



Family Handbook

2016-2017

SCHOOL YEAR

<http://benhillchristianacademy.org/>



WELCOME

Dear Family,

On behalf of Ben Hill UMC Academy Director, Board and Staff we welcome your family into the Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy Family and Legacy. At The Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy we take seriously the fact that you have entrusted us with one of your most precious treasures, your children.

We use the Christian based A Beka curriculum. Through our curriculum, teaching strategies, and a variety of learning resources, our students are challenged to excel in all academic areas. Our Academy continues to be a staple in early education; teachers and staff are committed to helping your child or children, grow and have the best educational experience possible.

We are grateful that you have entrusted the care and education of your children to the Ben Hill Christian Academy. We look forward to providing you with a caring and enriching academic environment.

Sincerely,

Beverly C. Logan

Beverly C. Logan, Ed.D.
Academy Director

ABOUT Us

Philosophy

As a Christian based academy we hold dear to the tenets of Proverbs 22:6 *Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.* We believe school is a continuous and exciting journey for each child and plan our curriculum accordingly. We create age/grade level work around the essential focus of what we want children to take away at the end of each school year. By developing critical questions and essential concepts in this way, we are able to assess our students and incorporate activities that are age and grade appropriate as well as being challenging.

Mission

Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy is a ministry that is a vital part of Ben Hill United Methodist Church. We are committed to providing our children and families a faith-based, cutting edge, enriched learning environment that encourages physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

HISTORY

Dr. and Mrs. Olly C. (Carolyn) Duckett founded the Ben Hill United Methodist Church Preschool Academy. The Ben Hill United Methodist Church began its pre-school ministry in November 1973, for the purpose of providing day care service. The academy during that time offered services for children ages 2–5. It was licensed for a capacity of 69 children.

In May 1974, the academy was expanded to offer a developmental program. This program included the following areas of study: language, art, health and safety, reading readiness, physical activities, and recreational play. Through the leadership of Mrs. Stella M. Graggs the academy soared and gained the reputation of being the place to send children to receive a strong academic foundation. We celebrate our history and look forward to building upon it with your family and our tradition of success.

In 2011, Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy received national accreditation by the National Association on the Education of Children (NAEYC).

Certifications

Licensed by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

Accredited by the National Association on the Education of Children (NAEYC)

Hours of Operation

The Academy is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. our summer camp hours are 7:00 am until 6:00 pm.

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SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

The Academy observes the following holidays and will be closed:

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday (National Observation)
Presidents' Day
Good Friday and Monday after Easter (Spring Break)
Memorial Day
Independence Day (July 4th)
Labor Day
Day before Thanksgiving we close at 4:00pm
Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Break (refer to calendar)
New Years Break (refer to calendar)

Please note- if the traditional holiday occurs during the weekend, we will observe the holiday on the **Friday** before the holiday.

Teacher Pre-Planning and Professional Development

Generally the school is closed for teacher pre-planning days one week after school ends in May and one week before school begins in August. The Academy administrative team will notify you of the specific dates.

Early Dismissal

Thanksgiving Holiday. We will also dismiss at 3:00 pm the day before Thanksgiving.

ADMISSION & REGISTRATION POLICY

Admission into Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy is based on availability and openings; our facility admits children from 12 months (who satisfactorily demonstrate that they can walk independently) to 5 years of age. All admission forms must be completed and registration fees paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

The Academy may not accept a child for enrollment or continue the child's enrollment when the school determines that services necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other children cannot be provided. If at the end of the first two weeks it is determined that a child will not benefit from this experience, other arrangements must be made for the child.

Non-Discrimination Policy

At **Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of most students.

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Registration and Additional Fees

Registration Fee - An annual registration fee of **\$175.00** is due at the time of enrollment and re-enrollment.

\$75.00 - PTA Family Assessment

\$50.00 - Supply Fee

\$25.00 - T-shirts and Sweatshirts

\$25.00 - Insurance

\$175.00 - Total Annual Registration Fee (Non-Refundable)

Families will be charged only one time during an academic year-- defined as August – May.

PTA fee is to be prorated over the 10 months @ 7.50 per month of enrollment.

Being enrolled even one day during the month means the monthly fee is charged

Additional Child(ren) - For each additional child the registration fee of \$100 will be added to the \$175.00. Please note the PTA assessment is per family.

