



Vestavia Day School

## Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church

2061 Kentucky Avenue  
Birmingham, AL 35216  
Day School Office: 769-0128

### **Director**

TaraKy Eason

769-0138

[teason@vhumc.org](mailto:teason@vhumc.org)

### **Assistant Director**

Jennifer Miller

769-0129

[jmiller@vhumc.org](mailto:jmiller@vhumc.org)

[www.vestaviadayschool.org](http://www.vestaviadayschool.org)

**Parent Handbook**  
**Full-time Programs**

# 2019-2020

## Table of Contents

Letter from the Pastor _____	3
Purpose & Mission _____	4
Statement of Faith & Program Goals _____	4
Program Facilities _____	4
Security System _____	5
Affirmative Action Statement _____	5
Calendar of Operations _____	6
Tuition Fee Schedule _____	7
Program Policies	
Registration _____	8
Preschool Potty Training Policy _____	8
Orientation and Meet the Teacher _____	8
Daily Hours _____	8
Tornado/Severe Weather Procedures _____	9
Weather Related Closure _____	9
Fire & Bomb Threat Procedures _____	10
Stranger Danger Policy _____	10
Active Shooter Policy _____	10
Arrival and Departure _____	11-12
Stay and Play _____	12
Payment _____	13
Late Pick-up _____	14
Emergency Contact Information _____	14
Absences _____	14
Withdrawal and Re-enrollment _____	14
Health Policies _____	15
Medication Administration _____	16
Clothing Policies _____	17
Meals _____	17-18
Conferences and Visits _____	18
Discipline Policy _____	18-19
Aggressive Behavior Policy _____	19
Birthday Parties _____	20
Our Staff _____	20
Emergency Contact Information _____	20
Potty Training Information – Appendix A _____	21
Biting Policy – Appendix B _____	22
Parent Handbook Acknowledgement _____	23

Dear Parent,

Welcome to Vestavia Day School! As a ministry of Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church we hope that you will find us to be a welcoming program that truly enriches your family's life. During this exciting time in your child's life, we will seek to provide him or her with a safe and loving place where academic and spiritual development can occur, and where your child can always know that they are loved and cherished by God.

As you will come to see in Vestavia Day School, children and families are very important at Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church. We seek to touch the lives of children through Vacation Bible Camp, Sunday School, Children's Church, Children's Choirs, Worship Services, Wednesday Night activities, Vestavia Dance, the Conservatory of the Arts, and recreation programs at the Lighthouse. In every program, activity, and event we provide other adults to support parents in nurturing their children to be all that God created them to be.

We also provide amazing opportunities for you as adults to grow in your spiritual life. We offer six worship experiences each Sunday. There are also Sunday School classes, small group opportunities throughout the week, choirs, the Conservatory of the Arts, hands on mission projects (locally and around the world), recreation activities in the Lighthouse, marriage enrichment, and many more opportunities to strengthen your relationship with others and with God.

We deem it an honor that you allow us to partner with you in this exciting time in your child's life, and we would love to be able to partner with you in any way needed to further your spiritual growth. I invite you to visit our website at [www.vhumc.org](http://www.vhumc.org) for more information about the ministries of Vestavia Hills UMC. If there are other ways we may serve you, or if you have any questions, please contact us.

In Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Bill Brunson  
Senior Pastor

## **Our Purpose and Mission**

Vestavia Day School is an outreach ministry of Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church. We are committed to instruct and guide each child spiritually, cognitively, socially and emotionally in a safe nurturing environment. We provide the spiritual and academic foundation on which each child can become a life-long learner.

## **Statement of Faith**

Because Vestavia Day School is a ministry of VHUMC, everything that we do is guided by Christian Principles of God's love, his care for us and creation of our world. Our program will have daily prayers, place special focus on Christian holy days, will use a Christian curriculum and will provide a weekly worship for the children. Our Christian principles guide us in how we discipline how we resolve conflict and will be at the core of all of our interactions with teachers, students, parents and the community.

## **Program Goals**

1. To offer quality care in a developmentally appropriate environment where children are encouraged to learn according to their individual needs and interests.
2. To foster each child's sense of self, self-worth & confidence.
3. To provide an environment for children that will serve to enrich their understanding and appreciation of their family, community & world about them.
4. To facilitate a partnership with parents through effective and open communications concerning the welfare and development of the child.

## **VDS Philosophy**

The teachers and staff at Vestavia Day School (VDS) are committed to providing a high quality program for young children and their families. The program is designed to promote the development of the total individual by helping each child develop skills in the emotional, social, creative, cognitive, physical and spiritual areas. This goal is accomplished by providing a balanced program that includes both teacher-directed and self-selected activities, quiet as well as active experiences, and the recognition that learning occurs in both formal and informal ways. VDS seeks to be appropriately responsive to families. Parents and staff work together toward the goal of nurturing children in an environment where all are respected for their individual differences and provided with the building blocks for a lifelong love of learning.

## **Program Facilities**

Vestavia Day School provides a rich atmosphere where our children can learn and grow. Our physical facilities offer a full-sized gymnasium, two outdoor playgrounds, a nature area with picnic tables and an amphitheater. Hot Lunch is prepared by VHUMC kitchen staff and is served in the classrooms to all full time and some participating preschoolers. Our Wednesday Worship is held in our church chapel and is led by a minister or guest speaker. Our music and movement programs are held in large classrooms to allow for full movement and expression.

## **Security System**

Our program uses a scan card security system during our hours of operation. Returning families should have 2 cards that were issued last year. Our new families will have cards issued to them at Orientation or Meet the Teacher.

