

# **Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool**

## **Parent Handbook**



Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool. Our program exists for you and your child as we strive to provide the loving care and guidance that your child needs as he/she grows and develops.

As parents, you play a vital role in our ministry for your child. This handbook is designed to help you understand this program, our mission, and the guidelines under which it operates. Cooperation between parents and staff will contribute to a successful experience for your child. Our church values children and believes in families. We sponsor this Weekday Preschool program as a ministry of the church to provide a learning environment that will help preschoolers grow as Jesus grew. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

We strongly encourage parental involvement during classroom activities that may require extra assistance, such as holiday parties, field trips, etc. If you would like to assist with any of these activities, there will be a sign-up sheet in your child's classroom.

After reading the Handbook, a parent must sign the Parent Contract. The Parent Contract states that you have read and understand the policies and guidelines as set forth in the Parent Handbook.

Please do not hesitate to call the Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool office @ 334-277-0362 if you have questions regarding any information enclosed in this packet.

# Vaughn Forest Preschool

## General Information

### Educational Philosophy of the Program

A child develops mentally, physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally. We are committed to providing Biblically based, age-appropriate experiences to allow each child to progress at his/her own level of ability while feeling successful. This is primarily done through hands-on activities in learning centers, and through positive Christ-like role modeling of the staff. Parent newsletters will keep you informed about each unit designed for your child's class.

## The Program

The program incorporates many educational hands-on activities and allows self-discovery through instruction. Colors, shapes, number recognition and formation, letter recognition and formation, and basic phonics skills are introduced. Your child will participate in a variety of learning center activities that include art, books, blocks, puzzles and manipulatives, nature, music, and dramatic play. Social skills are developed through sharing, taking turns, thinking, reasoning, and problem solving. Bible stories and scripture are included in each teaching unit.

## The Curriculum

The One, Two, and Three Year Old classes use a combination of different curriculums to introduce the children to the letters of the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors.

*The Letter People* and *ABeka Books* are two of the curriculums used in the Four Year Old classrooms. There is a puppet for each letter of the alphabet. Through the use of these special friends, the children will practice letter recognition, letter sounds, building words, counting, and more.

The Kindergarten program uses a combination of mainly two curriculums. *Kinderlit* uses the philosophy that children learn to read through literature. *ABeka* is a phonics approach (learning letters, names, sounds, blends, words) to learning to read. The math curriculum used is *ABeka Math* and *Kinderlit Math*. Using these different approaches to learning, allows the teacher a variety of teaching methods.

## Vaughn Forest Preschool Staff

Vaughn Forest Preschool is staffed with Christian Educators with many years of experiences in Early Childhood Education. The student/teacher ratio is as follows:

18 months – 24 months	6 students to 1 teacher
Twos	7 students to 1 teacher
Threes	8 students to 1 teacher
Fours	14 students to 1 teacher
Kindergarten	14 students to 1 teacher

## Entrance Requirements

Each child must have an up-to-date Alabama immunization record and signed Parent Agreement form on file in the Weekday Office before he/she will be allowed to attend school. All children entering the three, four, and kindergarten classes must be fully toilet trained. Fully toilet trained means that a child knows when he/she needs to use the restroom and is able to take care of all of his/her needs while in the restroom. Children that enter the program must be able to speak conversational English.

## Registration

Our school year is August through May. Registration for the new school year opens in January. Currently enrolled families and church members have the opportunity to register during closed registration which is held during the first two weeks of January. On the last Tuesday in January, registration is open to the public.

To inquire about openings, call or email the Weekday Preschool Director. Once an opening is confirmed, the director will send the paperwork necessary to complete the registration process. The registration form and fee must be completed to hold the child's place.

August tuition and the supply fee are due August 1<sup>st</sup> and are non-refundable.

## Open House

Open House is held the day before school starts. Children and parents are invited to come visit the classroom and meet the teachers. The date and time will be published on the school calendar.

## School Calendar

Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool follows the Montgomery County Public School's calendar regarding school holidays and school closings. Our school calendar will be published after the Montgomery County Public School system releases their calendar.

