



2024-25 Parent Handbook

Rev. 8/1/2024

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This handbook is intended to familiarize HopeMark Families with current HopeMark policy, practices and standards. HopeMark reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director. HopeMark Families will be notified of updates to the handbook as they occur.

History

Founded in 1971, HopeMark Preschool initially emerged as a collaborative community outreach program between St. Mark's Episcopal and Hope United Church of Christ. Operating as a

nonprofit institution, HopeMark aims to enhance the St. Louis Hills and neighboring areas by offering high-quality early childhood education to children aged 3 to 5 years old. Rooted in Christian principles, the preschool has since evolved to incorporate the Missouri Early Learning Standards, thus freeing itself from exclusive ties to either St. Mark's or Hope UCC.

Hope UCC continues to work closely with HopeMark Preschool, actively supporting its mission, and maintaining a strong presence through a member of the congregation who serves on the HopeMark's Board of Directors, acting as a valuable liaison. On the other hand, St. Mark's has relocated to a different location and now maintains only nominal ties through its namesake.

Throughout its history, HopeMark Preschool has nurtured and educated countless children, equipping them with the skills and enthusiasm for lifelong learning. As a result, the preschool takes pride in fostering kind, prepared, and confident Kindergarteners who are well-prepared to embrace the future.

Mission Statement

At HopeMark Preschool, our paramount mission is to foster a stimulating, nurturing, and secure environment dedicated to the optimal development of preschool-age children. We are driven by the aspiration to encourage emotional, social, cognitive, and physical growth, laying the foundation for our students' present and future success both inside and outside the classroom. As educators, it is our task to ensure that every child's unique needs are met in order to carry out this mission.

Philosophy and Guiding Principles

HopeMark Preschool carries out that mission by offering a theme-based, play-centered program that follows the Missouri Early Learning Standards. We strongly believe in a holistic approach to learning, combining play, exploration, investigation, and direct instruction. Our program is designed to nurture all aspects of child development, including academics, fine and gross motor skills, social/emotional development, and creative growth. Our curriculum is thoughtfully designed based on the Missouri Early Learning Standards, which underpin our approach to early childhood education.

The principles extracted from the Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS, 2013 & 2021) serve as the bedrock of our program:

1. **Active Interactions:** We recognize that children develop knowledge of the world around them through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events. By encouraging hands-on experiences, we empower them to construct their understanding of the world.
2. **Sequential Learning:** Learning is a sequential process, building upon prior understandings and experiences. We celebrate each milestone achieved by our

students, appreciating that progress is unique to each child and occurs at their individual pace.

3. Individual Progression: Acknowledging that learning rates vary in different areas for each child, we value the diverse range of skills and understandings they demonstrate. Our curriculum caters to their individual strengths, fostering growth in all developmental domains.
4. Interconnected Learning: We embrace the notion that learning in one area is interconnected with others. By incorporating various aspects of development into their experiences, we provide comprehensive and well-rounded learning opportunities.
5. Cultural Context: Understanding that learning is embedded in culture, we ensure that our teaching practices are rooted in familiar cultural contexts. This inclusive approach facilitates meaningful connections and enriches the learning journey.
6. Family and Caregiver Collaboration: We recognize the pivotal role of families in a child's education. Learning begins in the family and extends to early care and education settings, where our caregivers work collaboratively with parents to support each child's development.
7. Potential and Support: At HopeMark Preschool, we firmly believe that every child possesses the potential to achieve the Missouri Early Learning Standards with the appropriate guidance and support. We are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment that nurtures each child's growth and success.

In alignment with our mission statement, these principles form the cornerstone of our program, empowering our young learners to flourish emotionally, socially, cognitively, and physically, as they embark on their lifelong journey of learning and discovery.