Late Pick-Up Fee - A late fee of \$1.00 per minute is charged for every minute after 6:30 p.m. that the child remains on the premises, payable in cash to your child's teacher at the time of pick-up. This fee will be charged to the subsequent months' tuition, if not paid at the time of late pick-up.

Annual Activity Fee- This fee is payable in full by last Friday of September. This fee helps to support our on-site/off-site field trips.

Summer Camp Registration Fee - Summer enrollment requires a non-re-fundable registration fee. This fee is only charged to PreK, Kindergarten and School Age classes. The fee will be determined on a yearly basis.

TUITION POLICY

Payment Policy

Payment is always due monthly in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. All monthly tuition payments must be processed through our designated tuition collection system. Smart Tuition can be reached by visiting www.parents.smarttuition.com

The monthly tuition must be paid by the 1st of each month. The tuition is late after the 5th of the month. If the 1st falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, your payment will not be posted to your account until the following Monday. If the tuition is not paid in full (including the late fee, if applicable) by the 5th, **we will not be able to provide service for your child until the tuition is paid in full.**

Tuition Weekly Rate

Early Learners A (12-24 Months).....	\$190.00 per week
Early Learners B (24- 36 Months).....	\$185.00 per week
Preschoolers (36-48 Months).....	\$180.00 per week
Pre Kindergarten (4-year-olds).....	\$180.00 per week
Kindergarten	\$180.00 per week

Students will remain in their assigned classrooms for the entire school year unless authorized by the Academy Director.

Tuition Discounts

Multiple Children. Families with 2 or more children will receive a weekly \$10.00 discount per child.

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Payment in Full. There is a 10% discount when tuition for the year is paid in advance. Only one tuition discount method may be selected per family.

Late Payment Policy

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of **\$45** will be added to your account by the 6th of each month. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, **we will not be able to provide service for your child until the tuition is paid in full.**

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a \$35. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "money order only" status.

Summer Tuition Policy

Summer Semester. (Year Round Academy Students- Early Learners A/B and Preschoolers) will adhere to the same policy as the Regular School Year. The next Academic payment schedule enrollment/re-enrollment date is June 1st. If there are any payment information updates, please notify the Academy office by May 1st.

Summer Camp. (Rising Pre-K – Rising 3rd Graders) Summer camp is optional. We host an 7 or 8-week Summer Camp program. There is a (6) six-week minimum attendance requirement. Summer Camp tuition rates are based on \$125 weekly payments that must be paid in advance of services rendered.

1st Installment for weeks (1-3) of camp is **\$375, due by the 1st day of Summer Camp.**

2nd Installment for weeks (4-6) of camp is **\$375, due by the Monday of the 4th week.**

3rd Installment for weeks (7-8) of camp is **\$125 or \$250, due by the Monday of the 7th week.**

*Please note that summer enrollment is not required for Pre-K and Kindergarten students.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Tardiness/Absence

Children benefit from a punctual and regular attendance at the Academy. In order to take full advantage of the Academy's curriculum your child(ren) are to arrive no later than 9:00 am. (Please note daily schedules academic start times).

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 am, please call us at 404-344-8912. You may also email Dr. Logan at blogan@benhillumc.org.

Tuition Waiver-Vacation

Requests for tuition waivers need to be submitted in **writing** or **email your request** to the Academy Office at least two weeks prior to redeeming them.

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Academic Year (August–May). The Academy will grant each child one **half-week** tuition waiver to be redeemed at any time during the school year from August to May. Your child must not be present at the Academy during the time you wish to redeem your voucher.

Summer Semester (June-July). (Year Round Academy Students- Early Learners A/B and Preschoolers) May take 4 weeks of tuition free vacation. If parents want to vacation for the entire summer and guarantee their enrollment for Fall Semester the family may pay a \$400.00 holding fee.

Summer/Summer Camp. For rising Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students, summer enrollment is not required. If students are enrolled in summer camp they may take a two-week tuition free vacation.

Withdrawals

A 2-week advance, written notice is required by the Academy when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in accumulation of weekly tuition until notification is received and then two weeks of tuition payment is required after notice is given.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions regarding where the records should be sent is required along with a self-address/stamped envelope.

