



Hibben Preschool
Parent Handbook
2017-2018

Hibben Preschool
690 Coleman Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 216-8438 phone
(843) 884-2091 fax
preschool@hibbenumc.org
www.hibbenumc.org
www.facebook.com/hibbenpreschool

Directors:
Kim Dowd and Nancie Willett

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WELCOME

Welcome to Hibben Preschool! This Parent Handbook is designed to acquaint you with our program, and the policies and procedures that govern it. We feel parental involvement is a necessity in a good program, and we trust that you will work together with us to provide an environment that meets the needs of your child.

All Hibben Preschool staff members are employees of Hibben United Methodist Church. The school is a ministry of the church, and is guided by the preschool board, which is comprised of the Preschool Directors, the Children's Ministry Director, and various members-at-large. Among the members-at-large we strive to include parents of formerly or presently enrolled children, as well as past or present public school educators. All at-large board members are members of Hibben United Methodist Church.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Hibben Preschool provides developmentally appropriate education within a safe and loving Christian environment.

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

As a sanctioned ministry of Hibben United Methodist Church, Hibben Preschool has been developed to nurture the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual development of young children. We offer a safe and healthy weekday program in a Christian environment, offering security, warmth, education and fun for children ages 1-5 within the Hibben congregation and local community.

OUR GOALS

With the mission statement and purpose statement in mind, our curriculum and daily classroom activities are designed around the following goals:

- Introduce age-appropriate elements of the Christian faith
- Foster within children a positive self-concept and a positive attitude toward learning, self-control, and a sense of belonging
- Encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment
- Encourage development of social and emotional skills
- Provide opportunities for fine and gross motor development
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices
- Respect cultural diversity
- Provide experiences that promote creativity and aesthetic appreciation of the arts
- Encourage language and literacy development
- Prepare children for a successful transition to elementary school

Inclement Weather

- In the event of current or pending inclement weather, Hibben Preschool will be closed if Charleston County School District (CCSD) is closed. Please tune in to local media and if it is announced that CCSD is closed, you will know that Hibben is closed also, even if it is not among the listed closings.
- If CCSD operates on a 2 hour delay due to weather conditions, Hibben Preschool will be closed.
- If CCSD operates on a 1 hour delay due to weather conditions, or announces an early dismissal due to weather conditions, Hibben Preschool will operate on its normal schedule.
- As a general rule, days missed due to inclement weather are not made up.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Classes and Tuition/Fee Schedule			
<u>Class</u>	<u>Age as of 9/1/17</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Monthly Tuition</u>
Preschool 1s	1 year	MWF	\$225
		TTh	\$170
Preschool 2s	2 years	MWF	\$225
		TTh	\$170
Preschool 3s	3 years	MWF	\$225
		TTh	\$170
4K	4 years	M-F	\$275
		M-Th	\$250
<u>Annual Classroom Supply Fees:</u>			
Per student	\$25/semester		

GENERAL INFORMATION

Children are placed in classes based on their age as of September 1. We are not able to accommodate requests to be placed in a particular teacher's class or in a class with a particular child. Children generally remain in the same class throughout the entire school year. The regular school year begins in September, on the Tuesday after Labor Day, and runs through May, ending on the Thursday before Memorial Day. Optional summer classes may be offered based on staff availability and parent demand.

CLASSES

1s

Preschool 1s, is offered Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. for children who are age 1 as of September 1. Children attend either Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday. The teacher:child ratio is kept to 1:4. Classes are staffed by two teachers.

These classes primarily provide supervised play time, during which children develop social skills as they interact with other children and non-parental caregivers. Other activities that may be incorporated into the day include story time, music, simple crafts and outdoor play.

2s and 3s

Children in 2- and 3-year-old classes attend either Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The teacher to child ratio is 1:5 for 2s and 1:6 for 3s. Each class is staffed by two teachers.

As children progress from age 2 to age 3, and beyond into 4K, the classes gradually become more structured, while still allowing plenty of time for creative play. Each class routine allows for alternating periods of more structured activities such as circle time or group activities, with periods of less structured activities such as outdoor play and individual activity centers. Throughout the year activities are planned and carried out which allow the children to develop age-appropriate skills in the areas of language and literacy, math, science, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, social and emotional skills, and self-help/personal skills.