General HopeMark Information

Executive Director:

Sophie Prosser: sophie@hopemark.org

Office Manager:

Mollie Morton: mollie@hopemark.org
Garden Room Lead Teacher:
Jennifer Barber: jen@hopemark.org
Sunshine Room Lead Teacher:
Cheryl Reiter: cheryl@hopemark.org
Lunch Bunch Teachers
Cheryl Reiter: cheryl@hopemark.org
Graham Flores: graham@hopemark.org
Permanent Sub:
Marilyn Smith: marilynjane75@yahoo.com

Hours of Operation

HopeMark is open Monday through Thursday from 9:00am to 2:45pm, and Fridays from 9:00am - 2:00pm.

We follow a traditional academic calendar; staff start in early August with back-to-school meetings, and students start officially the day after Labor Day. HopeMark dismisses for summer the 3rd week in May. Please see the full calendar for dates of Parent Teacher Conferences, Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Breaks.

Programs

2-Day Foundational Program Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 – 11:30 AM

This class is typically a child's first school experience and is specifically designed for children turning 3 before July 31st. The 2-day program focuses on developing social-emotional skills, adapting to the school environment, and an introduction to academic concepts, primarily through center exploration, games, and hands-on play.

3-Day Foundational Program Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00 – 11:30 AM

Children in these classes continue to develop socially and participate in a more focused Kindergarten readiness program. These explore the alphabet, learn number concepts, begin printing using correct grip and formation, and are introduced to academic concepts such as opposites, rhyming, patterning, etc., through games and play. Children in this program are typically turning four between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025, and are two years from entering Kindergarten.

Pre-K Foundational Program Monday – Thursday 12:15 -2:45 PM

This program is designed for children who will be attending Kindergarten the following school year. Typically children in this class are turning 5 between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025. This class allows for intensive Kindergarten readiness preparation as well as time devoted to

free play and social interaction, building on the foundational skills learned in our 2-day and 3-day programs.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is a great way to extend your child's HopeMark day! They will have free play, gross motor playtime, learn self-help skills at mealtime, and have time with friends all while under the watchful eye of our caring Lunch Bunch Coordinator(s). Our 2-Day and 3-Day Programs will have lunch bunch from 11:30 – 1:00. Our Pre-K Programs will have lunch bunch from 10:45 – 12:15. You may sign up for lunch bunch as much or as little as you would like. For staffing purposes, we ask for at least a month's commitment at a time, but you may also sign up the day of if needed. The cost is \$10 per stay, due between the 1st and 10th of every month, but September. September's payment is due on the 15th. See Lunch Bunch Policies for more information.

Extracurricular Classes

Extracurricular Activities are separate from HopeMark Preschool, but take place at HopeMark and are coordinated to fit seamlessly into your child's HopeMark day! Your child may come to any of these classes, even if it is not on their typical HopeMark class day.

Robinson Karate: Robinson Karate will be at HopeMark on Monday mornings! This is an exciting class where your child will learn focus, discipline, confidence, and respect all while having fun! There is a minimum of 4 students registered for this class to be offered and children must be 4 years old to participate.

Yoga with Ms. Carrie: This very popular class will take place Tuesday mornings! Ms. Carrie has taught children's yoga for over 7 years at HopeMark is wonderful with helping kids to learn breathing techniques, yoga poses, and more to help with self-regulation. The cost is \$8 per class, the total number of classes depends on the semester length. A minimum of 5 students are needed to be registered for this class to be offered, and all ages are welcome.

Tapping with Tina's Ballerinas: This dance class covers Musical Theater, Hip Hop, Tap, and more! The cost is \$55 per month. If your child signs up for the dance class, they will also be able to go to Ms. Tina's dance studio once a week for an additional class for no additional charge! Students do not need to wear anything special - just clothes they can move in and sneakers/tennis shoes.

Musical Movement with Ms. Cheryl: This fun and dynamic class will help your child cultivate their joy of music! We will explore rhythmic movement, musical cultures and instruments of the world, creativity, self-expression, and the foundations of music theory. Music and movement develop coordination, gross and fine motor skills, literacy, sequencing, and following directions. This class will deepen your child's appreciation and skill with music! The cost is \$10 per class, the total number of classes depends on the semester length. A minimum of 5 students are registered for this class to be offered, and all ages are welcome.