UNIFORM AND STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

All students of the Ben Hill United Methodist Church Christian Academy are required to wear a uniform. This is to ensure modest, appropriate, and economical dress, and to de-emphasize external clothing and strengthen acceptance of each child because of their true internal worth. All students are required to wear the school uniform beginning the first day of the school year. NO EXCEPTIONS will be made. **Teachers have been instructed not to accept students into their class who are not properly dressed in uniform. This will be strictly enforced.**

School uniform apparel is required. The school uniform is to be sized correctly and worn appropriately (long sleeve shirts may not be rolled up), regardless of current fashion trends. Replace worn, torn, or outgrown uniforms promptly. Please tuck in all shirts properly. Only plain white T-shirts are to be worn underneath uniform shirts.

School apparel. T-shirts (1) and sweatshirts (1) are included in the registration fee. Additional T-shirts/sweatshirts may be purchased through the academy Office. We require the Early Learners A/B and Preschooler students to purchase a school sweater and the Pre-kindergartners and Kindergartners are required to purchase a school blazer. Pricing and order information is provided during orientation.

Chapel attire. ALL students ages 3 – Kindergarten will wear their school sweater/blazer with emblem. Chapel is held every Wednesday; you will receive notification of any changes.

Change of Clothing. Parents/Guardians are asked to provide an extra set of uniforms, to be left at the Academy, for emergencies. **All clothing must be labeled.** If no change of clothing is available for a child, the child will be permitted to wear Academy clothing home. Parents/Guardians are asked to please launder and return academy clothing the following day.

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Out of uniform days. In support of our PTA Fundraiser we offer out-of-uniform every Friday for a fee of \$2.00. Payment is due on the 1st Friday of each month, please place payments in the PTA Box located in the Academy's main office. (Please refer to school calendar for specific dates) with **no cost** associated.

Summer dress code policy. During summer session no uniform is required. Please note we do not allow any open toe shoes, jellies, and crocs.

Field trip attire. Ben Hill T-shirt/Sweat Shirt uniform pants (during school year). Summer bottom attire will be communicated prior to each field trip based on the field trip location.

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY - GIRLS	
Jumpers/Dresses:	Plain Navy Includes Polo style dress (no sweater dresses) *We recommend that blue shorts be worn under jumpers, dresses, and skirts
Bottoms:	Plain Navy (no logos): -Skirts -Skorts -Shorts -Capris -Slacks
Shirts:	Solid Navy or White (no logos): -Short/long shirt sleeve collar shirt -Short/long Polo style shirts
Shorts or Slacks:	Navy (school apparel only)
Sweaters/Vests:	Solid Navy, Black, or White V-Neck or Crew Neck Cardigan (no logos)
Belts:	Brown, Navy or Black (three and older only)
Socks:	White, Navy, or Black: (no designs) -Ankle socks -Knee socks -Tights -Leggings (Navy or White only with matching socks)
Shoes:	Navy, Black or Brown (solid color only) or Saddle Oxfords * No Boots or Open Toe Shoes/Sandals
Hair Accessories and Jewelry	All Accessories must be Black, Navy, Blue, White, Red or Clear * Beads (Pre-K and Kindergarten only) Jewelry: Earring Studs Only

SCHOOL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS – BOYS	
Slacks:	Navy slacks

Shirts:	Navy or White (no logos): -Short/long shirt sleeve collar shirt -Short/long Polo style shirts
Shorts:	Navy shorts
Sweaters/Vests:	Solid Navy or Black V-neck or crew neck cardigan
Belts:	Brown, Navy or Black (three and older only)
Socks:	White, Navy or Black
Shoes:	Navy, Black or Brown (solid color only) and Saddle Oxfords * No Boots or Sandals
Hair:	Boy's hair should be neat and well groomed at all times. No shaved hair designs or dyed hair color. Hairstyles should not be more than 2 ½ inches in height/width/length. The Director has final determination regarding compliance with enforcement of this rule.
Jewelry:	None allowed

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy does not provide daily transportation. Parents/Guardians are responsible for transporting their child(ren) to and from the Academy.

Arrival. We open at 7:00 a.m. please do not drop-off your child prior to 7:00 a.m. Parents are to accompany their child(ren) **and sign them in upon arrival.** We close at 6:30 p.m. **Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.**

In an effort to control access to the Academy we ask that parents enter the building from 7:00-9:00 a.m. through the Academy's main entrance (the double doors off the church's main parking lot). Students should arrive at school no later than 9:00 a.m. The parking lot gate and doors to the Academy are locked promptly at 9:00 a.m. by security.