Initial cards – Each family will receive two cards upon enrollment  
Additional/replacement cards - \$25.00

**All classrooms, hallways and entrances are under 24-hour surveillance.**

## **Affirmative Action Statement**

Vestavia Day School advertises in the public media in order to make openings known to all. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin or religion. Children with disabilities/special needs are accepted when there is mutual agreement among the Director, parents, and teachers that needs can be adequately met.

# Vestavia Day School

## 2019-2020 School Calendar

August 5 & 6, 2019	Teacher Professional Development Days (NO STUDENTS)
August 7, 2019	Full Day Option available for ASP*
August 7, 2019	Parent Orientation 6:30 PM Child's Classroom
August 8, 2019	Meet the Teacher 9:00-11:00 AM, unless specified in meet the teacher letter
August 8, 2019	First Day for After School Program (1 <sup>st</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)
August 12, 2019	First Day for Children's Day Out (MWF) and Part-Time (8:30-1); All children go to new classrooms
August 21, 2019	Back to School Bash 6pm
September 2, 2019	All programs closed for Labor Day
September 6, 2019	Welcome Waffles Breakfast 7:00-9:00 Fellowship Hall
September 12-13, 2019	Whale of a Sale
October 11, 2019	Children's Day Out and Part-time Closed-Full-time & ASP* close at 1:00 for Teacher Training
October 30, 2019	Halloween Parade
November 11, 2019	Children's Day Out and Part-time Closed-Full-time & ASP* Opened
November 27-29, 2019	All programs closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
December 6, 2019	Breakfast with Santa 7:00-9:00 AM Fellowship Hall
December 13, 2019	Christmas Program (3-year-old and up) Tyson Hall at 9:30
December 19, 2019	Last day for all children for Christmas Break
December 20-January 2, 2020	All programs closed for Christmas Break
January 3, 2020	Full Time and ASP* return from Christmas Break
January 6, 2020	CDO and Part-time return from Christmas Break
January 20, 2020	All programs closed for Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday
February 20 & 21, 2020	Whale of a Sale
February 14, 2020	CDO and Part-Time Closed-Full-time & ASP* Opened
February 17, 2020	All Programs Closed - Teacher Workday
March 2-6, 2020	Celebrate Literacy Week
March 2, 2020	Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss Celebration
March 23-27, 2020	All programs closed for Spring Break
April 10, 2020	All programs closed for Good Friday
April 17, 2020	CDO and Part-Time Closed-Full-time & ASP* Opened (Inclement Weather Day for VHCS)
April 27-May 1, 2020	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 3, 2020	Blessing of Graduates & Luncheon 11:00 AM
May 8, 2020	Muffins with Mom 7:00-9:00 AM Room 219/221
May 14, 2020	PreK & 5K Graduation at 9:30 AM
May 20, 2020	VDS Play Day & last day for CDO and Part-time Students
May 21 & May 22, 2020	Full-time & ASP Opened
May 25, 2020	All programs closed for Memorial Day
May 26-July 31, 2020	Full-time Summer Program; ASP Summer Days
June 19, 2019	Donuts with Dad 7:00-9:00 AM Room 219/221
July 3, 2020	All programs closed for Independence Day
August 3 & 4, 2020	Teacher Professional Development Days (NO STUDENTS)

\*On days when Vestavia Hills City Schools are closed, children enrolled in our After School Program may attend our Full Day Program for the full day for a \$60.00 fee. This includes lunch and snacks. On October 11, 2019 when our school closes at 1:00 for teacher training, the ASP drop in fee will be \$30. August 5, 2020 will also be a full day option for ASP children.

\*\*We follow the Vestavia Hills City Schools system for inclement weather and early dismissal and late starts.

## Tuition Fee Schedule

<u>Program Type</u>	<u>Days per wk</u>	<u>Options</u>	<u>Reg Fee</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u>	<u>Activity Fee</u>	<u>Monthly Rate</u>
*CDO Infants 9:00 am-1:00 pm	M/W/F	3 days	\$100.00	\$75.00	N/A	\$305.00
*CDO Toddler/Twos 9:00 am-1:00 pm	M/W/F	3 days	\$100.00	\$75.00	N/A	\$270.00
*3 Year Old Preschool 9:00 am-1:00 pm	M/W/F M-F	3days 5days	\$100.00 \$100.00	\$125.00 \$150.00	\$50.00 \$50.00	\$285.00 \$350.00
*4 Year Old Preschool 9:00 am-1:00 pm	M-F	5 days	\$100.00	\$150.00	\$50.00	\$350.00
*5 Year Old Kindergarten 9:00 am-1:00 pm	M-F	5 days	\$100.00	\$150.00	\$50.00	\$350.00
Full Time Care (7:00 am-5:45 pm)						
Infant-Toddler	M-F	5 days	\$150.00	\$150.00	N/A	\$965.00
2's	M-F	5 days	\$150.00	\$150.00	N/A	\$915.00
3's, 4's, 5's	M-F	5 days	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$50.00	\$825.00
After School Program (2:25 pm-5:45 pm)						
Kindergarten-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	M-F	5 days	\$100.00	N/A	N/A	\$310.00

\*A full month's tuition is due for all months September 2019 – May 2020. August tuition will be prorated.