4K

Children in 4K attend either Monday-Thursday or Monday-Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The curriculum is based on South Carolina curriculum standards in English/Language Arts and Math. Additional instruction is given in science and social studies. The teacher to child ratio is 1:8 for 4K, and each 4K class is staffed by two teachers.

WAITING LISTS

Waiting lists are maintained for each age group. They may include children who do not attend, as well as children who attend but are waiting to switch or increase their days of attendance (from TTh to MWF for example). Waiting lists are prioritized, with consideration given for various factors, such as Hibben church membership, current or previous enrollment status, current or previous enrollment status of siblings, classroom spot previously offered and declined, and length of time on the waiting list. As a result, a child's position on the waiting list may move up or down.

Waiting lists are not kept more than one year ahead (i.e. a newborn cannot be put on a waiting list to begin preschool as a 2 year old), and waiting lists do not automatically roll over from year to year. If a child is on the waiting list and does not get in that year, the parent must inform us that they wish to be placed on the waiting list again for the following year.

MUSIC EDUCATION

In addition to music activities that may be incorporated into the day by the classroom teachers, all children receive weekly music instruction from our music teacher. Singing of both secular and spiritual songs may be accompanied by the piano or by recorded music, or sung a cappella. The basics of music theory are taught, and children also have the opportunity to participate “hands-on” with assorted rhythm instruments. Older children may participate in musical program performances in December (Christmas), May (graduation), or occasionally for other preschool or church events.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Jesus said, “...let the children come and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 19:14

Hibben Preschool is an outreach ministry of Hibben United Methodist Church, and Christian teachings are incorporated into all classes. Teachers incorporate Bible stories and songs into lesson plans, blessings are said before lunch, and as part of the opening and closing daily classroom routine as well. Children in 3-year-old classes and 4K learn a monthly Bible verse, and each of those classes will have the opportunity to attend chapel once a week with one of Hibben’s pastors or the Children’s Ministry Director. Through chapel lessons and other activities, children have a chance to expand their knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ and his love for them, Christian doctrine, Biblical principles, and the significance of the church seasons, including Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

SIGN LANGUAGE

American Sign Language (ASL) is incorporated as well, primarily through music and chapel but occasionally in the regular classroom. Toddlers may learn to use signs for basic words related to items in their classroom and daily activities. Twos and older may learn faith-based signs and classroom management signs throughout the year, and 3s and 4s may learn alphabet signs as well. Additional signs may be taught that correspond to themed classroom instruction units, as well as signs that go with songs being sung in the classroom, in music, or in chapel.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLASSES

Assorted extra-curricular classes may be offered on an optional basis after the

regular school day. These classes are not a part of Hibben Preschool, but are made available to our students on our premises. These classes require a separate registration and monthly or semester fee, paid directly to each class' instructor. Classes begin after the regular school day ends, and classroom teachers will assist the children in preparing for the classes and moving to the class locations within the Hibben campus; parents do not need to be present during this transition time. Class ending times vary from class to class, and may range from 1:15 to 1:45.

Current class offerings include JumpBunch, Karate, Dance, Soccer, Going Bananas Over Books, and Challenge Island S.T.E.A.M. For more information including class schedules, class fees and minimum ages for participation, please refer to the information in your parent folder (distributed at Parent Night) or stop by the preschool office.

WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL

Dress children in comfortable play clothes, suitable for running and active play. Dress children in washable play clothes, as they will be using paint, glue, markers and other "messy" materials on a regular basis.

Dress children in layers. Our HVAC system is such that some rooms get quite hot, even during the winter, while others may get chilly, even during the summer. Dressing in layers is the easiest way to ensure that children stay comfortable throughout the day.

Please avoid sending children in overalls. They are a time-consuming obstacle at diaper and potty time.

Please avoid shoes without a heel strap, such as flip flops, as they are a safety issue during active play, especially outdoors.

SPARE CLOTHING

All children need to bring a diaper bag or backpack to school each day. It should contain a complete change of clothes, including socks and underwear, in case of accidents or spills. Occasional accidents are inevitable, even with 4K children, and children will be more comfortable if they can change into a spare set of their own, familiar clothing. Please ensure that your child's spare clothes are seasonally appropriate, and label all items with your child's name. Children who are still in diapers/pull-ups should have at least 3 diapers/pull-ups in their bag each day, and these should also be labeled with the child's name on the front with a permanent marker. Pacifiers must be attached to a clip that fastens to the child's clothing, and should also be labeled. If your child has an accident or a spill, and does not have suitable spare clothing, we will attempt to find something appropriate in our spare clothing bin. If your child leaves school wearing any clothing you do not recognize, please launder the item(s) and return it as soon as possible so that it can be made available to the next child who needs to borrow it.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Lunchtime is part of the daily routine in all classes, and each child needs to bring

a packed lunch to school each day. Lunch is also part of the learning experience, and the teachers use this time to incorporate teaching about nutrition, thanking God for our blessings, and table manners. Your cooperation in adhering to the following guidelines on what to pack and what not to pack for lunch are greatly appreciated!