After 9:00 a.m. we require students/parents to enter the building through the church's office doors located behind the church (the ramp doors). **Only use the exit doors on the second floor in case of an emergency.**

Departure. The Academy closes at 6:30 p.m. during the school year. The parking lot gates and the main entrance to the academy are opened by security at 4:30 p.m. and remain open until 6:30 p.m. If you arrive to pick up your child before 3:00 p.m. or after 6:30 p.m. use the church offices (ramp) entrance.

Late Pick-Up Fee Policy

A late fee of **\$1.00 per minute** is charged for every minute after 6:30 p.m. (summer 6:00pm) that your child remains on the premises, payable in cash to your child's teacher at the time of pick-up.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Cell Phone Usage

The time you spend in the Academy dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone while visiting the Academy.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons age 16 or older; that you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PARENTAL ACCESS POLICY

The custodial parent(s) of the child, shall at any time the child is in attendance at the Academy, be permitted to access appropriate Academy areas of the building. A Parent shall make his or her presence known to Academy staff prior to removing the child from the premises.

Parents must report to the Administrative Office to "sign in" and secure a "Visitor's Badge." The visitors badge must be worn until the visit ends. Visitors **MUST NOT GO DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM**. Please be considerate and do not detain teachers; this will prevent them from their primary duties in caring for the well being of the students.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring. Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, cups, diapers, cot sheets, blankets, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cubbies. Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Items from Home. We request that you do not allow your child to bring items/toys from home into the Academy unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. The Academy is not responsible for any damaged or lost items.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state and NAEYC requirements; however our teachers exceed those qualifications. The minimum staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Lead Teachers	AA/ BS/ MA Degree in Early Childhood Education - or - Child Development Associate Certification/Equivalent	2 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Pursuing an AA/ BA Degree in Early Childhood Education - or - Pursuing a Child Development Associate Certification	1 year

Teachers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, first aid and CPR, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, positive guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Outside Employment of Staff

An employment arrangement between families and our Academy staff outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy**.

Child to Staff Ratios

We will maintain low ratios to ensure each student receives the individual attention they deserve. Our NAYEC accreditation guarantees it! Children are supervised at all times. All teachers receive scheduled breaks/lunch; which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

COMMUNICATION & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Communication. Regular notes from Academy staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the Academy. Notes will be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day, as necessary.

Documentation/Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the Academy, documentation boards provide you with pictures, learning objectives, and content about happenings in your child's classroom. Our bulletin boards provide Academy news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, and announcements.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Come and visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on field trips, or enjoy a meal with your child. All visitors must sign in and wear a visitor's badge for the safety and protection of our children.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur throughout the year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released; with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children in our program are confidential.

Publicity

We may use your child(ren)'s image, voice, and names for publicity, unless the family indicates, in writing, that they do not want their child to participate.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Mandatory Volunteer Hours. Each family will be required to provide a **minimum of ten (10) hours** of MANDATORY VOLUNTEER work for the Academy. See office staff for a listing of all onsite/offsite activities. Parents/ family members volunteering will be required to sign in and out to document their hours. Please note that you may volunteer offsite from home or work.

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Parent Leadership Opportunities

Program Goals. All parents/guardians are invited to participate in our annual Program Goals meeting to help provide feedback in the development of our short and long-term goals.

Parent Advisory Committee. We invite parents to participate on the Director's Parent Advisory Committee. This Committee meets 4 times a year to review progress of our short and long-term goals.

Classroom Representatives. These individuals serve as liaison between classroom parents and teachers.

Parent Teacher Association. The Academy's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an excellent opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to work together. Please see school calendar for meeting times. The officers conduct monthly planning and business sessions. The PTA encourages and supports parent/guardian participation in various activities throughout the school year. The PTA also sponsors optional fund-raising projects for the purpose of enhancing the educational program at the academy.

If you are interested in serving in any of the above leadership roles, please contact the front office. Also see the annual school calendar for meeting times.

Family Events. We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Review your calendar and look for various announcements.

- Parent Orientation/ Meet & Greet
- Back to School Night
- Christmas Program
- Academy Sundays
- Black History Program
- School Festivals
- Kindergarten Graduation
- Thanksgiving Luncheon

Classroom Activities. Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Family Teacher conferences

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a structured learning environment with curricula that is developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We use the A Beka curriculum to promote strong academic skills; we also provide child directed hands on learning opportunities. Our program is designed to enhance development in the following areas: cognitive/reasoning, creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem solving, responsibility, and independence. Copies of daily schedules and lesson plans are posted in each classroom for your viewing.