## Registration

Registration for each school year begins the preceding January. Registration progresses in this order:

Mid-January Presently enrolled children, VHUMC Staff and then siblings of currently enrolled families

Early February Wait-list/Open registration to the church and community (same day)

To register, parents need to return the completed admission and financial policy agreement forms along with the registration fee. This fee is to hold the child's place on the list; it is **non-refundable** and is not applicable toward tuition. Class placement is based on the age of the child as of September 1 of the school year. If, after careful review and prayerful consideration, it is determined that it is not in the best interest of an applicant and/or other children in the program to admit an applicant, the VHUMC Vestavia Day School reserves the right to refuse admission.

## Preschool Potty Training Policy

All children must be potty trained before entering any of our 3 and 4 year old classes, unless children have a medical condition that prohibits him/her from developing (doctor's note is required). Potty trained is defined as completely accident free for 2-3 weeks and acknowledging or recognizing when an accident occurs. Potty trained children are required to wear underwear. Pull-ups are allowed only at nap time for children who need them.

We understand that an acclimation period may be necessary for some children. We also understand during this period, children may have up to three accidents a week. If after October 1, a student is not fully potty trained, he or she will be temporarily placed in a two year old classroom (if space permits) or temporarily dismissed from the preschool program.

We understand that transitions in a child's life may cause a child to regress. If a child has been potty trained and begins to have frequent accidents, the teachers can ask the parents for a conference to determine if there is something going on that may cause the child to regress. We want to work with parents to make sure this is a partnership and we work together to make potty training successful! Please keep in mind that home and school are two very different environments. The activity level at school can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty more so than at home.

## Orientation and Meet the Teacher

Prior to the beginning of the fall session, Infant and Preschool classes will hold a Meet the Teacher. At this time, you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teacher, new friends and their parents. Information regarding your child's daily schedule will be available. Please make every effort to attend as important information about your child's year will be given out. Prior to school starting, we will hold a Parent Orientation for all families. Whether you are new to the school or been a part of the VDS family for a while, please make every effort to attend this meeting. We will cover lots of important information about things you can expect and possible changes from the year prior. Please do note that childcare will not be provided.



## Daily Hours

**CDO/Part-Time Preschool:** 8:30 am – 1:00 pm

**Full Time Hours for children enrolled in Preschool:** 7:00 am - 5:45 pm

**After School Program (ASP):** \*2:30 – 5:45 pm

\*When applicable, ASP children can add a full day from 7:00 am-5:45 pm for an additional fee.

***Inclement weather*** – We follow Vestavia Hills City Schools (VHCS) decision for inclement weather closings. In the event that VHCS has a delayed start or closes early, VDS opening or closing times may offset by 30 minutes to an hour to give our teachers adequate time to get to their own families.

## Tornado/Severe Weather Procedures For Lambs, Ducks, & Owls

1. Line up all children at the door- check bathrooms & closets. Count the children.
2. Have one adult lead the children, the other should be at the rear of the line.
3. Get the children to the **Tunnel near Sanctuary** using the nearest stairway.
4. Have children sit with their backs against the wall and remain quiet.
5. Count children again to make sure everyone is accounted for.
6. Wait for further instructions or until the “ALL CLEAR” is given.

## Tornado/Severe Weather Procedures For Elephant, Kangaroo, Zebra, Lion, Monkey, Giraffe, Teddy Bears, Bees, Ladybug, Butterfly, Caterpillar, and ALL After School Programs

1. Line up all children at the door- check bathrooms and closets.
2. Count the children.
3. Have one adult lead the children, the other should be at the rear of the line.
4. Get the children to the **YOUTH FLOOR** using the nearest stairway. Fill up room 212 first and then room 214.
5. Have children sit with their backs against the wall and remain quiet.
6. Count the children again to make sure everyone is accounted for.
7. Wait for further instructions or until the “ALL CLEAR” is given.

## Weather-related Closure

Vestavia Day School follows the Vestavia Hill City Schools closing decisions. We reserve the right to make an independent decision to close should we deem it to be necessary. You will be notified by School Cast of the school closing. We will pick up our after school children from all schools and bring them back to VHUMC. We ask that you pick up your after-school child here at VHUMC. Please call the Vestavia Day School office and your child's school office if they are NOT to be picked up by VHUMC vans for early dismissal.

If severe weather or unsafe driving conditions prevent our staff from traveling safely to the schools, you will be notified immediately so you can make other arrangements to have your child picked up from East, West or Central.

## **FIRE & BOMB THREAT PROCEDURE**

### **For all age groups**

1. Line up all the children at the door- check bathrooms and closets.
2. Count the children.
3. Have one adult lead the children, the other should be at the rear of the line.
4. Use the nearest exit; get children to your designated area of the parking lot.
5. Have children sit.
6. Count the children again to make sure everyone is accounted for.
7. Wait for further instructions or until the "ALL CLEAR" is given.

## **STRANGER DANGER POLICY**

**CODE YELLOW:** Partial lockdown. No one is allowed to go outside the VDS locked door parameters. When outdoors, all staff should move inside to their classroom. Check that all exterior doors are closed and locked. Continue normal academic functions unless informed to take another action.

**CODE ORANGE:** Complete lockdown. Stay inside your classroom; lock your door, put up window cover, & door stop.

**CODE RED:** Complete lockdown. Report to your classroom or closest area of refuge. Lock your door; turn off lights, put up window cover, & door stop. Move furniture against door & get into your hiding spot. If fire alarm sounds, do NOT evacuate, but stay aware of the situation. Wait for further instructions.

## **ACTIVE SHOOTER POLICY**

### **1. Evacuation**

- a. Exit the school by the nearest and safest exit. Leave all belongings.
- b. Help others escape, if possible.
- c. Gather at the designated meeting area.