Art with Ms. Flores: This class is a fun opportunity for children to experience the joy and wonder of creating art without the pressure of expectations. Ms. Graham uses a process based art teaching method to ensure each lesson builds on the self-expression essential and integral to personal development, observation enhancement, fine motor skills, and confidence building of the students enrolled. Class is Fridays at 1:00pm, the cost for each class is \$10. There is a maximum class size of 10 students per class.

Ratios

At HopeMark, we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios at all times in our classrooms:

Age of Children	Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children
3 years	1 staff for every 8 children
4 years	1 staff for every 9 children
5 years	1 staff for every 10 children

Licensing

HopeMark is a nonprofit License-Exempt Child Care Facility in accordance with Missouri Department of Childhood. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review in the office and on the web at <https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/AdRules/csr/current/5csr/5c25-300.pdf>

Non-Profit

HopeMark is a non-profit incorporation that is open to all races and creeds. We are governed by a Board of Directors. We strictly adhere to all safety mandates required by the State of Missouri Department of Health, Child Care Regulation.

Weather Related Closing

HopeMark will close due to severe weather that prohibits us all safely getting to the building. The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel school for the following day. In the event that HopeMark closes early or cancels school for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation via email. If closing early on a school day, students should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

Communication Policy

At HopeMark, we strive to provide families with consistent communication with regard to events at school. We use email, Brightwheel, and handouts to maintain communication with our

families. At the start of every class, each parent will have time to quickly touch base with a teacher as their child enters the class. Brightwheel will allow parents to send a message, such as if a child will be absent that day. We post important notices and reminders outside classroom doors as well.

We also have a website for parents to look up the current calendar and any other information needed. The address is www.hopemark.org.

Teachers work to partner with parents to meet each child's individual needs. Parent / Teacher Conferences are held twice a year, in November and March. The teachers also welcome conversations before or after class, and are happy to meet with parents by appointment.

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due from September through May. Tuition is not prorated for children who miss school due to vacation, illness, etc. Tuition is not reimbursed due to weather or other "Acts of God" that are not within the HopeMark's staff control. Invoices via Brightwheel will go out 5 days before tuition is due. Tuition is due between the 1st and 5th of every month. Payments may be made through Brightwheel, personal checks, or cash. Please instruct payment to be made to HopeMark Preschool, 6273 Eichelberger Street, St. Louis, MO 63109.

Supply Fee: HopeMark assesses supply fees rather than providing supply lists to each child. This is a bi-annual fee. The supply fee is due September 30th and January 31st. An invoice will be sent out on September 15th and January 15th through Brightwheel. A reminder will be sent home in the September and January newsletters as well. We also request donations of everyday items (eg. Paper towels, tissues, etc.) throughout the year in order to reserve supply funds for art and craft supplies. These donation requests are completely voluntary.

Late Payment Policy

Tuition is due on the first of the month. Payment is considered delinquent after the 10th. An invoice reflecting an outstanding balance will be sent home on the 11th of each month and will include a \$25 late fee. A child whose tuition remains unpaid at the end of the month will not be admitted to school until the past-due amount is paid. If a family is experiencing an unexpected financial hardship or needs to establish an alternate due date, please see Miss Sophie to discuss.

Withdrawal Policy

Should a child be withdrawn from school, HopeMark requires a month's advance notice of withdrawal or one month's tuition. If a student registers for the following school year and then decides to go elsewhere, we will need to know by August 1st, or they will be responsible for paying September's tuition.

Arrival / Dismissal

Children are to be accompanied by their parents or caregiver upstairs. You may wait for class to begin in the hallway outside the classroom. Please do not send your child upstairs unaccompanied, as this poses a safety concern to your child. If you are unable to climb the stairs, please ask another parent to escort your child up/down the steps each day. At 9:00 AM for the morning classes or 12:15 PM for the afternoon classes, a bell will ring to signify the beginning of the school day. Please do not let your child enter the classroom until the bell rings. One teacher will be at the door and the other at the morning time meeting area. The teacher at the door is there to discuss any important details with you at drop off and to help your child come into the classroom as needed. Parents are asked to stay in the hallway with a quick goodbye at the door with the teacher.

