trained, when your child has reached their cognitive and physical development to be “diaper-free”, they will successfully begin to use the toilet. *Kids First Day School* of the First Methodist Church of Trussville has set these guidelines for the children in the Adventurers, Seekers and Explorers Classrooms:

1. Keep children on a regular schedule for them to create a routine.
2. Use positive reinforcements for success and for attempts. When accidents happen, they should be treated casually. Chastising will be avoided.
3. Children should be dressed in self-manageable clothing (no snaps, buttons, zippers, or hooks) to allow them to be more independent in the process.
4. Toilet Logs will be posted to inform parents of child's progress.
5. After 2 weeks of being accident free, *Kids First Day School* will allow child to start wearing underwear.
6. Toilet training children must have at least 2 extra sets of clothing (including underwear, socks, and shoes). As soiled clothes are sent home, please make sure to replace them.
7. Parents must send pull-ups with fasteners on the side.

Please remember that young children need to be ready for toilet training in order to be successful. Toilet training usually takes 3-6 months and relapses are very common.

Children must be potty-trained in order to enroll in our 3K classrooms.

Clothing

Children should wear washable, comfortable clothing each day. Clothing should be easy for the child to get on and off independently. Please choose clothing that will not require the child to be concerned about getting dirty during activities such as painting, outdoor play, water, and/or sand play. Tennis shoes are best for play and safety. Footwear such as flip-flops, sandals, cowboy boots, Crocs, etc., can be uncomfortable and dangerous and are NOT recommended. During the winter months, hats, caps, warm jackets, and gloves/mittens are necessary. Please remember to label these items. The children play outside every day that weather permits, even on cold days.

Each child should have two complete changes of clothing that are to be kept at *Kids First Day School* in the event they are needed. All clothing should be marked with the child's name. *Please place the change of clothes in a Ziploc bag with the child's name written on the outside of the bag.*

Communication

Communication between parents and staff are extremely important to create success in a child's development. Classroom schedules, lesson plans and parent letters about the child's activities will be posted in each classroom and daily written reports will be sent home each day for our infant classrooms.

Connecting Kids First and the families we serve is a vital part of our program. We keep the lines of communication open through the following avenues:

- Kids First Day School Parent Handbook & Policy Manual
- Bulletin Boards and Posted Schedules/Notices
- Calendars and Notes
- Regular conversations between parents, teachers and director
- Formal conferences with teachers or directors by appointment
- Student evaluations
- Parental Visits
- The First Methodist Church of Trussville Bulletins and Newsletters
- Email
- Text
- School Cast
- Kids First Day School Newsletters

- *Smartcaretm Teacher Portal*
- *Kids First Day School private FaceBook page*

Live Stream Video Casting

Kids First Families have an option to pay for classroom video access. The fee is \$5.00 per month. Access on the Kids First Video Cast does not allow sharing of passwords, imaging, photos, or any other form of public viewing. All children enrolled in Kids First Day School MUST remain confidential and their information cannot be disclosed to persons other than a Kids First Staff member or the immediate family. **Any parental misuse of this policy may result in termination of the family's enrollment.**

Student Evaluation

Kids First Day School will conduct regular assessments of your child's progress of development. Assessments will be performed and sent home 3 times per year through ESGi (Educational Software for Guiding Instruction). Our developmental goals are defined by the Alabama PreK Standards. These goals will be achieved through activities in the following categories for all children enrolled in our program:

- Relationships and Connections. This includes Family and community engagement, Social emotional development, and Social Studies
- Exploration and Critical Thinking: Developing STEM Skills which includes Approaches to Learning, Science Exploration and Knowledge, and mathematical thinking.
- Communication: Language and Literacy and Creative Arts
- Physical Development and Health

Conferences will be scheduled as requested by a parent or a teacher to discuss any concerns or noted delays.

Health Policies

In order to keep our children as healthy as possible and help prevent the spread of illness, disease, or infection, *Kids First* requires adherence to the following policies:

- The Jefferson County Health Department **requires that** each child have a **current Immunization Form** and a **Child's Medical Report** on file at all times.
- Kids First Day School will not administer over-the-counter or prescription medication with the exception of diaper creams and afternoon sunscreen during the summer months. As determined by the State of Alabama, medication is a very broad term that encompasses the following: drugs, powders, ointments, drops, creams, insect repellents, and sunscreen. If a child is sick enough to need medication more often than every twelve hours, they

should remain at home with parents. Infants must be given teething pain medicine at home. Infants with broken sores or severe diaper rash must remain at home with their parents. *Kids First* will not apply or reapply insect repellent. Please apply insect repellent and/or sunscreen at home before coming to Kids First Day School. We will apply sunscreen for afternoon play in the summer months.