- d. Teacher will take attendance.
- e. Call 911 when you are safe.

## 2. Hide

- a. Report to the nearest room or area of refuge.
- b. Lock your door, turn off lights, and put up window cover, & door stop.
- c. Staff should move students so they can not be seen.
- d. Remain quiet. Silence your cell phone & walkie-talkies.

## 3. Fight

- a. Fight as a last resort & only when your life is in imminent danger.
- b. Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- c. Act with as much physical aggression as possible. Warrior mentality!
- d. Improvise weapons or throw items (scissors, staplers, chairs, etc.) at the active shooter
- e. Commit to your actions....your life depends on it.

The first officers to arrive on scene will not stop to help the injured. Expect rescue teams to follow initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove the injured.

## Full Time Care Arrival and Departure

### Full Time Arrival:

- The Full Time Program serves children ages 6 weeks through 12 years of age during the hours of 7:00 am – 5:45 pm Monday through Friday.
- If you drop off or pick up your child on the bottom floor, please park in a parking space near or around the portico doors. **DO NOT** park underneath the portico! This is a fire and safety issue.
- Parents will use a specified PIN number and password to sign each child in the specified locations electronically.
- Parents must sign their child in and out each day. Please sign your first and last name instead of initials. All parents must walk their child to/from their designated drop off/pick up point. Please do not send your child in alone!
- Items brought from home must be put away prior to entering the classroom. We encourage the children to bring comfort items for rest time, if needed (i.e. stuffed animal, lovie, etc.).
- While we do not provide breakfast, children arriving **before 8:00 A.M.** may bring a breakfast from home. Planned group activities will begin promptly at 8:00 A.M., so we ask that all children arriving **after 8:00 A.M.** have breakfast before arriving at school.
- Please do not park in the handicapped parking unless you have the proper tag or sticker.
- **This 11-hour schedule has been set to provide a range of drop off and pick up times to accommodate various full time work schedules. However, it should be noted that much over 9**

**hours is considered inappropriate for very young children to be cared for in group settings. Therefore, please do not view the full 11-hour schedule as appropriate for a child on a daily basis.**

## **CDO and Part Time Arrival**

- All children attending the 9:00 – 1:00 Preschool & CDO will be dropped off no earlier than 8:50. Each child must be walked to and signed in by a parent or guardian in their classroom. Dismissal will begin at 1:00 pm. Parents are required to sign their child out each day.
- Parents will use a specific PIN number and password to sign each child in at the specific locations electronically.
- Pick up begins promptly at 1:00 pm. Call the Day School Office and leave a message if you are detained for any reason. Please see our late pick up policy on page 12.
- Please do not park in the handicapped parking unless you have the proper tag or sticker.

## **Departure:**

- Your child will not be released to anyone not listed on your information form or who does not show proper identification. Please keep these names current. ***Written permission must be sent*** if someone not on your list will pick up your child. In extreme emergencies, we can accept verbal messages or confirmation.
- Part time children must be picked up by 1:00. Full time parents should arrive by 5:45 pm to pick up children and have enough time to collect their belongings and speak with the teachers. All persons should leave the building by 6:00 pm. A late fee of \$25 per 15-minute increment after 6:00 pm will automatically be charged if you are late in picking up your child. Please remember that our school closes at 6:00 pm.

## **Stay & Play**

VDS offers an extra hour of childcare (1-2pm) for our part time students called Stay & Play. Stay & Play is offered on a first come, first serve basis. You can make a standing reservation to receive a discounted rate. Standing reservations must be paid with tuition of each month.

Please see the standing rates below:

Number of Days per week	Standing Rate per Month
1 Day	\$30
2 Days	\$60
3 Days	\$90
4 Days	\$120
5 Days	\$150

Drop in care will be \$15 per day. **Space is limited so drop in reservations will be based on availability.** You must contact the office by phone or email as soon as possible to sign up for a drop in basis. We prefer that you give us a 24-hour notice for Stay & Play drop in reservations. Drop in rates will be added to the next month's tuition and will auto drafted.

All children should be picked up by 2:00 PM to avoid a late fee of \$25 (please refer to our late pick up policy on page 13).

Please call 769-0128 or email Patti at [pgraffeo@vhumc.org](mailto:pgraffeo@vhumc.org) to sign up or if you have any questions.

## Payment

Monthly tuition will be handled through Tuition Express (TE), which provides the convenience of automated payments and invoices. All families will enroll in TE and have the option to pay by credit card, checking or savings account on a schedule we (VDS and the responsible party) agree upon. All tuition and fee payments will automatically be debited from your account or card of choice. All payments are secure and you can choose to have a receipt emailed to you directly after the transaction has occurred. Upon enrolling at VDS, all families must sign an authorization and processing agreement. Once enrolled in TE, you will automatically be re-enrolled each year until you give a change/withdrawal letter in writing.

1. Tuition/fees will be automatically drafted either between the 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> of each month.
2. Additional monthly fees such as late pick-up, stay and play, and add full day for after school care will automatically be drafted
3. There will be a \$35 fee for all auto drafts returned or declined.
4. It is the responsibility of the payer to complete a new authorization and processing agreement form if your account information changes.
5. All families who pay by credit card will be charged and additional 3% of the monthly tuition and fees. These fees will be automatically charged with monthly charges.

If you choose not to enroll in TE and wish to continue to pay by check, you will need to speak to the Director or Bookkeeper in person, and a \$10 handling fee will be applied to each payment, in addition to the following policies.