Please DO:

Send food and drink items that have nutritional value and that your child will enjoy.

Send food and drink items that your child can feed him or herself with limited assistance.

Label all lunchboxes, lunch bags, and re-useable serving containers

Include a napkin with the lunch each day.

Include a fork/spoon if the lunch includes items that require utensils.

When sending food that must be cut up, please do all cutting at home, prior to packing the lunch.

NOT send in any soda or candy, or large “desserts” with high sugar content.

Soda and candy will be set aside, and sent back home in the lunchbox.

NOT send in knives, even plastic ones.

NOT send in items that must be refrigerated*; please use cold packs instead.

NOT send in items that must be warmed up in a microwave*; please use a thermos or other insulated container instead.

**A small refrigerator and microwave are available in the 1s classroom only, since some children in that class are still drinking milk/formula/baby food that must be kept refrigerated or be warmed for serving. If your child is in the 1s class, please provide clear, written instructions for the refrigeration/warming of your child's bottles or baby food.*

If this is your first experience packing lunch for your child, and you are not sure of exactly what types of items to pack, please feel free to speak with your child's teacher. She can give you lots of ideas of things that parents typically send, and will also keep you advised as to whether you need to increase or decrease the amount of food you are packing.

- Please ensure that your child has eaten a filling breakfast prior to arriving at school. A simple snack (ex. pretzels, graham crackers, etc.) is provided daily in 1s and 2s classes, but older classes do not generally include a snack time during their daily routine. If your child has difficulty making it until the class eats lunch, you might try giving him or her a small snack just prior to arriving at school. Please speak with your child's teachers if you have a concern about a particular snack and/or need to send in a different item for your child.
- Please do not send breakfast items for your child to eat in the classroom upon arrival.
- Some teachers will request that you send an extra drink for snack time or

to have after playground time.

ALLERGIES

Parents must inform the school of any and all known food and medical allergies. Space is provided for this on the enrollment application. Hibben Preschool has adopted a written Allergy Action Plan for all children with food allergies. If your child has a food allergy, you will receive a copy of this plan, and in accordance with the plan, a meeting will be scheduled at the beginning of the school year with your child's teachers and the directors. (If your child does not have a food allergy but you would like a copy of the Allergy Action Plan, simply request one from a director.) In general, if a child has a food allergy, a special "allergy alert" will be posted in the classroom, and will include the child's name and photo, a description of the allergy, and any special treatment instructions. Since all children eat lunch at school and since these lunches are not provided by Hibben Preschool, it is not feasible to maintain a peanut-free environment (or gluten-free, lactose-free, egg-free etc.). For additional details, please refer to the Allergy Action Plan.

BIRTHDAYS

Parents are welcome to bring special treats to their child's class to celebrate his or her birthday. Please arrange such events in advance with the classroom teacher to ensure that the treats are appropriate for the entire class, and to give the teacher a chance to discuss the treats with parents of any children with food allergies in case an alternate treat must be provided. Also, please do not distribute birthday party invitations at school, unless the entire class is to be invited to the party. Student addresses are generally available in the school directory for invitations which need to be mailed.

SUPPLIES

Each student will be charged a supply fee each semester. This fee is in lieu of giving parents a list of supplies for which to shop. It goes toward the cost of consumable items used throughout the year, such as crayons, glue, construction paper, paper towels, hand sanitizer, baby wipes, etc. All supply fees are non-refundable. Students joining the class mid-semester will be charged a pro-rated supply fee.

VIDEOS

Videos are not a regular part of the daily routine in any class. A video may occasionally be shown to enhance a subject being studied, for special holidays, or as a special reward. Videos may also be shown during playground time if there is inclement weather and the gym is unavailable for use that day. The showing of videos for any reason not listed above will be strictly limited.