At 11:30 AM for the morning classes or 2:45 PM for the afternoon classes, teachers will open the classroom doors and dismiss each student as their parent or caregiver arrives. Again, you may wait in the office or hallway until dismissal. Please ensure that you list all persons who will be picking your child up from school on your emergency contact form. If someone other than the listed caregivers will be picking up your child, please advise the child's teacher and fill out the Approved Pick-Up form.

Late Policy

We encourage you to make every effort to bring your child to school on time. Late arrivals disrupt the class and the late child may miss out on having a job or other planned activities. Parents or caregivers are expected to pick up their child on time at the end of the school day.

If you find that you will be unavoidably late to pick up your child from school, please call the school office. Morning class dismissal is at 11:30 AM. If a child is not picked by 11:40 AM will be sent to the lunch bunch room and will be charged \$10.00 for that day's lunch bunch. We do keep extra food on hand so the child may eat while they are waiting.

Pick up for the 2 Day and 3 Day Lunch Bunch is 1:00 PM. Any pick up later than 1:10PM is unacceptable. The first time there will be a discussion on the importance of timely pickup, the second will result in a warning, and if there is a third, the family will be charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute if they are late. If any pick up is after 1:15, there will be an automatic charge of \$1.00 per minute without the issuance of a warning.

Afternoon class dismissal is at 2:45 PM. Any pickup later than 2:55 PM for the afternoon classes is unacceptable. First time there will be a discussion on the importance of timely pickup, the second will result in a warning, and if there is a third, the family will be charged a fee of \$1.00

per minute if they are late. If any pick up is after 3:00, there will be an automatic charge of \$1.00 per minute without the issuance of a warning.

Parking

A parking lot is located behind the school and accessible through the alley at Tamm and at Clifton. Please follow the entrance and exit arrows on the lot. The back parking lot can become congested – please try to fill up the front spaces nearest the fence first before parking in the spaces next to the alley. There is no parking on the driveways next to the lot – they belong to the neighboring apartments. Please also refrain from parking in the accessible parking spaces in the alley, on the grass lot next to the parking lot, or in the alley itself. Please also pay attention to the no parking signs on Eichelberger and Tamm. Keeping our community happy keeps everyone happy.

You may also park on Eichelberger or Tamm Avenues. Entrances to the school are through the red doors on Eichelberger, or the red door through the gate of the back parking lot. Typically, if your child is in the Garden Room, it is easiest to park in the parking lot or on Tamm. If your child is in the Sunshine room, it is easiest to park along Eichelberger. At all times, please drive slowly and be aware of small children when entering and exiting the parking lot.

Safe Building Policy

HopeMark employs a remote lock / unlock system. Doors will be locked at all times while school, including arrival and pickup. Please ring HopeMark Preschool's doorbell at the back parking lot or Eichelberger entrance. The director or one of the teachers will speak with you, confirm your identity, and then unlock the door. All doors are equipped with emergency exit bars should the building need to be evacuated quickly. The HopeMark staff has protocols in place for fire, tornado, earthquake, and intruders both outside and inside our building. Communication if these types of events should arise will be as prompt as possible with parents via Brightwheel, phone calls, and / or email.

Emergency Readiness Plans

The children practice fire drills and tornado and earthquake drills to prepare for the unlikely event of a true emergency. Should the school need to be evacuated, children will be removed to a safe location outside the school. Should it not be safe to be outside, HopeMark has partnered with St. Gabriel the Archangel School, located at Tamm and Nottingham, to provide shelter to the children. All emergency contact information is brought outside, along with cell phones to contact parents or caregivers to pick up their child.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent / Teacher conferences are held twice a year, in November and March. There is no school for the children these days. But childcare will be available for \$5 during your conference time as needed. Siblings are also welcome and are covered by the \$5 fee. Appointment sign-up sheets will be available prior to the conferences.