1. All checks must be received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.
2. If payment is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of a month, the child will NOT be allowed to return to the program until the balance is paid. There will be no open balance carried from month to month.
3. The Day School Board of Directors reserves the right to review any account and, upon proper notification, dismiss any student whose account is not in good standing. This ruling will be final.
4. There will be a \$35.00 charge for all returned checks.

There is no reduction in tuition for holidays, absences or school closings due to inclement weather.

We are a ministry of Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church and operate the Vestavia Day School on the funds provided by tuition and fees. All tuition and fees are used by the program to provide the best possible teachers, equipment and supplies. **A full month's tuition is due for all months September May; August will be prorated tuition for all part time children, including ASP children.**

## **Late Pick-up**

Your child must be picked up by the time listed below:

Full Time Care	5:45 pm
Part Time Care	1:00 pm

A late fee of \$25.00 per 15 minutes after 1:00 pm for part time children and 6:00 pm for full time children will automatically be charged if you are late in picking up your child. Please remember that our program closes at 5:45 pm, and all families need to be out of the school by 6:00 pm. Repeated late pick-ups after a warning can result in the removal of your child from our program.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Please notify us of any change in home, cell or work phone numbers for the parents and emergency contact. It is important to keep your emergency phone numbers up to date, as we will contact these people in the event that we are unable to reach you.

## **Absences**

Please call the Vestavia Day School office if your child will be absent, especially if your child is sick. This helps us keep up with the spread of illnesses so we can keep our parents informed. (This includes students enrolled in our After-school Program.)

## **Withdrawal**

- A two month written notice prior to withdrawal is required. Tuition will be prorated if necessary.
- The Director of the Day School reserves the right to ask parents to remove any child who cannot adjust to the program or if the Director determines the program cannot physically and/or financially meet the individual needs of a child. The parent will be given two weeks notice before expecting the child to be withdrawn.

## **Grievance Procedure**

If a problem exist, VDS wants to take the proper procedure to correct it as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved if it is identified immediately. Parents with concerns should first discuss them with the classroom teacher. If the classroom teacher is unable to resolve the concern independently and to the satisfaction of the parent, then the matter should be brought to the attention of the Director or Assistant Director. If the VDS Administration is still unable to arrive at a solution satisfactory to the parent, then the matter should be brought to the Business Administration of VHUMC.

## Withdrawal and Re-enrollment

When a child is withdrawn from the program by the parents, a one month written notice is required from the parents. Otherwise, parents are responsible for the following month's tuition. If a child is absent for more than two weeks without notification, we will assume the child has been withdrawn and we will proceed to register another child. If the child is withdrawn from the program and later wishes to re-enroll (if space allowed) within a three month period, the registration fee will be waived. After a three month period, the full registration fee will be required. If, after careful review and prayerful consideration, it is determined that Vestavia Day School can no longer provide the optimal environment for a given child's growth and development, or it is determined that the safety and/or well being of other children are being jeopardized by the actions of a given child, the Vestavia Day School reserves the right to terminate services to the child.

## Health Policies

In order to help prevent the spread of infection or disease and to keep our children as healthy as possible, Vestavia Day School requires adherence to the following policies. If you fail to comply with these policies, after one warning, it could result in the removal of your child from our program.

- Each child/parent will be greeted as they enter the room. Teachers will ask about child's evening/night. In the event the child was sick overnight, the child will not be permitted to stay at school.
- Teachers will also complete daily health checks of all children and look for signs and symptoms that doesn't foster the well-being of each child (i.e. not feeling well, abuse, etc.)
- Parents agree to share with teachers any health or behavioral issues from home or other settings that will impact their care plan, caregivers, or other children. (i.e. febrile seizures, sensory processing, ADHD, speech delays, major life transitions)
  
- The Certificate of Immunization (Blue Form) should be on file with Day School prior to your child's first day of attendance. These may be obtained from your Pediatrician. You will be notified in writing in advance of the form's expiration date.
- Our program reserves the right to refuse admittance due to illness.  
No child will be accepted and/or will be sent home if they are exhibiting:
  - a. Fever 100.4 or higher, chronic or severe cough, colored nasal discharge, sore throat, breathing trouble, yellowish skin or eyes.
  - b. Diarrhea (2 bouts or more in a day).
  - c. Conjunctivitis (red, teary or crusted eyes/Pink Eye)
  - d. Rash/Frequent scratching of the skin
  - e. Headache
  - f. Vomiting unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition (such as reflux) and the child is not in danger of dehydration. A doctor's note may be required.
  - g. Symptoms of Strep Throat or Influenza
  - h. Excessive irritability or unusual passivity/lethargy

If your child becomes sick at school, he or she will be separated from the other children and will have continuous supervision until an authorized person comes to pick up the child. The child must be picked up within one hour and must remain away from the school the **following full business day**. A Doctor's note cannot supersede our health policies. The administration will still have the right to send a child home at their discretion based on our policies.

Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours upon returning to the school without the aid of symptom reducing medications (For example: Fever reducing medication, anti-diarrheal medication, anti-nausea medication, etc.)

If your child has a rash or sores (impetigo, hand, foot and mouth, mollescum, etc.) the affected area must be dried up and covered by clothing or bandages. If the area affected can not be covered, the child must remain out of school until the rash has completely dried up.