SCHOOL PICTURES

School pictures are taken in both the spring and the fall by a professional, local photographer. Fall pictures are generally taken inside, with a backdrop suitable for holiday pictures. Picture orders are complete in plenty of time for Christmas. Spring pictures are generally taken outside, weather permitting. Class pictures are generally taken in the spring as well. You will be notified of picture dates and order information in advance of each photography session.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Hibben students may be included in photographs or videos of school activities for informational, promotional and publicity purposes. Such photographs may be used, for example, in brochures, in scrapbooks, on posters within the school, and/or may be posted on the church/preschool website or Facebook fan-page, or published in the newspaper, or used in slides or video clips during a worship service. Photos or videos may also be emailed directly to a particular group of parents, such as when a class or group of classes participates in a special event. Such photographs or videos will never identify a child by name unless specific permission is obtained from the parent(s). An "opt out" form is available in the preschool office, and must be signed by a parent and returned to a director if you do not agree to allow your child to appear in photographs or videos as described. Failure to complete and return an "opt out" form will be interpreted as implicit permission for one's child(ren) to be included in any such photographs or videos as described above.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 9:00 a.m. Prior to 9:00 a.m., teachers are busy preparing for the day and cannot admit children into the classroom until that time. Teachers plan arrival time activities that usually last until around 9:15 a.m., at which time more structured activities begin. As a courtesy to the teacher, and to avoid causing a distraction to other students, please bring your child to his/her class by that time.

The school day ends at 12:30 p.m. and all children should be picked up no later than 12:30 p.m. Teachers involve the class in a closing time activity around 12:15 p.m., and will dismiss individual students to their parents as they arrive. Children get very anxious when they are the last one to be picked up, so please make sure your child is picked up by 12:30 p.m.

Any child picked up after 12:40 p.m. will be charged \$1.00 per minute for each minute late. This late pickup fee will be reflected on your monthly statement.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION FEES

An annual registration fee is required of each student at the time of enrollment. This fee ensures the child's spot in the program, and is not applied to tuition or other classroom fees. This fee is non-refundable and is paid annually upon re-enrollment for the following school year.

MONTHLY TUITION AND LATE FEES

Tuition is paid monthly, from August through April, for attendance September through May. Each monthly payment is due in full by the 1st day of each month, and is considered late as of the 2nd day of the month. We do allow a grace period until the 10th of the month (not applicable in August); however, any payments received after the 10th will incur a late payment fee of \$15.00. Please note that late payment fees will be incurred, even if the 10th falls on a weekend, holiday, or a day your child is not normally scheduled to attend. If tuition remains unpaid beyond the 20th of the month, the child's space in the program may be forfeited. A financial statement will be emailed to each family approximately 1 week prior to the 1st of each month, to remind you of your balance. Tuition is the same each month, regardless of the actual number of days of attendance.

If you or your child is sick or you are out of town when tuition is due, please make arrangements to pay ahead of time, send your payment with a friend, or mail it to us. Please note that mailed payments are considered paid on the day they are actually received, NOT the day they are postmarked. We cannot be responsible for postal service delays.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

We accept payments in the form of cash, checks or money orders. Checks and money orders should be made payable to "Hibben UMC." Please note that we do not keep cash in the preschool office and are unable to make change. If you are not able to provide the exact amount due, we will credit the overage toward the following month's tuition or other charges.

With the exception of cash, which should be given directly to one of the directors, payments can be placed in one of the two tuition drop boxes. These boxes are kept locked, and only the preschool directors have keys. One is located on the wall just outside the preschool office, and the other is located on the wall across from the 4-day 4K class in the Christian Life & Learning Center. These boxes are available any time the church building is open, generally from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., although this may vary.

ONLINE BANKING PAYMENTS

If your bank offers online banking and bill payment services, we strongly encourage you to utilize these services to pay your tuition. When utilizing online banking and/or electronic bill paying services, please be aware that unlike other bills you may have, payments to Hibben are generally not made via electronic transfer; rather, your bank will draft your account, and then cut a check and mail it to us. To ensure that the check sent by the bank on your behalf arrives on time and gets properly credited to your account, please heed the following instructions:

- Allow adequate time for the bank to process and mail your payment to us. We suggest that you schedule the payment to be made 1 week prior to the 1st of the month; this will allow time for us to actually receive the check by the 1st.
- Enter the payee as “Hibben Preschool”
- On the memo line, indicate “preschool tuition”
- If the last name on the bank account is different from the child’s last name, add the child’s last name to the memo line
- You, not your bank, are responsible for the timely payment of your child’s tuition.

