

**LOWER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
BUOYS AND GULLS PRESCHOOL**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**Proverbs 2:10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge  
will be pleasant to your soul.**

**Lower United Methodist Church  
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HARTFIELD, VA 23071  
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# WELCOME!

Welcome to Lower United Methodist Buoy and Gulls Preschool. We are very grateful that you have chosen our school and entrusted your children to our care, and we promise to help your child have a wonderful preschool experience and grow as a whole person. It is our privilege to provide them with nurture and guidance. Indeed, your child is a gift from God! I look forward to meeting you and watching your children grow and learn through the year. My office is open, and I invite you to see me anytime. If you have any questions or any needs, feel free to contact me.

Blessings,

Rev. Yosub Namgung

We welcome you to Lower United Methodist Church Buoy and Gulls Preschool! We are a super small family and want you to know you can reach out to us anytime you have questions or concerns. We have found that effective communications help to keep things running smoothly. We could not be more excited you have decided to send your little one to us and we hope we can do the very best job and love them while they are with us.

Kelly Walden

Director, Buoy and Gulls Preschool

## OUR VISION STATEMENT

Lower United Methodist Church (LUMC) Buoy and Gulls (B&G) Preschool offers a program that nurtures a love for learning in children; prepares children for success in their future academic life; and builds relationships with families in the community by sharing God's truth and love. Lower United Methodist Church Buoy and Gulls Preschool offers a program that fosters the wholesome development of each individual child, ages 2 ½ to age 7.

Using basic principles of early childhood and Christian education we provide a safe, friendly environment where children experience and learn love and acceptance. Much of this experience is accomplished through play situations and social interaction. Close

rapport between parents and teachers allows the child to develop their basic needs, including social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth. We are a welcoming and inclusive community that respects and honors different religions, abilities, and backgrounds. Buoys and Gulls Preschool will be a place where children are made aware that they are the cherished creation of God and where God's love is demonstrated to others.

We believe that play is an effective method of learning. Play is a child's way of exploring, experimenting and learning cooperative behavior. The teachers and assistants use play situations to provide beginnings in language, science, social studies, music and creative arts. The program is developed through curriculum themes such as seasons, community helpers, holidays, and through stories and discussions. Each child is recognized as a productive individual as they develop self-confidence and feelings of self-worth.

## **WRITTEN DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Buoys and Gulls Preschool (B&G) is operated as an outreach program of Lower United Methodist Church and is exempt from state childcare licensure due to Religious Exemption and is subject to all church policies. All rules and regulations provided under religiously exempt child day centers are followed and annual documentation is provided by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) each year granting this status.

The maximum number of students ages 2 and a half years – 7 years that may be enrolled on a given day is 42. The preschool does not prepare food on this site.

This facility is a non-administering medication site and is designed for well children. Please inform your physician that your child is in a preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Limiting medications dispensed away from home helps prevent medication errors. If medication needs to be administered during school hours for an ongoing health issue, please contact the director to discuss a medical plan.

The quality of the staff is especially important in providing quality education and care for preschool age children. All staff have an annual physical to deem them physically and emotionally capable of taking care of children and are in good health according to a physician or nurse practitioner. Staff meets education and personal requirements set forth by Lower United Methodist Church and submits to background checks to include a DSS Search and VA State Police database search. Staff members are required to have

AED training, a current Pediatric CPR and First-Aid Certificate. The Director is required to have a bachelor's degree and a minimum of 5 years in a teaching capacity. The education requirements for Lead Teacher include a bachelor's degree (preferred) or at minimum an associate degree and at least 3 years' experience in a teaching capacity. Assistant teacher must have a high school diploma and two year's preferred teaching experience. Staff is hired on an equal opportunity basis. All staff should have a calling to minister to children and their families and all personnel shall be approved by Lower UMC Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee.

LUMC is covered by liability insurance and has been inspected by the Middlesex County building inspector and is determined to encompass approximately 1,460 square feet (school areas, not including hallways and bathrooms) and is determined to be free of obvious hazards to children. The building is inspected annually for fire hazards and health/sanitation.