Field Trips

Field Trips. During the academic year and summer we provide enriching field trips for our students. The child's family must sign a permission slip for each trip and each child must have an up to date **Emergency Medical Form**. If you did not sign the permission slip, the Academy will not permit him/her to attend the field trip. If your child does not arrive by the specified departure time, then he/she may have to remain at school; or you may bring your child(ren) on the field trip, but accompany him/her for the duration of the activity.

Chaperone Policy. From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip as a chaperone. Chaperone means any adult parent or other adult relative of a child enrolled in the Academy, who occasionally accompanies a group of children from the Academy on a field trip and assists the Academy's personnel in providing supervision of the children during the field trip. **The chaperon must be under the direct supervision of Academy personnel at all times.** We ask for advanced notice, especially if you plan to travel with the students on the bus. We must document your attendance.

Field Trip Transportation. All children transported in a vehicle provided by or used by the Academy shall be secured in a child passenger restraining system or seat safety belt in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. School buses are exempt from Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS) based on Georgia law.

Field Trip Attire. Ben Hill T-shirt/Sweat Shirt uniform pants (during school year) and summer bottoms are communicated prior to each field trip, based on the field trip location.

Student Transitions

Your child's transition in our school should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. As new routines and new people are introduced we will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transitions.

Transition from home to Academy. Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the Academy, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between classrooms. Children are transitioned to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. **We do not transition children in the middle of the academic school year**, except for in extreme circumstances, as determined by the Director.

Transition to elementary school. Transition for our Kindergarten students includes a graduation, activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, and creating a mural of special friends and special times at our Academy. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Electronic Media/Television

Electronic media including, but not limited to I-pads/tablets, PCs, and television are collectively limited to 30 minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violence and high-quality educational content.

Our normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, we may use online resources, DVDs, or software as instructional tools and discussion stimulator. Television consumption will not be longer than one hour and the program will be screened prior to showing. Programs will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Rest Time

After lunch, all children younger than 6 years of age participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Diapering Procedures

Step 1. Get organized. Before bringing the child to the diaper changing area, perform hand hygiene, gather and bring supplies to the diaper changing area:

Step 2. Carry the child to the changing table, keeping soiled clothing away from you and any surfaces you cannot easily clean and sanitize after the change.

Step 3. Clean the child's diaper area.

Step 4. Remove the soiled diaper and clothing without contaminating any surface not already in contact with stool or urine.

- Step 5.** Put on a clean diaper and dress the child.
- Step 6.** Wash the child's hands and return the child to a supervised area.
- Step 7.** Clean and disinfect the diaper-changing surface.
- Step 8.** Perform hand hygiene according to the procedure in Caring for Our Children Standard 3.2.2.2 and record the diaper change in the child's daily log.

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. 3rd Edition. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. Also available at <http://nrckids.org>.

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Toilet Training Procedures

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Procedure for Changing Soiled Clothing

- Step 1: Get organized. Before bringing the child to the changing area, perform hand hygiene, gather and bring supplies to the changing area.
- Step 2: Avoid contact with soiled items.
- Step 3: Clean the child's skin.
- Step 4: Put on a clean pull-up or underwear and clothing, if necessary.
- Step 5: Wash the child's hands and return the child to a supervised area.
- Step 6: Clean and disinfect the changing surface.
- Step 7: Perform hand hygiene according to the procedure in Standard 3.2.2.2 and record the change in the child's daily log.

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs*. 3rd Edition. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. Also available at <http://nrckids.org>.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, respectful of other people/property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. Along with positive guidance strategies, we also allow students to take time-outs to help them calm down.

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Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

NUTRITION

Academy Food Prepared

Academy food will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the USDA Nutritional Guidelines (ndb.nal.usda.gov) required for food service. The Academy provides a breakfast snack, lunch, and afternoon snack.

Outside Food

Families often bring foods from home to provide the class with an evening snack, holiday party, or birthday party. Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Baked goods should come from a store or an insured bakery. No homemade cakes, cup cakes, or any kind of homemade food can be served to the children.

Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially wrapped package that was never opened.

Meal Time

At meal time the dining table is set with plates and flatware. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/teachers. A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Toddler Feedings

Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods. Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

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Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an **action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician** (please request the form from the academy office).