RECEIPTS

Routine receipts will be issued for cash and money order payments only. For payments made by check, your cancelled check will serve as your receipt. If your employer’s payroll plan allows you to receive a pre-tax deduction for child care expenses, we will be happy to provide you with a receipt with our tax ID number on it at your request. Please attach a note to your payment each month; we will print a receipt and place it in your child’s folder, generally within 1-2 days. If your employer provides a specific form for this, we will be happy to complete any necessary payment information, sign it, and place it in your child’s folder, generally within 1-2 days.

TUITION AND THE SCHOOL CALENDAR

We are frequently asked whether tuition is prorated during months with holiday breaks or other school closings. Monthly tuition is the same each month; holidays and other closings are figured into the cost of tuition and averaged out over the course of the year so that tuition is the same each month, August through April. Adjustments are not generally made for occasional days missed due to inclement weather, as church policy dictates that our teachers must still be paid for such days.

RETURNED CHECKS

Checks returned for insufficient funds will incur a returned check fee of \$25. Please be sure you have sufficient funds in your account to cover any checks you write to us. We cannot hold checks and cannot accept post-dated checks. More than one returned check may result in a requirement that your tuition be

paid in cash for the remainder of the year.

WITHDRAWALS

Parents are required to give a 30-day written notice when withdrawing their child from the program for any reason, prior to the end of the school year. This allows us ample time to fill the space being vacated by your child. You are responsible for paying tuition through the end of the 30-day notice, regardless of if or when your child's space is filled by another child. Pre-paid tuition will be refunded in a prorated amount, to the extent that the prepaid tuition covered a period of time beyond the 30-day notice. In the event you are due such a refund, a check will be cut and mailed to you. Please note that it may take 5-7 business days to do so.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES

A child who exhibits symptoms of a contagious illness, or who does not feel well enough to participate in all classroom activities, including outside play, should be kept at home. Students who develop any of these symptoms while at school will be isolated from other students if possible, and a parent will be called to pick the child up immediately.

Such symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- Elevated temperature
- Skin rash
- Abnormal urine or stool
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Evidence of head lice
- Severe coughing
- Severe runny nose or sneezing
- Difficult or abnormal breathing
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

A child will be re-admitted to school when all signs of illness are gone, or with a written note from a physician stating that the child is not contagious. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications, before returning to school.

ORAL MEDICATIONS

The Hibben Preschool staff will not administer any oral medication to children at school. If your child is taking any oral medication, please plan the timing of your doses at home so that your child will not need to receive medication while at

school. Please see the “Minor Injuries” section below for our policy on topical first aid treatments.

EXPOSURE TO CONTAGIOUS DISEASES/HEALTH RISKS

When children are exposed to more serious diseases or health risks, including such things as chicken pox, measles, head lice, etc. parents will be notified, provided we are made aware of the exposure. Such notification is generally limited to parents of other children in that particular classroom. If the child in question has a sibling at Hibben Preschool, the parents in the sibling’s class may also be notified. In extreme circumstances, a school-wide notification may be issued.

Since diseases and other contagious health conditions are often contagious before symptoms appear, please let us know immediately if your child or anyone in your household is diagnosed with such a disease or health issue so that we can quickly notify the parents of other children of possible exposure. Please be assured that your child will not be “named” in such parental notices.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Each child is required to have on file in the preschool office a copy of his/her current SC Certificate of Immunization, showing that the child has received all vaccinations required to date by the state of South Carolina. Your physician’s office will have this form, and they are welcome to fax the completed form to us. A new and updated copy of the record must be submitted as additional immunizations or booster shots are received. We will notify you in writing if your child’s immunization form has expired or is about to expire. Please be aware that we do not accept any exemptions, including medical, religious or other.

MINOR INJURIES

Minor injuries are inevitable during active play. When a child receives a minor cut or scrape that breaks the skin, the affected area will be washed with soap and water or an antibacterial wipe, and Neosporin or equivalent may be applied. Ice or cold packs may be applied to bumps and bruises, and Benadryl cream or equivalent may be applied to insect bites and stings. Desitin, Balmex or equivalent is applied to diaper rash as necessary. Large doses of TLC are administered for all injuries as well!