## **CURRICULUM**

Our Buoys and Gulls preschool curriculum uses a learner-centered approach that emphasizes individual development based on the child's interest and learning style. To set goals for each student and organize teacher objectives for each month, an informal student evaluation is done at the beginning of the program. To provide the children with many educational opportunities we use a variety of hands-on age-appropriate activities including songs and dances in their circle time, finger plays, reading books, puppetry, play acting, small group activity handouts, art, and science activities, and following the natural order of the seasons, as well as using Bible based stories and songs.

In January we do a formal assessment and revise our goals for each student based on progress they have made. The specific goals and objectives are listed in a handout given out at our open house or by request from the parents. The environment in which all the children at Buoys and Gulls learn will be one of unconditional love, support, and respect to help them grow socially, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

## **READING PROGRAM**

Once students have mastered all alphabet letter names (upper and lower case) as well as letter sounds, students will be given a sheet of C-V-C (consonant- vowel- consonant) words to be practiced at home and returned to be read with the teacher. Once they have gone through the list of word families, they will move on to phonics based early reading books. We will have them read to us and when they read 20 books, they will be rewarded with a pizza party. When they read 40 books, they will receive an ice cream sundae party, 60 books earns a movie, popcorn, candy, and juice box party and 80 books earns either a spa day or a party of their choice. This reading program is designed for accelerated students that are ready to read. Parents are encouraged to help their children at home with reading library books and practicing letters to improve their reading and vocabulary skills.

## **LIBRARY**

At preschool we believe the single most important thing you can do for your child is to take time each day and read with them. There are over 2,500 books in our collection and it grows each month. We take monthly Scholastic book orders and proceeds from the sale of these books goes to stock new books in our library. We encourage children to check out one or several books from our library as often as possible. To check out new books simply return the previously checked out books. If your child loses or damages a book, they can still check out books; however, we may ask you to replace a book if this happens repeatedly.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

When feasible, the daily schedule will include a period for outside play. Children will use the playground located to the left of the entrance to the preschool. The base of the playground consists of a rubber mulch. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school with appropriate outdoor clothing. We will go outside every day unless the temperature or real feel temperature is 32 degrees or below, it is raining, extremely windy, the playground is too wet, or snow covered. When indoor play is necessary, the children will have recess and gross motor play inside. When the weather is cold, please dress children with coats, hats, and mittens. When the weather is warm and sunny, we suggest sunscreen be provided by the parents.

## **CHAPEL TIME**

One day a week, students will go to the sanctuary for chapel time. Chapel time combines Bible stories and songs that affirm God’s unconditional love for each child. Chapel time is led by the LUMC Pastor, Pre School-Director, Lead Teacher, B&G staff or a member of the church. Two staff members will remain with the children during chapel time. The chapel time monthly themes and Bible verses are reinforced in the classroom.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **STAFF/CHILD RATIOS**

The following ratios apply for all programs at Buoys and Gulls Preschool to meet or exceed the Virginia Department of Education licensing standards:

- 2- 3-Year-old children 1 caregiver per 8 children present.
- 4 -7-Year-old children 1 caregiver per 10 children present

### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

In-House Registration for the upcoming school year begins in January for students currently enrolled at B & G as well as their siblings and children of families who regularly attend Lower United Methodist Church. Children are accepted into our program on a first come, first served basis, as openings become available. Upon acceptance, a child is enrolled for the upcoming full year from September through May, subject to receipt of completed registration form and payment of all registration/supply fees. Child must be two and a half years old and potty trained by the first day of school. Failure to sign-up during the In-House registration puts the family into the Open Registration pool. Open Registration begins in February for new families. Please call B & G Preschool Director for further information.

If the program in which you wish to enroll your child is full, your child’s name will be placed on a waiting list. When there is an opening, you will be notified. This waiting list will apply for one school year only; it will not “roll-over” into subsequent years.

### **CHILD POTTY TRAINED POLICY**

The independence of a “potty-trained” child is a prerequisite for admission to the Buoys and Gulls Preschool. This means your child must be able to wear cloth underwear without accidents, able to verbalize the need to use the bathroom, able to manage to clothe without help and have the ability to wipe or clean themselves appropriately to maintain clean hygiene.

The Buoys and Gulls Preschool is an equal opportunity school and admits children regardless of race, nationality, or ethnic origin, and religious affiliation to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the children in the school.