## School Hours

**Regular Hours** Monday through Friday 9:00am - 1:00pm

Carpool will begin each morning at 8:50 am. If a child needs to be left at school before carpool, the child should be taken to Early Room.

**Early Room** ..... Monday through Friday  
8:00a.m. –8:50a.m.

**Late Room**..... Monday through Friday  
1:05pm - 2:00pm

**The cost is \$7.00 (cash) per child for each hour and is paid directly to the teacher in charge.**

## Tuition

Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and is paid through Brightwheel. Invoices will automatically be sent two days before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. There are two methods of making a payment.

1. **Paying Using a Banking Account:** The ACH processing fee will be covered by the Preschool.
2. **Paying Using a Credit/Debit Card:** There is a processing fee for using a credit card/debit card of 2.95%. This fee is to be paid by the parent and will automatically be added to your child's tuition at the time of payment.

**For Families with Siblings:** Tuition for children in the same family will be merged into 1 billing plan using the youngest sibling. Therefore, the youngest sibling will have a billing plan that includes each sibling and the other sibling(s) will have no billing plan.

**Tuition is considered late if not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.** If the payment has not been received by the 15<sup>th</sup>, the Late Fee of \$20 will be invoiced and charged to the account.

If tuition and late fees are not paid by the last day of the month, the child will be dismissed unless the parent/guardian takes the initiative to make definite arrangements for payment.

A **non-refundable** registration fee is due at the time of registration. No child is officially enrolled until the registration fee is paid.

**Registration Fee -** \$100.00 (Non-Refundable)  
**Supply Fee -** \$150.00 (Non-refundable after August 1<sup>st</sup>)

Tuition is paid for 10 months beginning in August and ending in May. Monthly tuition remains the same, with no deductions for absences, holidays, or unexpected closings due to circumstances beyond our control.

1 Day Tuition \$150 /Monthly  
2 Day Tuition \$180 /Monthly  
3 Day Tuition \$ 210/Monthly  
5 Day Tuition \$ 260/Monthly  
Kindergarten Tuition \$280 /Monthly

**May tuition is due in full by the first Tuesday in May.**

**The supply fee and August tuition are due on August 1st. These fees are non-refundable after August 1<sup>st</sup>.**

## Communication

At Open House, each child will be given a folder that will be sent home daily. Teachers will use the folder to send home daily work, notes and calendars, and behavior charts for appropriate ages.

It is very important that parents go through this folder daily. Read all enclosed information, empty the folder, and return it the following school day. This process will ensure that every parent is informed, and that each child has what he/she needs for class. This is also a great way to develop a routine that will be needed when the child goes to “big” school.

We cannot emphasize enough how importance it is for parents to read all communication from school. We want each child to be prepared and included in all classroom activities. For example, having an item for show and tell is very important to most children. These dates will be on notes and calendars sent home in the folder. This is a great opportunity for parents to prepare for “big” school as well.

During the registration process, a Brightwheel account will be set up for each child. The Brightwheel app will be use by the parents, teachers, and director to communicate back and forth. Each family will need to have at least one parent set up to receive messages through the Brightwheel app and have the notifications turned on. It is a very easy process and is a simple, fast way for us to communicate important information to everyone at once, individual classes, or individual parents. Directions will be provided to each family.

## Withdrawal

A two week notice in writing must be made for any withdrawals during the school year. You will be billed the regular tuition amount through the end of your notice. **No withdrawals will be accepted after March 31<sup>st</sup>.** For a child to register for the next school year, tuition for the current school year must be paid in full. Therefore, if a child withdraws during the school year, tuition for the remainder of the current school year must be paid in full for a child to register for the following year. Supply fees and registration fees are non-refundable.