- Please notify us if your child obtains a communicable disease so that we may notify parents of the other children. These include, but are not limited to: head lice, scabies, chicken pox, ringworm, strep throat, impetigo, pink eye, mollescum, herpes simplex I, Fifth's disease & flu.
- Lice: If lice is detected, your child must be picked up from school and remain out of school, following treatment, until he or she is lice and nit free. We will recheck your child upon returning to school.
- Please notify us of any special condition your child may have which requires special attention such as food allergies, insect sting reactions, asthma, hearing loss, visual impairment, etc.

**The overall health and well-being of all our VDS teachers and children is of utmost importance, therefore, the school reserves the right to refuse care due to illness.**

## **Medication Administration**

If a child should require medication while in our care, the office staff can administer prescription medication **ONLY** if the following conditions are met per the *Baby Douglas Law*:

1. **VDS may not administer the initial does of medicine except with physician's written permission for life-threatening situations.**
2. The parent completes a medication form (available in each class or at the front office) that includes specific instructions that match the prescribed dosage and time to administer. **(We can have NO open-ended medication directives, i.e. "give as needed". Our school cannot be responsible for making medication decisions.)**
3. Nonprescription medications can only be administered with a doctor's note and only when the dosage specifically matches the label recommendations for a child of that age. The only exception for nonprescription medication would include diaper cream and sunscreen.
4. The medication must be in the original container which includes the child's name, name of the medicine, and directions for administration.
5. Unless a physician's instructions indicate otherwise, medication can be given for a period of 5 school days.

**In the case of a serious medical condition, the school may request parents administer medication or medical procedures. In such cases, temporary withdrawal from the school may be needed until the child can safely participate in a group care situation.**

Medication forms, along with the medicine to be administered, should be turned in to the front office. All medications will be kept in a locked box outside of the classroom. **No medications should be left in children's bags or classroom.**



Additional items that may be administered to children include insect repellent and sunscreen. Proper forms must still be filled out with complete and specific directives, and can be obtained by your child's teachers or at the front office.

## Allergies

Please notify us of any special condition your child may have which requires special attention such as food allergies, insect sting reactions, asthma, hearing loss or visual impairment. A list of all children with food allergies and intolerances are posted in the kitchen and are provided to each teacher. As part of our full-time care, we provide lunch for our students. If you choose to provide a lunch for your child, we will need written and signed authorization from your child's pediatrician stating that your child has dietary or nutritional restrictions.

**If your child has an epi-pen which is kept at school it must be checked every 6 months by your child's physician. Epi-pen dosages are based on weight, therefore, the Jefferson County Department of Health requests bi-annual evaluations of these devices. We are required to have the Epi Pen in its original box with prescription attached.**

## Clothing

- Please see that your child wears comfortable play clothes and closed-toe, rubber soled shoes. Daily activities include active and messy play. The children should feel comfortable enough in their clothes to enjoy themselves without worrying about getting expensive outfits dirty or torn. To enable the children to go to the restroom without teacher help, play clothes should be able to be manipulated independently by the children. Closed-toe shoes are required for your child to play outside safely on the playground.
- Sandals, flip-flops, Crocs and cowboy boots are not permitted, **even during water play**. Tennis shoes are strongly encouraged. However, other rubber soled shoes (such as Ugg type boots or rain boots) are allowed as long as the child has tennis shoes available for movement/playground time.
- All children should have a weather-appropriate change of clothes in their bags including socks and underwear. Please label all outerwear and extra clothes.
- Please be mindful that we are a preschool and the children play, do art and get dirty. Please do not send your child to school in clothing that you do not want to risk the chance of getting dirty or possibly ruining.

## Toddler and Preschool Meals/Snacks

- All children over the age of 1 year will be provided a nutritious hot lunch to be served in their classroom.
- All families will provide a nutritious morning and afternoon snack for their child/children. For healthy snacks suggestions, please visit the following website <http://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/feeding/healthy-snacks/> or visit the USDA.gov website for nutritional guidelines. . Snacks may be brought in on a daily or weekly basis. If brought in weekly, we will keep the snack supply here at school and each child will be allowed to choose ONE snack at a time. We will provide an afternoon snack for all After School Program (ASP) who come over from elementary schools.
- Please be mindful that some classrooms have a food allergy and this must be considered when packing a snack for your child. If a classroom has food allergy, a sign will be posted outside of the class. Any items containing food allergy ingredients will not be permitted to be opened in that classroom.
- While we do not provide breakfast, children arriving **before 8:00 A.M.** may bring a breakfast from home. All children arriving **after 8:00 A.M.** must have breakfast before arriving at school.

- The Department of Human Resources requires that children enrolled in our full-day program eat two snacks and a hot lunch. VDS will provide a hot lunch that meets all USDA nutritional guidelines.
- If your child has a special dietary need or restriction, you must provide a note from the child's pediatrician stating the need or restriction. These are the only circumstances which you may provide alternate food for your child.
- If you wish to send a special snack/lunch for a special event, we ask that you consult your child's teacher about possible food choices and best times. Be respectful of nut-free and/or other allergies in the classrooms. For the best interest of the health and safety of the children in our care, we recommend bringing food into the school to be shared with a class only commercially prepared food that clearly list all ingredients or that there is proof that the food is prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.
- If your child has a dietary need or allergy restriction that we cannot accommodate, you can choose to provide a lunch for your child. However, we will need written and signed authorization from your child's pediatrician stating that your child has dietary or nutritional allergy or restrictions.