- In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Kids First Day School will administer prescription medication ONLY to children with a disability (such as diabetes, seizure disorders, asthma). In those cases, Kids First Day School MUST have a letter from the child's physician on his/her letterhead each year stating the nature of the disability, the name of the medication, the reason for taking the medication, the dosage, the frequency and times(s) medication is to be given, and the treatment order in the event of an adverse reaction to the medication. The medication will be given ONLY if it is in the original container with the child's name, dosage, and date clearly printed on the label. As required by the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR), the parent must complete and sign the DHR Medication Administering Authorization Form every five days. Office staff will administer medications. (A child must take the first dosage of any new medication at home with parents.)
- Please do not send children to school if they have any of the following conditions, including but not limited to: colds that are accompanied by fever, headaches, sore throat or ear infections; fever of 100.4 degrees and higher; contagious or undetermined rashes or spots; headache; upset stomach; unusual lethargy; irritability; persistent crying; difficulty breathing; diarrhea (2 loose stools within an hour); vomiting; conjunctivitis (red, teary or crusted eyes); impetigo; strep throat; head lice; chicken pox; tuberculosis; discolored nasal discharge (yellow or green – not clear); flu; an excessive cough; or other symptoms of illness. **Children that develop these symptoms during the day will be sent home immediately.**
- Normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees. A fever is a body temperature of 100.4 degrees and higher. A child with 100.4 degrees fever will be sent home and may return after 24 hours of being fever-free without medication.
- As required by DHR, parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately if signs of illness occur during the day. Parents are expected to promptly (within one hour) remove their children from the center when called because of illness.
- Please have alternative childcare arrangements to use when children are ill.
- Please follow the requirements below when bringing your child back to school. This will help us to protect your child, all the other children and families enrolled in our program, and our staff.
- In the event of an accident or illness requiring emergency attention, a child's parent(s) or guardian will be called immediately. If we cannot reach you, we

will call the Trussville Paramedics. It is extremely important that you keep emergency numbers and the name of your child's pediatrician current and on file at Kids First Day School.

- Please report any illness or exposure to communicable diseases to the Director so that other parents can be alerted. Likewise, we will inform parents when their child has been exposed to a communicable disease at *Kids First Day School*.

A child will be excluded from *Kids First* if:

- There is an injury or illness that prevents him/her from participating in regular program activities.
- Any condition causing greater care than can be provided for by the Kids First Staff that compromises the health and safety of other children.
- The child has any contagious illness or condition.

A child may return to *Kids First*:

- 24 hours after being free from symptoms (fever, discolored nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.). Children should be free of fever without Tylenol or other fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- 24 hours after antibiotic or other treatment has been initiated (for sinus infection, strep throat, o).
- Children may not return after minor surgery (tympanostomy, tonsillectomy, or any other surgery that requires general anesthesia) for 48 hours.
- After an examination and approval for readmission is given by a physician, a doctor's letter including a diagnosis must be submitted to the Kids First Administrator. This includes rash, conjunctivitis, head lice, or similar condition.
- After the 6th day of rash onset for chicken pox, or when all lesions have dried and crusted.

Kids First Day School reserves the right to refuse admittance due to illness.

Adopted from the Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases

22nd Edition, 1991, American Academy of Pediatrics

Infectious Disease or Pandemic

Kids First will follow closures, protocols and guidelines regulated by the Jefferson County Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Trussville City School System concerning any infectious disease outbreak or pandemic. The Kids First Director and the Kids First Executive Board shall monitor and coordinate effective operations to ensure safety for our staff and children. Families will be updated to specific guidelines and/or protocols pertaining to the current situation. Tuition charges will continue to be

charged to your account during any temporary classroom or center closings to ensure our Kids First Program can remain operable.

Birthdays

Each child's birthday is recognized in his or her classroom. If you wish to provide refreshments, please contact your child's teacher. Chocolate, strawberries, peanuts or food containing peanut butter, are not allowed. Invitations to parties outside of *Kids First Day School* may only be distributed at the center if all the children in your child's class are included.

Inclement Weather

Kids First Day School will follow the decision of the Senior or Associate Pastor of the First Methodist Church of Trussville or, in his or her absence, the *Kids First* Director, during inclement weather. If it is determined that we close, we will follow the **Trussville City School** System for closing. Should the Trussville schools open late, we will open 1 hour before their opening time. When Trussville City Schools close in the middle of the day, we will stay open for 1 hour after their closing time.

Kids First will use our discretion in the decision to pick up School-Age children from the Elementary Campuses. Although it is our preference to have our School-Age children here at *Kids First*, the decision must be based on the safest plan for our children and staff.

For any change in opening or closing times, you will receive a call, text, and/or email from the School Cast System and/or the SmartCare System.