## Arrival and Departure

Children will be dropped-off and picked-up each day in a carpool line. Before the first day of school, parents will receive the up-to-date policies and procedures for carpool. A paper copy, map, and carpool sign will also be sent home at Open House. **It is very important that parents share this information with anyone who will be carpooling their child to and from school.**

Carpool will begin each morning at 8:50 am. Early Room is available for parents needing to bring their child to school before 8:50 am. Parents are encouraged to arrive at school on time. Carpool ends each morning at 9:05 am and the preschool doors remain locked throughout the day. Therefore, if you arrive to school after carpool has ended and the carpool doors have closed the parent will need to drive to the main preschool doors and ring the doorbell. Once the door is unlocked, the parent will walk the child to the classroom door. Again, please make every effort to arrive to school on time.

If you need to pick-up your child early, you will follow the same procedure. Ring the doorbell at the main preschool doors. Once the doors are unlocked, you will pick up your child at the classroom door. When possible, please let your child's teacher know in advance so we will be better prepared.

Afternoon carpool will begin at 12:50 pm. Children will only be released to people listed on the registration form. This information may be updated at any time. Carpool ends each day at 1:05 pm. Teachers take any remaining children to Late Room. **Once carpool has ended, the parent must pay the Late Room fee.** Teachers do not have the authority to waive this fee.

If you arrive for pick-up after the carpool doors have been closed, you will go to the main preschool doors and ring the doorbell. Once the door is unlocked, the parent will go to the Late Room classroom. You will sign out your child and pay the teacher on duty. There may be a time that despite the best plans, you arrive to school late. If this happens, we will explain to your child that you are on your way and comfort him/her if needed while walking to Late Room. Parents are welcome to send a message through Brightwheel anytime during the day to let us know you are sending your child to Late Room. We will check the messages and tell your child and classroom teacher.

## Early Room / Late Room

An Early Room and a Late Room is provided each day. Teachers volunteer to supervise Early/Late Room. Early/Late Room is provided on an “as needed” basis for \$7 per hour per child. This cash fee is paid directly to the teacher in charge. An Early/Late Room calendar will be sent home each month. We ask that no food or drink be brought into Early or Late Room.

Early Room begins at 8:00 am and is for children that need to be brought to school before 8:50 am.

Late Room is provided for children that need to stay beyond 1:05 pm. Late Room ends at 2:00 pm. Children that have not been picked-up before carpool ends, will automatically be taken to Late Room and charged the Late Room fee of \$7. Teachers do not have the authority to waive this fee.

If a child attends Big Green Bus on Wednesday afternoons in the 1:00 pm to 1:30 pm class and the parent wants the child to go to Late Room at 1:30 pm, **the parent MUST make Late Room reservations before 1:00 pm that day**. This is to ensure that the Late Room teacher knows to stay for your child if no other children attend Late Room this day. Once the reservation is made, the parent will owe the \$7 fee to the teacher in charge.

**If a child is not picked up by 2:00 pm, the parent must pay an additional late fee of \$5 for every five minutes past 2:00 pm. Please keep in mind that the staff must be able to get their own children from school.**

## Absences

It is extremely important that your child attends preschool on a regular basis and arrives on time. It promotes continuity in learning, establishes structure and routine, and prevents disruption within the classroom.

The Kindergarten class begins at 9:00 am. Absences and tardies are recorded for permanent school records. Attendance is vital to the academic process. Excess tardies and absences result in children missing important instruction time.

If your child will be absent, it is very helpful if the parent will notify the teacher through Brightwheel. This helps the school monitor any illnesses within a classroom and the school in general.

Full tuition is due even when a child is absent. Failure to pay may cause your child to lose his/her space at the preschool.



## Weather Days and School Closings

There may be times that the school is closed for severe weather. Vaughn Forest Weekday preschool will follow the Montgomery Public School system. If they are closed, we are closed. In the event of a closure, parents will be notified through Brightwheel as soon as possible.

On days that there is a possibility of severe weather, the Weekday staff will be “Weather Aware”. This simply means that the staff is watching the weather and will be ready to take the children to our safe place at any moment.