### **Newborn and Infant Meals/Snacks**

- All bottle-fed infants should come with an adequate supply of bottles for the day. Please send only plastic bottles and container. Please make sure everything is labeled. Clearly label all baby food jars (first name, last initial, no glass jars). Daily Infant Information Sheets provide space for you to tell your child's teacher specific feeding instructions, including the amount to feed and exactly when to feed your baby.
- Please include the following in your child's diaper bag: a day's supply of diapers, a pacifier or lovie, if needed, and a complete change of clothes. All items must be labeled with child's name.
- Beginning at 12 months, all full-time children must provide two snacks, one for morning and one for afternoon. All part-time children must provide one snack for morning. VDS will provide nutritious hot lunch and milk for all full-time children.
- If your child has a medical need/condition such as a food allergy that will prevent your child from eating our lunch, parents will be responsible for providing a nutritional lunch that will meet USDA nutritional guidelines. Parents must also provide a doctor's note stating that the child has special dietary needs.

### **Conferences and Visits**

- You are free to visit your child's classrooms any time after the first month of classes. This ensures that the children have ample opportunity to become accustomed to being away from you and home.
- While we welcome and value your involvement, please be mindful of classroom visits other than pick-up or drop-off time. While your child may be comfortable with your visiting and then leaving, other children may become distressed, expecting their parent will soon follow.
- All parents will be offered 2 scheduled conferences with the teachers during the year (Newborns through 5K) at which time you may discuss your child's progress.

# Curriculum

Our teaching methods are based on the Piaget philosophy that children learn best through play. We strive for our classrooms to be welcoming and engaging while providing an environment that fosters their growth and development at all times. We have low teacher/child ratios which allow us to offer a variety of learning opportunities which include both whole and small group, hands-on, child initiated and teacher initiated. There is also ample time in each students' day for free play, exploration and outside time.

## Field Trips

Children in our four-year-old classrooms will take a few field trips a year. Such trips are expected to be educational in nature and plans must first be approved by the VDS Administration. A written authorization form signed by the parent is required for a child to participate in the field trips. This form will inform the parents of the destination, the date and time, of the trip. Transportation will be provided by church vans with approved and trained drivers. Before leaving VDS, children will be counted and checked off by the teacher. Upon arrival at the destination, children will be counted and checked off again. Two adults must be present on each van. Children will be expected to follow the rules of the class while on the field trip. If a child is having a hard time in class, a parent of that particular child may be asked to chaperone the field trip.

## Discipline Policy

This policy will be used for all children in all programs.

1. Child called by name: A child will be called by name when s/he becomes involved in disruptive behavior.
2. Hand on shoulder: The adult will place his or her hand on the shoulder of the child who is disruptive.
3. Separation: If a child continues to be disruptive, they will be removed from the group to have time to calm down and think about his/her actions. At no time will a child be left alone.
4. Parental Involvement: If the child's behavior is reoccurring, we will ask the parent to become involved.
5. Suspension: If a behavior is disruptive to the class or dangerous to other children and/or teachers, the Director may suspend the child from the program for up to three days.

If, after careful review and prayerful consideration, it is determined that it is not in the best interest and safety of children and/or teachers in the classrooms, the VHUMC Vestavia Day School director reserves the right to expel a child from the program.

Vestavia Day School **prohibits** the following disciplinary actions:

- corporal or physical punishment and physical restraint
- abusive language
- withholding of lunch, snack or pottyting.

Children will not be disciplined for not napping, not eating or toilet accidents.

In order to prevent unacceptable behavior, we strive to:

- Create a classroom environment that is structured and predictable
- Removing a child from a situation and allowing them an opportunity to calm down
- Dialogue and partnership with parents to create consistency along all areas for caregiving

## **Aggressive Behavior Policy**

Vestavia Day School has a separate policy for disciplining what we consider “aggressive behavior” (behavior which is not in retaliation or response to other students’ actions and results in physical injury to any other student or teacher). We understand and realize that children are growing, learning, and experimenting with many emotions and ways to handle these emotions; but we do not allow continued, uncontrolled aggressive behavior. Uncontrolled, aggressive behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Biting (See Appendix B), pushing, hitting, and kicking.

Toddlers – Based on pediatric research, it is typical for this age to bite, throw, push or kick. The few times it occurs, it will be dealt with in the classroom and the parents will be notified. If the behavior persists, the parents will be called in for a conference to help determine reasons for the behavior and to create a plan to correct it.

Two Year Olds – The first two incidents that occur will be dealt with in the classroom, according to the program discipline policy. The parents will be notified of the aggressive behavior on the day it happens. On the third offense, the parents will be contacted immediately to remove the child from school for the remainder of the day. In addition, the parents will be asked to conference with the program directors to develop a plan to correct the behavior.

Preschoolers (3, 4 & 5 yr. olds) – The first incident of aggressive behavior will be dealt with in the classroom firmly and the parents will be notified of the behavior. If the behavior occurs after the first incident, the parents will be contacted immediately to remove the child from school for the remainder of the day. In addition, the parents will be asked to conference to establish a plan to correct the behavior. The child will remain suspended from the program until the behavior is corrected. If the behavior occurs upon return to the program, the director reserves the right to remove the child from the program.

School Age Children – The first incident of aggressive behavior will be dealt with in the classroom firmly and the parents will be notified of the behavior. If the behavior occurs after the first incident, the parents will be contacted immediately to remove the child from school for the remainder of the day. In addition, the parents will be asked to conference to establish a plan to correct the behavior. The child will remain suspended from the program until the behavior is corrected. If the behavior occurs upon return to the program, the director reserves the right to remove the child from the program.