When injuries occur, an incident report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by a director, and a copy given to the parent. If the situation warrants, the parents may be called prior to pick-up time to be informed of the injury.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Preschool staff members certified in first aid, and in CPR for infants, children and adults, are on site at all times. An AED is available in each building, and preschool staff members are trained in its use as part of their CPR training. In

the event of a serious accident or illness that requires immediate emergency medical treatment, the child may be transported to a local hospital by a preschool/church staff member or by ambulance. Parents will be notified as quickly as possible, as will the child's physician.

BITING POLICY

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to our teachers. Children will bite on occasion, but when that biting becomes a chronic issue it must be addressed. If your child bites or gets bitten you will receive an incident report from your teacher. If you are the parent of the child bitten, you will only know your child was bitten, but not the name of the biter. Chronic biting is considered multiple incidents in a short period of time. Besides receiving the biting incident form upon the second bite (within days of the first bite) you will be asked to come in and meet with one of the directors to discuss the incidents. Teachers will keep a detailed log of the biting incident and using that log will determine if there is a trend with the biting (i.e. it is near lunch and child was hungry, teething, frustration, etc.) If a trend is determined, the teacher will immediately implement a course of action (perhaps eating lunch earlier, separating the child from other children they may have issue sharing with that could cause frustration, etc.) If steps are taken and biting occurs again, you may be asked to keep your child out of school for a period time. If your child returns and bites again, you may be asked to remove your child from the program.

FIRE/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire exit maps are posted in each classroom. Fire drills and lockdown drills will be conducted periodically. Severe weather drills may also be conducted. All staff members will know the location of fire extinguishers and will know how to use them.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Hibben Preschool has adopted an emergency response plan, which outlines procedures that will be followed in the event of various emergency situations including things such as fire, severe weather, earthquake, criminal activity near the campus, or hazardous environmental incidents near the campus. These procedures will be followed as closely as possible, but circumstances may warrant a deviation from the plan. Copies of the Emergency Response Plan are available in the preschool office.

PREVENTION

Children will be under direct supervision at all times.
Fighting is prohibited, as is running and throwing things, unless supervised and part of an organized activity or game.
Poisonous substances and potentially hazardous equipment or materials are stored out of the reach of children.
Furniture and equipment are checked regularly for safety and stability. Any

questionable equipment will be reported to a director.
No hard candy or chewing gum is permitted at any time.
All unused electrical outlets are capped.
All staff members submit to a criminal background check before being hired, and checks are re-done every five years.

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY AND CHILD ABUSE

Hibben United Methodist Church has adopted a “Safe Sanctuaries” policy, which is a church-wide Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Policy. As a ministry of the church, Hibben Preschool abides fully by this policy. The policy addresses the following topics:

- Qualifications and screening procedures for employees and volunteers who work with children
- Procedures and guidelines for child ministry programs and activities
- Policy orientation training and additional training in the area of child abuse
- Reporting procedures for suspected, alleged, or actual abuse

A complete copy of the policy may be found by visiting the church website, at www.hibbenumc.org. Written copies are also available in the preschool office.

In accordance with this policy, all preschool staff have undergone background checks and reference checks before being hired, have signed a covenant statement to abide by the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, have participated in policy orientation training, and have completed at least one other class or workshop on the subject of child abuse.

If a teacher has any reason to suspect that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect of any kind, it will be documented and reported to the director and to either the Department of Social Services or the Mount Pleasant Police Department, depending on the nature of the suspicions. The director will also report it to the pastor(s) of the church.

It is the policy of Hibben Preschool not to release a child to any parent or other adult if that person shows any sign of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Under such circumstances, we will offer assistance in calling another authorized person to pick up the child and/or a taxi. The police will also be notified if deemed necessary by Hibben staff.

BUILDING SECURITY

The entire Hibben campus is covered by a monitored security system and building access is strictly limited. Preschool parents will receive a security access card for building access. This access will be limited to select doors and select hours, as necessary to drop off and pick up preschool children. Detailed information is included in Parent Night folders, and/or from the preschool office. Additionally, each classroom is equipped with a two-way radio for emergency communication with a director, and a director carries a two-way radio at all times.

COMMUNICATION

SHARING INFORMATION

Children are easily affected by events occurring in the home. We ask that you share with your child's teacher(s) any happenings that might alter your child's behavior. Our staff can be of comfort to a troubled child if they know with what they are dealing. Such happenings might include illness or hospitalization of a family member, moving plans, birth of a sibling, death in the family or death of a pet, parent separation, visitors staying with the family, or any other event that might cause stress, tension or changes in the family dynamic.