**Items required before child’s first day of attendance:**

- Completed registration form with all current phone numbers and addresses. Online Registration Form available at: [www.lowerumc.com](http://www.lowerumc.com) or by appointment with preschool director.
- **Non-refundable** registration and supply fee.
- Proof of child’s birth: i.e., birth certificate, passport, proof of birth letter from hospital. (According to the Department of Education, if a parent/guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity and age within the first seven business days of initial attendance, the B&G Preschool is required to notify the local law-enforcement agency.)
- A Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form verifying a child’s record of immunizations that is signed by a physician, or their designee, or health department official.
- In the case of a child with severe allergies (has an Epi-pen), a medical response plan must be developed and approved by the child’s pediatrician, family, and the director.
- A signed B&G Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form that states parent has read and understands the policies and procedures of Lower UMC Buoys and Gulls Preschool. Form at end of Parent Handbook.

**TUITION/ FEES/TERMINATION PROCEDURES**

**Early Drop Off Option**

Early Drop Off: 7:45 – 8:15AM

Early Drop Off Fee: \$45/month

Minimum required number of students: 10

2 Half Day Tues/ Thurs	(8:30 am – 11:30 am)	\$220/month
3 Half Day Mon/Wed/Fri	(8:30 am – 11:30 am)	\$330/month
5 Half Day Mon -Fri	(8;30 am – 11:30 am)	\$500/month
2 Full Day Tues/Thurs	(8:30 am – 5:00 pm)	\$360/month
3 Full Day Mon/Wed/Fri	(8:30 am – 5:00 pm)	\$540/month
5 Full Day Mon- Friday	(8:30 am – 5:00 pm)	\$720/month



- Make checks payable to Lower United Methodist Church (LUMC). Write child's name in memo.
- Submit tuition on the first day of class or bring to August Open House.
- Tuition is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month for the months of October - June.
- If payment is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month a \$25 late fee will be applied to your account.
- **Buoys and Gulls Preschool (LUMC) reserves the right to terminate enrollment of a student** for any reason and must give parents/guardians two weeks written notice of scheduled termination of services and reasons for termination.
- Buoys and Gulls requires two weeks' notice from parents/guardians when withdrawing a student from school. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of services during those two weeks of the termination period.
- Tuition assistance is available if needed, please contact Buoys and Gulls director.
- ***A late fee of \$10 is due for every 10 minutes you are late picking up your child after their program has closed (beginning with 11:40 am for half day program and 5:10 pm for full day program). Please call, text, or email to let us know if you are going to be late. Your call will help us communicate with your child to let them know you are on your way.***

## RECORD KEEPING POLICIES

### GENERAL

All Children's records are treated confidentially. Access to children's records is restricted to the Director and other specific staff, as situations warrant, at the director's discretion.

Records, logs, and reports are kept current. Records and reports on children shall be maintained and accessible to authorized persons for two years after termination of enrollment unless current Department of Education requires a longer time span.

The main office of Lower UMC maintains files of reports of all fire, safety, and health/sanitation inspections done by state or Middlesex County officials.

During the school day, the Director/Lead Teacher will complete a record of attendance. This will enable us to account for all the children attending in the case of an emergency.

### CHILDREN'S RECORDS

A File is maintained for each child for the current school year in the preschool's office. In addition to the child's Registration Form the file may also contain:

- **Accident Reports** documenting any accidents or injuries, including minor ones, sustained by child at school and any first aid administered by the staff.
- **Reports of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect** and the required notification procedures, if necessary.
- **Reports of a missing child** when Local authorities have been contacted for help. In the unlikely event that a death occurs while a child attends Lower UMC Buoys and Gulls Preschool, this is reported to the Virginia State Licensing Office within 24 hours and is included in the office files.
- **Doctors/health care provider notes to return to school and allergy medical response plan.**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

A calendar showing special events, parties, and school closings will be provided to families at the Open House. Dates for field trips and other school activities will be provided throughout the year in newsletters, and calendars from the Director. **Please retain a copy of the school calendar that shows special events, parties and school closings.**

Two make up days are built into the school calendar. If more than 2 days are missed due to inclement weather or emergencies they may not be made up.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES/MATERIALS NEEDED**

- Items from supply list (updated annually and mailed during the summer)

**Full day** students will also need the following items labeled with child's name:

- Nap mat or pop-up cot
- Backpack or open top bag
- Lunch box
- Bag with extra clothes