### During Arrival and Dismissal Time

If severe weather occurs during morning or afternoon carpool, the staff will stop carpool. Teachers will take any children in the building to the designated safe area. Parents and children still in the carpool line are welcome to join the staff and other children in the safe area. In the morning, these parents must remain with their children until the severe weather has ended and the teachers are able to return to the classroom and receive the children. This will ensure that everyone is checked-in properly. If it is afternoon, we will resume carpool when the warning is over. If you are at home when the warning is issued, please stay until the warning has expired.

### During the School Day

If severe weather occurs while children are at school, the staff will execute the severe weather plan. Because the staff and children will be in the hallway, it will not be possible for the director to answer the phone if parents call. Parents are asked to understand that safety for all is the number one priority.

### Late Arrival Days

If MPS delays the opening of school due to weather, Vaughn Forest may not open at 9:00 am. The decision to open and the time will be based on the start time of MPS. Arrangements for the children of our staff members must be taken into consideration.

### Early Dismissal

If MPS closes school early for reasons related to weather, Vaughn Forest may close early as well. If this occurs, teachers will use Brightwheel to contact parents. **It is very important that we have current phone numbers for all parents.** MPS will make announcements on local radio and television stations and parents with children in the school system will receive phone calls. If this occurs, Vaughn Forest will close at least 30 minutes before MPS does. For example, if MPS announces school closings at 1:00 pm, VF will close at 12:30 pm.

### School Closings

There may be other times that Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool must close due to circumstances beyond our control. If this situation arises, we will give parents as much notice as possible.

## Discipline

It is our philosophy that the best form of discipline for a preschooler is positive reinforcement. If a child exhibits inappropriate behavior the teacher will attempt to alleviate the behavior. If the behavior continues, the child will be placed in time-out. Time-out is a time for the child to be removed from the present situation and given a moment to reflect upon his/her behavior. Our teachers will work with the child so that he/she understands what is expected at school. If the behavior continues, the child will be taken to the director in the Weekday Office. If a child is taken to the director's office, the parents will be notified. Any child that demonstrates that he/she cannot abide by the rules of good conduct, after sufficient consultation with the child's teacher and the Weekday director, he/she may be dismissed from the program.

Students causing physical harm to others (hitting, scratching, biting, etc.) while at school will be taken to the Weekday Office. Parents will be notified of the behavior. After the third offense, the parents will be asked by the director to remove the student from class until such behavior ceases.

## Dismissal of a Child

Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool will handle any issues that may arise in a Biblical manner. The issue should be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher first. If needed, the director will meet with the teacher and the parents. School matters should not be discussed on social media. Failure to handle situations in a Biblical manner is grounds for dismissal.

This program reserves the right to dismiss any child. If, after entering our program, he/she is unable to participate in group experiences or if fees have not been paid, the child will be dismissed. All children attending preschool will be asked to conform to the classroom setting.

## Health and Safety

The program exercises reasonable care and judgment in all matters related to safety. In all emergencies, the program has permission to take such reasonable measures as are (in the judgment of the teacher or director) necessary for the welfare and safety of the child until a parent can be reached.

All children **must have an updated Alabama immunization record** on file in order for them to be admitted to our program.

If your child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be isolated from the group and you will be called to pick up your child immediately. Please be certain that the office has current phone numbers at all times.

**In order to protect our students from spreading illnesses within the classrooms, your cooperation is vital. Children should be symptom free without the use of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.**

Children who have contagious illness or exhibit any of the following signs of illness may not attend:

- **Fever:** A fever of 100 degrees or more and the child should not attend school until he/she is fever free (without using fever-reducing medications) for 24 hours
- **Vomiting:** A child must stay home for 24 hours after symptoms subside
- **Diarrhea:** A child should remain home until 24 hours after symptoms subside
- **Contagious diseases**
- **Severe coughing / Sore throat**
- **Heavy or green nasal discharge**
- **Undiagnosed rash:** Your child should not attend school until the rash has been diagnosed and treated.
- **Pink eye or thick eye discharge:** Your child must be treated by a medical doctor before returning to school

You will be asked to take your child home should you bring your child to school with any symptoms. In the event of exposure to a contagious disease within the group, you will be given written notice. Teachers will not be responsible for giving medicine at school. Due to allergies, we ask that no animals/pets be brought into the building. This includes drop-off and pick-up times.