## **Birthday Parties**

If a child wishes to share his/her birthday celebration with the class, you may send a special snack for everyone to have at snack time. We ask that you consult your child’s teacher about possible food choices and allergies. Be respectful of nut-free and/or other allergies in the classrooms. Please, NO favors or gifts. Please arrange this with the teacher ahead of time. Invitations to birthday parties may be given out at school, provided the **entire class** is invited.

## **Our Staff**

We strive to hire teachers who are happy, warm, accepting, well informed about how children learn and develop, and knowledgeable about how to establish a good emotional climate in the classroom. These committed teachers feel comfortable with the school philosophy and look upon it as a reflection of their own. They have a high regard for other staff members and see each person as contributing to the ongoing development of all the children.

In order to provide a safe and fulfilling environment for children attending our program, we have established a policy of screening staff through the State Central Registry on Child Abuse/Neglect as well as a mandatory criminal history check. This policy meets the requirements of the Department of Human Resources as well as the United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuaries plan.

Continuing education opportunities are an essential part of building an effective staff. Training can serve not only to provide education and the required continuing education experiences, but also to build rapport among the staff members. Training events help staff to develop a common understanding of the purpose and philosophy of the Weekday Ministry and can serve to open lines of communication.

Examples of Staff Training:

- ❖ First Aid & CPR
- ❖ Positive Discipline
- ❖ Children with Special Needs
- ❖ Exploring Math and Science with Preschoolers
- ❖ Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse
- ❖ Child Development
- ❖ Health & Safety
- ❖ Quality child care

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Vestavia Day School uses the School Cast rapid notification system to notify you of emergency closings (i.e. severe weather closings or delays of openings). This is the same system the Vestavia Hills School System uses. The information you provide us on your student application has been entered into the system. You will be given a user name and initial password to access your contact information. Visit the School Cast website at [www.schoolcast.com](http://www.schoolcast.com) and enter your user name & password. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU VERIFY AND UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION (EMAILS, WORK/CELL PHONE NUMBERS) EVERY YEAR!!!**

Between the ages of 2 and 3 we expect that potty training will begin at home. We encourage parents to begin this process over a long weekend when you are able to devote your attention to potty training.

Signs a child is ready to potty train:

1. Follows simple directions
2. Remains dry for at least 2 hours during the day
3. Can pull pants up and down and walk to the bathroom
4. Has bowel movements at regular times. Charting can be very helpful in determining patterns
5. Initiates using the toilet and/or asks to wear underwear

Potty training should be a positive experience for your child. If your child is resistant to potty training, wait and try again in a couple of months. Once your child is ready, here are some helpful tips to get you started:

1. Begin a routine of putting your child on the potty at typical bathroom times. For example, first thing in the morning, after meals, before and after nap, and before bedtime.
2. Accidents will happen. Remember to stay positive and avoid negative language and punishment.

Please discuss your potty training plans with your teacher so we are prepared to support you and your child. Notify the teacher that your child is wearing underwear or training pants (thick cloth underwear) so we can remind them to use the potty throughout the day. When your child is ready to use the potty at school, please follow these guidelines:

1. Dress your child in clothing that is easy for them to pull up and down on their own. No overalls, jumpsuits, long dresses, onesies or pants/shorts that button and zip.
2. Pack several changes of clothing, underwear and an extra pair of shoes.
3. Bring Pull-ups for nap time and days when your child has more than two accidents in one day.

If your child is not in one of our potty training rooms (Owls, Elephants & Butterflies), please set up a time to meet with your child's teachers' if you feel like your child is ready to begin the potty training process.

Based on pediatric research, it has been determined that it is not unusual for toddlers to bite. We recognize that toddlers and children who bite are using this as a form of communication, however, biting can be harmful to other children and the school staff. The Vestavia Day School biting policy has been developed with these factors in mind. Our goal is to identify the root of the biting behavior and work to resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children and/or staff who are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, Vestavia Day School policy is that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

#### **When Biting Does Occur:**

The staff's job with regards to biting or other aggressive behavior is to keep the children safe and assist the children in learning to use more appropriate methods to communicate or solve conflicts.

*For the child that was bitten:*

1. First aid is given to the bite. The area is cleaned with soap and water and an ice pack is applied. If the skin is broken, the area is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified.
3. The Vestavia Day School Incident Report is completed documenting the incident.

*For the child that bit:*

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "NO! DO NOT BITE! BITING HURTS!"
2. The child will be placed in time out for no longer than one minute per year of age (i.e. 2 years old = two minute time out).
3. The parents are notified.
4. The Vestavia Day School Incident Report is completed documenting the incident.

#### **When Biting Continues:**

1. The child will be provided with a one-on-one shadow.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom teachers to determine the cause of the biting (teething, communication, situational frustration, etc.). The administration may also observe the child if the classroom teachers are unable to determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

#### **When Biting Becomes Excessive:**

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a consecutive 5 day period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior can be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a consecutive 5 day period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **2 school days**.
3. If a child once again inflicts 3 bites in a consecutive 5 day period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, **the parents will be asked to make other child-care arrangements**. It will be at the discretion of the Vestavia Day School administration whether this disenrollment is temporary or permanent.

If a child who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 15 consecutive school days without biting, we will go back to step 1 if the child bites again.

**If a child bites twice in a 4 hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from school for the remainder of the day. This will not count toward the 2 day suspension.**

**Please read, sign, and tear off and return this page to the**

**Your child's teacher, along with the other new school year forms.**

**Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church  
Vestavia Day School**

**Parent Agreement**

I/We \_\_\_\_\_

the parent(s) of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I/we have read the Parent Handbook of the Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church Vestavia Day School and agree to comply and cooperate with all policies and procedures within.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date