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

The Buoys and Gulls Preschool operates from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday and follows the Middlesex County Public School calendar for operational dates. Children in the program may not be dropped off earlier than 8:30 am, unless an early drop off permission form has been obtained, submitted and approved by the director. Early drop off is available on an as needed basis. Children must be picked up by closing at 5:00 pm. **LATE FEES WILL BE ASSESSED.** See section on fees.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule is posted in the classroom. We strive to maintain consistency in following the schedule each day; however, it may be altered as the teachers find necessary or as activities change. The Department of Education requires a scheduled naptime each day. The naptime for Buoys and Gulls is between the hours of 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

8:30 – 9:00	Arrival, bathroom, wash hands, health check
9:00 - 9:30	Housekeeping, art, store, art, science, puzzles, writing & individual reading program
9:30 – 10:15	Small group
10:15 –11:00	Circle Time
11:00 – 11:10	Potty Time/Wash Hands
11:10 – 11:30	Snack
11:30 – 11:40	Potty Time/Wash Hands
11:40 – 12:45	Recess
12:45 – 1:00	Potty Time/Wash Hands
1:00 -1:30 -	Lunch
1:30 - 1:45	Potty Time/ Wash Hands
1:45 – 2:00	Story Time
2:00 - 3:00	Rest Period
3:00 – 3:25	Potty Time/ Wash hands, pack up
3:25 – 5:00	Outdoor Recess/or Indoor Large Motor Activities

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURE (unless children are on playground)

**DROP OFF:** Pull under carport and staff member will undo safety belt and escort child into building where a well check will be performed and child will be signed in by an additional staff member. Exit carport, make a U-turn, and proceed up the hill and out through the upper parking lot. Exiting vehicles must yield to cars coming down the hill.

**PICK UP:** Pull under carport and staff member will escort your child to the car and secure them in the vehicle. Exit the carport, make a U-turn, and proceed up the hill and out through the upper parking lot. Exiting vehicles must yield to vehicles coming down the hill.

\*\*\*\*If children are outside: The carport and exit lanes in the lower lot will be coned off. Parents must park in the upper parking lot and walk down to pick up their child. A staff

member will sign the children out. If special circumstances exist, parent may request that a staff member bring the child to the upper parking lot.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than those listed on the registration form unless permission is given to the staff by way of email, text, or a written, signed note from the parent. The director will only accept a text or email request. When the designated person arrives, staff will ask to see their valid identification before releasing your child.

Please notify the director (text or email) if your child will be arriving later than 9:00 am, or if they will be absent or need to be dismissed early.

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

B & G Preschool follows the VA Board of Education guidelines for the prevention of suspension and expulsion of young children. These guidelines offer best practices that prevent suspension and expulsion including collaboration between family and teachers, a focus on effective classroom management, and the promotion of social and emotional skills to support young children’s healthy development. A child’s participation in the program depends upon his or her behavior. To ensure each child is able to enjoy the planned activities and to benefit from their experiences in our programs, we require that parents/guardians:

- Ensure that both you and your child are aware of and understand the behavior expected
- Be aware that you may be contacted by phone, in writing, or through parent/staff conferences if your child continues to need behavior management
- Understand that discipline techniques and consequences may be progressive
- B&G Preschool reserves the right to call parents/guardians to come and pick up their child if the child is having difficulty functioning cooperatively with others, is unable to participate in group exercises, or is a threat to the safety of themselves or others

When all practices/plans have been exhausted and participation in our program by a young individual results in a behavior that is continuously disruptive, violent, physical and/or threatening. Following are the Behavioral Consequences:

VIOLATION	1 <sup>ST</sup> Offense	2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense	3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense
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<b>Disruptive Behavior</b> -horseplay, profanity, refusal to follow policies and adult authority, attempted abuse of equipment, other behaviors identified by staff	Verbal Warning Parent notification Behavior modification	Parent meeting Up to 3 days suspension	Mandatory Expulsion
<b>Verbal Threat</b>	Parent notification Behavior modification	1-week suspension Parent meeting	Mandatory Expulsion
<b>Harassment, Hate Crimes</b>	Parent Notification Behavior modification	1-week suspension Parent meeting	Mandatory Expulsion
<b>Vandalism of Property</b>	Parent notification	1-week suspension	Mandatory Expulsion
<b>Fighting/ physical altercation</b>	3 days suspension Parent notification Behavior modification	1-week suspension Parent meeting	Mandatory Expulsion