Toys / Personal Items

Please discourage your child from bringing his/her toys, blanket, etc. to school. If a personal item is brought to school, our policy is to have the child leave the item in the hallway on the shelf above his or her name. You can encourage your child to leave their personal item in the car so it is waiting for them after school.

Clothing / Footwear

Please dress children in comfortable play clothes. Dresses should be worn with shorts or leggings underneath. Always send appropriate outerwear, (coats, hats, mittens, etc.) as we go outside most days. All outerwear should be labeled with the child's name.

Also, please send your child to school in athletic or athletic soled shoes. Sandals, Crocs, Flip Flops, etc. pose an injury risk when climbing on the play equipment. If your child's shoes are laces, please work with your child to learn how to tie their own shoes or double knot them before class.

Tote Bags

A canvas tote bag and folder are given to each child at the beginning of the school year, and are used for sending important information and student work home from school. Therefore, it is very important that parents or caregivers inspect their child's tote bag after each school day. Children bring their tote bag to school each day, take out their folder, hang their tote bag on the hook, and place the folder in the correct bin before entering the classroom. The teacher and students will fill the folders during the day to be taken home. Parents may place a note to the teachers inside their child's folder as well.

When you receive the bag, you will need to put your child's name on the front of the bag above the HopeMark logo. The tote bags are navy blue with the HopeMark logo in white on the front. You may write your child's name on the bag using fabric paint or you may have your child's name embroidered on the bag.

A local seamstress, Sarah McCarthy has agreed to embroider tote bags starting at \$10 per bag. Sarah's contact information will be in each child's bag.

Replacement bags will be available at a cost of \$10.

Illness

In a preschool classroom, germs are spread easily. Our illness policy is an effort to reduce the amount of germs in the classroom in order to keep the spread of infection to a minimum. If your child is exhibiting any signs of illness (fever, coughing, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), please keep them home from school until symptoms have subsided. A child with a fever must be fever-free for 24 hours, without medication, until he or she may return to school. HopeMark also follows the CDC Guidelines as they pertain to our school and community at large.

Parents will be called to pick up children who are exhibiting acute symptoms. Teach proper hand washing and nose blowing at home, to reinforce the methods your child is taught at school. Please notify the school office if your child will not be at school due to illness.

It is important for our students and staff to stay as healthy as possible as we do not have a long sub list. Our goal is to have an uninterrupted year of learning, but if teachers need to isolate or multiple are out at the same time, we may have to call off school due to staff shortages.

Immunizations

Missouri law requires that all children attending public, private, and parochial daycare centers, preschools, and nursery schools be current on all vaccinations upon the beginning of school. Should a family choose not to vaccinate their child, we must have a medical or religious immunization exemption on file in the school office. Parents of non-immunized children understand that their child may be withheld from school if there is a local outbreak of an illness for which there is a vaccine. This protects children whose immunizations are in progress as well as infant siblings.

The law also states that parents have the right to ask the director if there are any unimmunized children currently attending the facility.

Head Lice Policy

Preschool is often a child's first time participating in a group setting, and in all group environments, there exists the risk of contracting head lice. HopeMark has adopted a "No Nit Policy," as recommended by the National Pediculosis Association. Our staff has been trained to identify head lice and nits and will occasionally screen the children for lice, which is a common practice in all school settings. Parents are strongly urged to make lice inspection part of a child's personal hygiene care.

If a case of head lice is detected while at school, the parent will be notified to come pick up the child. The child may return to school as soon as he or she is free of lice and nits. All parents will receive a note that lice have been detected at our school, encouraging them to screen their child for lice carefully over the following weeks. It is important to note that head lice DO NOT reflect poor hygiene or social status.

Potty Training

We encourage all children to be fully potty trained prior to entering preschool. That said, no child is turned away if he or she is not fully potty trained. If your child is not yet completely potty trained, he or she may wear a pull-up diaper to school. All children are encouraged to use the restroom frequently. Because HopeMark is not licensed to change diapers, should your child have a bowel movement while wearing the pull-up, the parent or caregiver will be called to come to school and change the child within 30 minutes. We also keep a supply of extra clothes should a child have an accident. The soiled clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag. We ask that you wash the loaner clothing and return it on the next school day.