In similar fashion, your child's teacher will make it a point to share with you anything that occurs in the classroom that might be having an effect on your child. This could include things such as a substitute teacher being present, a new student, a change in the daily schedule, or the way a child gets along with another child. If at any time you feel something may be going on at school that is affecting your child in any way, please do not hesitate to discuss it with your child's teacher and/or a director.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Opportunities may be available for parents who wish to participate in the classroom. While it often helps to keep a distance at the beginning of the year so that the class can get established in a routine, teachers will generally welcome the participation of parents who would like to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, etc. with the class. Children are delighted and proud to have a parent visit their class; we simply ask that you discuss such plans with the teacher ahead of time. Depending on the level of involvement, it may be necessary for parent volunteers to complete the Safe Sanctuaries approval process. (refer to p. 16)

CONFERENCES AND PHONE CALLS

Conferences: Teachers in the 4s conduct parent-teacher conferences in January and/or May, and provide semi-annual written progress reports at these times as well. Children in the 3s will receive a progress report as well, and conferences may be scheduled at any time at the request of either the parent or the teacher. Conferences with parents of younger children are held on an as-needed basis, and may be scheduled at any time at the request of either the parent or the teacher. Teachers may also send out additional progress reports or request additional conferences as necessary. If you wish to schedule a conference for any reason, please make an appointment with your child's teacher or speak with a director, who will be happy to facilitate the scheduling of a conference at a mutually convenient time.

Phone calls: Drop-off and pick-up times are often hectic, and don't always

allow for adequate communication between parent and teacher. For this reason, teachers may make occasional phone calls or send emails to parents to touch base or discuss particular concerns. As with conferences, such calls/emails can also be initiated by parents; please feel free to phone or email your child's teacher or the preschool office, or to leave a note requesting that the teacher or director call or email you at a particular time if there is any issue you wish to discuss.

OTHER MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Student folders: Each child has a folder which should be checked daily, as it will include work or artwork the child may have done, notes from the teacher or directors, newsletters, financial statements, Scholastic book order forms, information on upcoming events such as school pictures, and a host of other important items. This folder will have the child's name on it and will be located in a wall-mounted file organizer outside the classroom door.

Email: In an effort to reduce the amount of paper used, we try to communicate as much as possible by email. Monthly newsletters will be distributed in this manner, as will other various news and announcements. You are welcome and encouraged to use email to communicate with us as well. The preschool office email address is preschool@hibbenumc.org.

Newsletters: Hibben Preschool distributes a monthly school newsletter. It contains reminders of upcoming dates to remember, staff news, announcements of new students and new siblings, and other general news. If your family welcomes a new baby, please let us know the name of the baby and the date of arrival, so that we can announce your older child's new status as a big brother or big sister! As mentioned above, this newsletter is distributed via email, although a few hard copies are also available in the office. Teachers send or email regular classroom newsletters and calendars as well.

Facebook: Hibben Preschool maintains a fan-page on Facebook, and we invite you to "like" our Facebook page so that updates will appear on your Facebook news feed. Simply search for "Hibben Preschool" and click "like." Various notices of news and school events, as well as occasional pictures, are posted on our page.

Bulletin boards: Each class has a bulletin board outside the classroom door. Please look at the bulletin board each day, as it may include class announcements, sign-up sheets for class activities, pictures of class activities and other items. Classrooms also have whiteboards outside the room, and key events of the day will be noted there.

Website: Hibben United Methodist Church maintains a very thorough website. The website is www.hibbenumc.org. If you visit the website, hover over “Preschool” at the top of the church’s home page for a drop-down menu that will direct you to various preschool-related pages. The preschool pages are updated periodically with important dates to remember as well as other general information. The website is also a great source of information for other church activities for both children and adults. These include children’s ministry programs, youth group activities, Bible studies, Sunday services, family ministry events and other “social” activities.

Phone messages: If you need to speak to a teacher or director outside of normal school hours, you are welcome to call the preschool office at 216-8438 and leave a voice mail. Voice mail is checked daily by the directors, and messages for teachers will be forwarded to them. Additionally, the school directory will include at least one form of direct contact for each preschool staff member (phone number or email address). The directory will be available to you by early October. Prior to then, you may obtain this information from a director.