B&G uses positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior. Our, “fill your bucket” system rewards children at various times and helps keep them on their toes with immediate and tangible rewards. They receive a drop (pom pom) in their bucket when displaying model behavior, spontaneous acts of kindness, displaying good qualities of citizenship or participation in group activities. After filling their bucket (total of 8 pom poms), they get to pick a prize from a prize box or are offered other incentives to include: being teacher for the day, selecting all the jobs for the day, special seating and snack at lunch or snack time. Here is a short list of do’s and don’ts at preschool: we do praise, reward, encourage them, set limits, model appropriate behavior, modify the environment to help prevent problems before they occur, listen to them, provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior, provide them with natural and logical consequences for their behavior, treat them with respect for their feelings, stress, needs and desires, ignore minor misbehaviors, explain things to them on their level of understanding, use short supervised periods of time out and maintain a consistency with our behavior management system. We do not use punitive measures or verbal humiliation as punishment.

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Our program involves the use of paint, glue, water, etc. Please dress your child in comfortable and washable play clothes. (Sleepwear/pajamas are only allowed on specified days). We will play outside every day possible, so please provide appropriate outdoor clothing and sneakers as well. **Please provide an extra set of clothing** in case your child needs it during the day due to a spill or accident. To store clothes at school in their cubby, please place in a clear zip locked plastic bag labeled with your child's name. Remember to **label all clothing, coats, mittens, hats, sweaters, etc. with your child's name.**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, food (other than lunch), jewelry, money, or candy to school. We will take no responsibility for lost or broken items or toys brought from home. **NO** toy guns or weapons are permitted in the school at any time.

### **FOOD/SNACKS/PARTY SNACKS**

We encourage our children to eat a healthy and nutritious lunch and snack.

Uncut grapes, uncut raw carrots, or popcorn are not recommended for children under 3 years of age.

- Half day students will need one daily snack and drink.
- Full day students will need one snack and lunch, and 2 drinks.
- Staff will reheat already cooked items that are labeled with heating instructions and provided in microwave safe container.
- Bring snack in a lunch box or bag. **Please label all lunch and drink containers with your child's name.**

For class parties we have a group snack. Parents will have an opportunity to sign up to help with two group/party snacks at the B & G Open House. If we have children with food allergies we may ask for brand-specific items that are manufactured in safe/approved handling facilities. It is our goal to make sure everyone is safe and can partake in the group snack on special occasions.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- The director will communicate information about classroom activities to parents on a regular basis. Each month a newsletter will be sent home through the communication folder. The newsletter will have upcoming special events, school closings and activities that are scheduled during the month.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teachers and to report new situations which may clarify any new or unusual behaviors observed at school.

- Teachers are happy to have short conversations about progress when you drop off or pick up your child or drop a note in their folder.
- If more time is needed, parents may also leave a note with the director or teacher requesting that the director or teacher phone them to answer questions or discuss concerns.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

- Conferences for children enrolled in the preschool program are scheduled once during the year, usually in January. The teachers are willing to discuss your child's progress whenever needed.
- If a conference or observation is desired please make an appointment with the teacher or director.

## **SAFETY INFORMATION**

### **SICK CHILD POLICY**

The health of your child is very important to us. Our teachers have been trained to do a daily health screening to exclude sick children from attending. Parents must have alternative care for their children when the child shows symptoms of any deviation from normal health. If your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, you will be notified by the school.

If a child becomes ill while attending preschool, the director or a teacher will immediately notify the parents/guardians. The child will be separated and kept comfortable until they are picked up. Children will not be permitted at school when ill or when displaying symptoms to include but not limited to:

- Fever above 99.9 F, behavioral changes, lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, any signs of severe illness (until a medical evaluation determines the child may return to school).
- The child may NOT return until they are 24 hours fever free without medication. A doctor's note may be required to return to school.
- The parent or guardian agrees to notify the director within 24 hours or the next business day if any member of their household has developed any of these symptoms or communicable disease as defined by the State Board of Health: Diarrhea, blood in stools, unusual nasal discharge, vomiting (within 24 hours)

mouth sores with drooling, persistent abdominal pain, rash with fever or behavioral changes, conjunctivitis, lice or nits, scabies, tuberculosis, impetigo, strep throat, or other streptococcal infections, chicken pox, shingles, mumps, hepatitis A, measles, rubella, unspecified respiratory illness, and herpes simplex.