Snacks / Birthday Treats

Children in the morning classes receive a snack and drink each day that is brought in by a classmate. Children in the afternoon classes do not receive a daily snack, but occasionally will have a birthday treat or special snack that correlates with what we are learning about. Snacks are designed to encourage community in the classroom, teach table manners and build social, fine and gross motor skills.

Parents are expected to sign up to bring a snack for their child's class on a monthly basis. A calendar is posted in the hallway outside of each classroom. Please sign up on the calendar for the day of your choice.

A list of snack ideas is posted in the hallway outside each classroom. Our goal is to serve minimally processed snacks for all to enjoy. A snack suggestion list will be provided. Water will be served at snack time.

If it is your child's birthday, please designate that he/she is bringing a birthday treat. The teachers will make your child a birthday crown, a special puppet comes out to say hello, and the entire class sings "Happy Birthday" to him or her. Cupcakes are a popular birthday treat, but we have found that many children cannot finish an entire cupcake, and there is a great deal of waste. In keeping with our minimally processed snacks, please consider the mini cupcakes or similar sweet treat accompanied by a fruit. Other suggestions for a birthday treat are frozen fruit popsicles.

Snacks and birthday treats may not be homemade. If not a fresh fruit or vegetable washed and cut at home, all snacks and birthday treats must have an ingredient label, as per our allergy guidelines.

Food Allergy Policy

We are a peanut and tree nut free facility upstairs. That means that all snacks must be pre-packaged and the ingredient list checked for traces of peanut or tree nuts in the product. Unfortunately, we cannot allow homemade treats because of the risk of cross contamination. If you purchase a snack from a bakery, it must contain ingredient labeling. It is surprising how many foods contain nut traces! It is very important that you double check the ingredient list of all snacks you send to school. Also, please send snacks in the original packaging. While it is a nice gesture to make individual snack bags, the food must be in its original packaging with ingredients labeled, to prevent cross contamination.

The teachers will also double check the snack before serving it to the children. **If a snack is homemade or found to have nut traces, it will not be served, and returned to the parent.** HopeMark has a zero tolerance policy with regard to homemade treats and items containing traces of nuts. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we strive to keep our children with allergies safe.

Occasionally, parents will send treat bags to school to celebrate a special event, such as holidays and birthdays. While treat bags are optional, if you choose to do so, please make every effort to send nut-free treats. The teachers will not allow children to open the bag until their parent or caregiver has inspected it. Many children also have allergies to other foods such as dairy, gluten, food dye, etc. If your child cannot eat a certain food or drink, please note the information on your child's medical form. Teachers will be provided with a class list of students who have an allergy and will double-check the food labels at snack time to be sure any students with allergies are kept safe.

You are always welcome to provide a daily snack just for your child that meets his or her dietary needs.

If your child requires an epi-pen or inhaler, please provide one to the school office, clearly labeled with your child's name and written instructions in case of use. That said, if your child is challenged by food and/or environmental allergies, we will do everything humanly possible to see that he or she is safe while at HopeMark. We cannot, however, guarantee an allergy – free environment. We are unable to remove all chances of contact with food allergens such as peanut butter any more than we can remove bees from our playground. Children often eat peanut butter at home before coming to school. If the child has wiped his or her fingers on their clothing while eating at home, we'll have peanut butter in the environment. That said, we do strongly encourage parents to have their child wash his or her hands after breakfast and before entering the classroom. Please be aware of the possible life threatening consequences of nut and other allergies, and strive to prevent potential contaminants from entering our school.

Lunch Bunch Policies

For children who may need to remain at school or arrive early for an extended period of time due to schedules, appointments, etc., we offer our Lunch Bunch program. Children bring a sack lunch to school to eat after the morning class dismissal or prior to the beginning of the afternoon classes, and engage in a variety of activities such as group games, art projects, science

activities, and more. We do not require lunches to be peanut free, but if a child with a peanut allergy, or any other food allergy, is staying for lunch bunch, caution will be taken to ensure that the child does not come in contact with any other child's lunch.