Please be alert to rapidly changing weather conditions and make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible if the Trussville City Schools close during the day. Our teachers need to get home safely too. Regular after-hour fees apply if you do not pick up your child within the allotted closing time. Make sure to have a back-up plan.

Emergency Plans

Kids First Day School staff will conduct monthly safety, tornado, and fire drills. *Kids First Day School* staff are trained according to our Emergency Policies and Procedures.

Parents will be notified if the First Methodist Church of Trussville has been notified (by the Trussville Police Department, Trussville Fire Department or Jefferson County Authorities) to evacuate the campus due to an emergency. *Kids First* staff will follow our Emergency

Evacuation Plan of Action set in place. Parents will be notified of the situation immediately.

If the power, heat/air conditioning, or water is temporarily inoperable, the center will endeavor to remain open if at all possible. We cannot, however, compromise the health and safety of the children. Parents, therefore, may be notified to come earlier than usual to pick up their children.

No Smoking Policy

As required by the Jefferson County Department of Health Child Care Center Regulations, Section 2.C, smoking is prohibited at all times at Kids First Day School, including before and after hours of operation, within ten (10) feet of any entrance or exit, in all vehicles used by the center to transport children, and within sight of the children.

Screen Time Policy

As required by the Jefferson County Department of Health Child Care Center Regulations, Section 3.C, screen time is the use of television, videos, video games, and computers. Screen time shall be offered as a free choice, limited to no more than a total of 2.5 hours per week, is prohibited during meal or snack time, and is prohibited for children younger than two years old.

Computer use shall be limited to no more than fifteen-minute increments, except for school age children completing homework.

Physical Activity Policy

Each child shall have an opportunity for the appropriate amount of active play each day. Active play shall take place outdoors when weather and environmental conditions permit. When the weather and/or environment do not permit outdoor activity, active play shall take place indoors in children's classrooms, Activity room, Gym, or other designated area. Children twelve months to three years shall play at least 60 minutes per day. Children three years and older (preschool children) shall play at least 90 minutes per day.

Caregivers shall make provisions for the promotion of physical development on a daily basis, including varied activities appropriate to each child's development for infants to twelve months.

Children who exhibit out of control behavior during active play may be given a "time out" of no longer than a minute per age. Children cannot be made to remain indoors or seated as punishment for earlier classroom behavior.

Nutrition Policy

As required by the Jefferson County Department of Health Child Care Center Regulations, Section 3.D, all food served in Kids First shall comply with USDA recommendations for Meals and Snacks.

Water shall be available at all meals and snacks. No sugar sweetened beverages shall be served to children, only 100% juice. (No more than 6 ounces per day, only served at meal or snack time, only for children over 12 months.) Children two years and older shall be served milk with 1% or less milk fat, unless medical documentation is provided with different requirements.

The following food items shall be served at least once a week:

- Orange vegetable for vitamin A,
- Dark green vegetable for iron, Vitamins A and C, and fiber
- Legume for protein, iron, B vitamins
- At least half of the grains served each week shall be whole grains.
- Leafy green vegetable

Menus shall be posted in view of parents and food preparation staff and prepared at least 2 weeks in advance.

Special diet needs and food allergies shall be kept on file in the food preparation areas and in the children's eating area. Documentation of amended menus must be corrected in writing and any substitutions shall be of equal nutrient value.

How You Can Help Your Child

- Encourage regular attendance except in case of illness.
- Be on time in the morning to allow the child to become in a regular routine.
- We ask that **ALL children be present by 8:30 a.m.** so that they may benefit from our program. This also allows us to staff properly.
- Encourage your child to do things for him/herself.
- Take time to listen to your child's daily experiences and discuss their day with honest interest.
- Stay up to date on the classroom lesson plans, upcoming special events and activities.
- Show enthusiasm and praise child for the things they accomplish.
- Teach your child to have a wholesome and friendly attitude toward their teacher(s) and all classmates.
- Inform teacher(s) of any out-of-the-ordinary situations that may affect your child such as family illness, moving, sleepless night, etc.
- Attend special events at *Kids First Day School* such as Open House and Music Programs.
- Keep any items such as toys, purses, jewelry, money, gum, or candy at home. These items are not allowed at *Kids First Day School* unless permitted for a special purpose requested by the teacher.

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Kids First Day School 2023-2024 Parent Handbook & Policy Manual Acknowledgement Form

The Parent Handbook & Policy Manual describes important information about *Kids First Day School of the First Methodist Church of Trussville*, and I understand that I should consult the director regarding any questions not answered in the manual.

Since the information and policies described in the manual are subject to change as needed, I acknowledge that revisions to the manual may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. I also understand that only the Kids First Board has the ability to adopt revisions to the policies in this manual.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that I have received the manual, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this manual and any revisions made to it.

Parent's Name (printed): _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Parent's Name (printed): _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sign and return to the Kids First office