Food Preferences

If your child is not allergic to a food, but rather has a food preference then we ask that you provide a substitution similar to our current menu. For example, you may prefer that your child not eat meat and we are serving turkey burgers, we ask that you provide a veggie burger. We will not provide food substitutions for food preferences.

Birthday Party Procedure

If your child wishes to acknowledge his or her birthday or a special holiday at school, please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements, and complete the activity form.

Food allergies. Please check with your child's teachers regarding food allergies of classmates before bringing special treats. Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy is a Nut FREE Academy.

Children may suffer noticeable reactions to chocolate and nuts. Please read labels on commercial items to minimize additives and colorings.

Food. All treats brought by families to share with the children must be purchased pre-packaged or provided in the original package from a store or local bakery. Birthday treats are shared after lunch or afternoon snack time (please arrange celebration time with Lead Teacher).

Outside Birthday Party. Please be respectful when having birthday parties outside of the Academy. If you want to invite friends from the Academy we are not responsible for informing others. To hand out invitations at the Academy, all students must be invited. Please provide the invitation to the student's Lead Teacher.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every January, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children you may not bring a sick child to the Academy. The Academy has the right to refuse a child who appears ill.

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You will be called and asked to pick-up your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (above 100.1° F axillary/under the arm) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.

- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 1. The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 2. A bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage can cover the involved areas.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide the academy with a **Food Allergy Action Plan** form the plan details the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. **Please note that doctor signature is required.** A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area, classrooms and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

To help prevent allergic reactions, the Academy is bleach-free school. To promote and minimize germs, instead of bleach we use products that contain hydrogen peroxide as the active disinfectant and sanitizing agent.

Medications

We require that parents/guardians give all medications to a front office staff member with the **Authorization for Medication** form detailing specific instructions for administration.

Medications should never be left in the child's cubby, bag, or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

Prescription medications. Prescription medications require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the academy has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather and aligns with the school uniform policy. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the academy, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Having a safe school environment is one of our primary goals at the Academy. We conduct daily safety inspections inside and outside the Academy area in order to prevent injuries. We require of all of our full-time staff to receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification. A trained teacher will administer first aid in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance. We will contact you or a person on your emergency contact list.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The Academy is a smoke-free environment. The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor academy environment and vehicles used by the academy are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the academy's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the academy's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Any adult, who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended usage is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our Academy will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Facilities Emergency Plans

Loss of Power. In the event of loss of power, each class is equipped with emergency lighting. Teachers will open blinds for natural light. The office will notify the service provider of the problem.

Loss of Water. In the event of loss of water services, the office will notify the water company of a problem. If service cannot be restored within 2 hours, parents will be notified for pickup of the children.

Loss of Heat. The children and staff will be moved to the warmest and safest area in the building and will be required to wear their coats/jackets. If the temperature should fall below 40 degrees, parents will be contacted to pick up their children.

Loss of Air Conditioning. In the event of loss of air conditioning, teachers will open windows. Should the temperature reach above 90 degrees, parents will be called to pick up their children.

Fire, Tornado, and Lock Down Drills

Safety drills are held regularly. Visitors and volunteers who are in the building during a drill should follow the safety directives. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and

staff on a monthly basis. The Academy conducts monthly fire drills to prepare the children for potential life saving strategies. The drills are timed and recorded for state purposes, and stored on site.

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Fire Alert. An alarm with short broken rings, followed with verbal instructions and flashing lights, alerts students to evacuate the building quickly and quietly.

Tornado Alert. An alarm with a rolling horn alerts students to go to the designated areas of safety within the building.

Lock Down Alert. The Academy Director announces on the Walkie-Talkies, “Lock Down Alert! Code Red.” This denotes a danger in or around the school and all classroom and school doors will be locked.

We have a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan. Please request a copy from the office.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

In the event of inclement weather, tune into Channel 2, WSB-TV Action News for information about Academy closings or delayed openings. The Academy will be closed if the public schools in the City of Atlanta are closed. When safe travel is possible the Academy will open. Parents may call the Academy Director at 678-964-3741 or Academy 403-344-8912 to verify that we are able to open. You may also call the Church’s Main Switchboard, 404-344-0618, to hear updated information. If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child’s early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.





Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, and return it to the Academy. This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to the 2015-2016 academic school term.

I have received the **Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy Family Handbook**; it is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask academy management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Child's Name

Recipient Signature

Date

Academy Staff Signature

Date