Parents may sign up for this program on a regular or as needed basis. HopeMark uses a monthly SignUp Genius to sign up for Lunch Bunch. The sign up will be emailed on the 20th of each month. You will have from the 20th-25th to sign up for the following month of stays. On the 25th, you will receive an invoice for the amount of stays your child will be attending.

For October - May, the payment for the coming month stays at Lunch Bunch will be due between the 1st - 10th of the month. For September, payment will be due on the 15th to allow for our school year to get started. This allows us to plan for the number of teachers needed for the month.

Lunch Bunch will be held in the Toddler Room and Fellowship Hall, both located in the basement of the building. Children attending an afternoon class will come to the Toddler room to start their day, and a teacher will bring them upstairs for class at 12:15 PM.

Children attending a morning class will be escorted downstairs by a teacher following 11:30 dismissal. Parents and caregivers will then pick up their children from the Toddler Room at 1:00 PM.

A note regarding lunch boxes and drink containers – children are required to carry their own lunch box downstairs. Children also must have one hand free to hold the handrail while going to and from Lunch Bunch. If you choose to send a drink container along with your child's lunch it must be inside or attached to the lunch box. Please ensure that any drink containers or thermoses are leak proof as well. We do serve water at Lunch Bunch.

Playground Rules

When the children are using our outdoor playground, we employ some basic safety rules. We encourage you to use the playground and picnic area before and after school and at times when the school is not in session. Parents are expected to adhere to and enforce the same playground rules that the children learn at school. This reinforces the rules the teachers use as well as provides the child the security of consistency.

1. No climbing or walking on, or jumping off the playground wall. This is a safety hazard for your child, as well as an insurance liability for our school.
2. Do not walk up the slides, and only slide down on your bottom, feet first.
3. Keep the sand in the sandbox.
4. If the sandbox is covered, please refrain from using it.
5. Please remain on the walkway in the garden.
6. Children are encouraged to explore nature, but also to respect the foliage by not walking, running or picking live plants or flowers. We want to instill the value of enjoying and appreciating nature so that everyone may benefit.

7. If older siblings are playing on the playground after school, please remind them of the rules and to be mindful of smaller children.
8. Please be respectful to other grownups and children on the playground. Use appropriate language and behavior when interacting with others. Grownups, please refrain from using foul language or inappropriate behavior while on the playground or on Hope UCC property. This includes both verbal and physical behavior.
9. Please ensure that your child is wearing appropriate footwear and clothing for the playground activities.
10. Please ensure that your child follows all safety rules and guidelines.

Disciplinary Policy

HopeMark's disciplinary policy strives to encourage positive behavior rather than focus on undesirable behaviors. We strive to empower children to solve conflicts verbally and stand up for their rights. Our goal is to teach children about choices and consequences, and how to self-regulate behavior. We also consider age appropriate behavior and discipline accordingly.

Below are strategies Hopemark staff will use to respond to child misbehavior.

- **Redirection** - If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, staff will quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."
- **Logical consequences** - These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.
- **Participate in the solution** - If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please apologize and help me make him feel better."
- **Natural consequences** - Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. Only natural consequences will be used when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.
- **"Take a break" or "Calm down chair"** - In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child will be directed to "take a break" or sit in the "calm down chair" with a teacher close by; NEVER ALONE. This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff will talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the calm down chair. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave

the blocks center and let's go to the calm down chair. I will be there to talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior, the following will take place:

1. Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director.
2. The Director will observe the child and meet with the Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
3. The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
4. The Director, Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

HopeMark's Song

"I'm a HopeMark Kid!"
Look at me, Look at me,
I'm a HopeMark Kid!
Look at me, Can't you see,
I'm a HopeMark Kid!
And everywhere I go,
I want the world to know,
I'm a HopeMark Kid!