## **What To Bring To School**

Snack with a drink

Lunch with a drink

Plastic bag containing a change of clothes to be kept in backpack

Backpack **large enough** to hold a folder, change of clothes, and lunch box

The supply fee paid on August 1<sup>st</sup> covers the cost of art supplies and curriculum

## **Snacks & Lunch**

We eat as a group. However, due to a variety of food allergies, children may be separated into small groups during lunch. Parents are responsible for providing a ready to eat snack and lunch with a drink. For safety reasons, do not send carbonated drinks or glass items. Sandwiches or finger foods are encouraged. Teachers are not able to microwave or store foods in the refrigerator. Hot-dogs, grapes, or other choking hazards should be cut into small pieces. Parents are responsible for sending napkins, spoons, and any other items needed. Label all food containers to ensure they are returned.

We ask that the following items not be sent to school.

- Pizza Lunchables
- Red Drinks
- Shredded Cheese

Due to the increasing number of children that have allergies to nuts, we have established Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool as a **nut FREE school**. Please find alternative solutions when selecting items to send to school for snack and lunch.

## **Records**

Attendance records, registration forms, health records, and identification records are kept for each child. Please keep all forms, **especially emergency numbers**, up to date. Notify the office and the teacher of any telephone or address changes. In the case of an injury or sickness, we will attempt to contact the parents based on the numbers on the record.

## **Progress Reports**

Progress Reports are sent home for children enrolled in the Three, Four, and Kindergarten classes. Children in the Three-Year-Old program will receive a Progress Report in January and May. Quarterly Progress Reports will be sent home for the Four-Year-Old and Kindergarten children. Attendance and tardiness are recorded for Kindergarten students.

## **Parent Meetings**

If at any time you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's experiences, please feel free to make an appointment with your child's teacher. Drop-off and pick-up times are not appropriate times for parents and teachers to conference. The teacher must keep her attention on the children. Also, it does not offer a private setting for a parent and teacher to talk.

## **Chapel**

Chapel is held weekly for the Three-Year-Olds through Kindergarten classes. During chapel, the children will listen to Bible stories, sing songs, and learn scripture. Lessons taught in chapel will be reinforced in the classroom throughout the week.

## **Clothes**

Dress your child in comfortable clothing. Children that are potty trained need to wear clothing that they can manage alone while in the restroom. Clothes not to wear include: costumes, costume accessories, removable jewelry, hats, or any other items that may cause a distraction or get lost easily. When teachers include dress-up days in the curriculum, special arrangements will be made for extra restroom time. All children are required to wear shoes with a back strap. No slip-on shoes, like flip flops, are allowed. Shoes such as *Crocs* that have a back strap are permitted. Close toe shoes are strongly recommended.

Each child needs an extra set of clothes in a plastic bag kept in the backpack. If a child does not have a change of clothes, the parent will be called and asked to bring a change of clothes to school.

Please label all removable clothing such as sweaters, raincoats, and jackets. Any items left at school with no label will be placed in the church lost and found.

## **Diapers / Changing Policy**

Diapers are changed on a schedule and more often as needed. Parents need to provide diapers and wipes.

Please notify the teacher if your child is being potty trained at home. The teacher will help with this process. Once the child begins wearing pull-ups to school, please continue to send him/her to school in pull-ups. This helps the teacher establish a routine with the children. Do not surprise the teacher by having your child show up in underwear. **Before a child starts wearing underwear to school, the parent MUST have a discussion with the classroom teacher to be sure that the child is ready to handle this at school.**

Procedures for going to the restroom at school may be different than the routine used at home. For example, at home a child usually does not have to wait in a line to go and he/she can take his/her time. At school, there may be a line, so a child needs to learn not to wait until the last minute to get in line. Also, because friends may be waiting to go next, a child needs to use his/her time wisely.

Things to practice at home:

1. Practice not waiting until the last minute to go to the bathroom.
2. Practice not removing your shoes and clothes while in the restroom.
3. Practice using your time wisely.
4. Practice dressing completely before leaving the restroom.
5. Practice washing your hands and placing the paper towels in the garbage can.
6. Practice using the correct amount of toilet paper.

**All children entering the 3, 4, and 5 year old classes must be fully potty trained and able to care of themselves in the bathroom.** This means a child is able to identify when he/she needs to use the restroom and use the restroom without the assistance of a teacher. Children that are still wearing pull-ups are not considered to be potty trained.

## **Outdoor Play**

The children at Vaughn Forest Weekday Preschool go outside every day, weather permitting. The children's play area is an enclosed and gated area that contains age appropriate playground equipment. Dress your child appropriately to enjoy God's beautiful world. This includes sending jackets when the weather is cold.

## **Toys**

Our staff works hard to plan classroom activities for the school day. Wide varieties of toys have been placed in the classroom and are rotated on a regular basis. Do not allow your child to bring toys to school unless requested by the teacher. Watch for show and tell details on your monthly classroom calendar. Please avoid sending toy weapons to school.

## **Classroom Celebrations/ Parties**

Throughout the school year, parties and special celebration will be planned to accompany the curriculum. Notes regarding such occasions will be sent home in the child's folder.

Please refer to classroom instructions regarding celebrating birthdays at school. Birthday party invitations may only be passed out at school if every child in the class is included. All boy or all girl party invitations are fine. Otherwise, please mail your invitations.

## **What the Children Will Learn While They Play**

- To learn about God, the Creator of all things and people
- To learn about God's son, Jesus, and what He did on earth
- To get along with others - to be polite, fair
- To share with others - toys, games, and experiences
- To explore new things and ideas
- To express himself / herself through words, clay, paint, crayons, music, and stories
- To plan - what to do next?
- To listen - to stories and directions
- To look at books and learn how to use them
- To spot differences - in color, sizes, shapes, and sounds
- To play outside - developing big muscles and learning to take turns and follow directions
- To eat with others - learn to relax - practice good manners
- To care for himself / herself and his/her belongings - keeping up with lunch bags, tending to bathroom needs, returning toys and tools at pick-up time
- To think of others - gifts for Mom, Dad, siblings, classmates, etc.

## Ways Parents Can Help

- Pray that our preschool program will be successful in reaching all of our children.
- Read all letters and information sent home.
- Enjoy your child's work with him/her and celebrate all improvements.
- Have your child bring a backpack to school each day large enough to carry a lunch box and a folder.
- Drop-off and pick-up your child at the scheduled time each day.
- Contact us if your child is not coming to school.
- Know and appreciate your child's teacher. Call if a problem arises.
- Remember to pay preschool tuition on time.
- Talk with your child each morning regarding school rules, manners, sharing, taking turns, etc.

## Extracurricular Activities

Several extracurricular activities are available for our children to participate in at Vaughn Forest Preschool. They are offered at an additional cost. Parent will have the opportunity to learn more and register for these activities at Open House. The activities are listed below with a brief description of each.

### **Abrakadoodle** Mondays 1:00 to 2:00 pm

A teacher from Abrakadoodle comes once a week. In Abrakadoodle classes your children will: ignite their imaginations, strengthen thinking skills, develop fine motor and language skills, explore their creativity and art materials, and celebrate their uniqueness.

### **The Big Green Bus** Wednesdays 12:30 - 1:00 and 1:00- 1:30

The Big Green Bus is a school bus that has been converted into a safe and fun preschool gymnastics facility. The bus will travel to our school once a week for a convenient, structured workout. The children will learn the basics of gymnastics on the balance beam, horizontal bar, vault, tumbling mats, and rings. Lesson plans are based on the Junior Olympic Developmental Program. Classes are taught by Amber Holley.

### **Dance** Fridays 1:00 – 2:00

Jill, with Leaps of Faith, comes to the school and offers a dance, ballet, and tap class.