At Buoys and Gulls, we keep small classes and may offer make up days to our children that attend the 2- or 3-day class. Our 5-day students pay a reduced per day rate because we cannot offer make up days to those students. Our makeup days are for students who have been sick not for children who have appointments, vacations, or otherwise scheduled events on school days. We accommodate as we are able and attempt to make up the day as soon as possible. There may be times when makeup days are not available.

### **HAND WASHING**

Washing hands (20 +seconds) upon arrival at school is required by B & G Preschool and highly recommended by the health department to help prevent the spread of illnesses and diseases. We have had great success at keeping illness contained.

Careful hand washing by the staff and children when arriving at school, before eating or handling food, after toileting, after playing outside, when hands are dirty/messy, or when deemed necessary by the teacher can eliminate approximately 75% of the risk of spreading many illnesses.

The staff will take constant precautions to prevent the spread of contagious and communicable diseases.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS**

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit the preschool at any time. It is not necessary to call ahead if you would like to visit. We also welcome your help in the classroom. Volunteers are needed for field trips, cooking projects, and other special events and celebrations. If you have a talent or skill such as music, dance, puppetry, storytelling, carpentry, or crafts, we encourage you to share it with your child's class. Please coordinate visits with your child's teacher or the Director. Volunteers will always be accompanied by a staff member when working with children.

### **FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION SAFETY**



Children enrolled in the Buoys and Gulls Preschool may go on field trips during the year. Field Trip Permission Slip Form must be signed by parent/guardians for EACH trip. All drivers participating in field trips must hold a valid driver's license and all vehicles must be insured and registered. During the field trip, LUMC and all its affiliates, including drivers, teachers, and volunteers will take every precaution before, during and after transporting and will not be held responsible in the event of an accident or emergency. Parents must sign and return a field trip permission form which includes a medical release to travel with the school.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

The Buoys and Gulls Preschool program will be closed when Middlesex County Public Schools are closed for weather/road conditions. If there is a delayed opening for Middlesex County Public Schools B&G Preschool will also be delayed.

A staff member will notify parents if school is delayed or closed due to fire or loss of power/water. All calls and texts will be made prior to 7:00AM when possible.

When Middlesex County government offices close due to natural disaster, terrorist activity, or extreme weather conditions, all programs of the Buoys and Gulls Preschool will close as well.

### **EMERGENCY DISASTER PLAN**

In case of an emergency, Buoys and Gulls Preschool of LUMC has established a plan for staff and children to follow. Parents may ask to view this plan at any time. Emergencies included in the plan are fire, medical, bomb threat, suspicious package, hazardous substances, workplace violence, terrorist attack, tornado or hurricane, and other weather related or local conditions. We will closely monitor any situation. During any emergency, staff will reassure the children that they are safe and remind them that trustworthy adults are in charge and will see to it that they are protected and out of harm's way. If your child is safe in the building, we will continue with the normal routine. However, if we need to act quickly to ensure the safety of your child, we will act immediately.

### **CHILD SAFETY**

For the safety of the children in our program no child shall be in the presence of a single caregiver at any time. Staff may not assist with children in the restroom alone. Children should be instructed how to wipe after toileting at home and staff is allowed to give verbal instruction from the hallway. During rest period the door to the nap area will be open where another staff member is within eyesight.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

All staff are trained to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect and are mandated reporters.

Section 63.1 -238.2 of the Code of Virginia defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 whose parent, or other person responsible for the care of the child.

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury.
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or healthcare.
- Abandons the child.
- Fails to provide adequate supervision in relation to the child's age and development.
- Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child including incest, rape, fondling, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Some symptoms that may indicate abuse or neglect\*

- Nervousness around adults
- Aggression toward adults or other children
- Inability to stay awake or concentrate for extended periods.
- Sudden, dramatic changes in personality or activities
- Knowledge about sex that is unusual for the child's age or stage of development
- Frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries
- Poor hygiene or dress that is inappropriate for the weather.

*\*Excerpt from the Virginia Department of Social Services "You Can Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect" brochure. February 2004.*

[http://www.dss.state.va.us/pub/pdf/church\\_bulletin.pdf](http://www.dss.state.va.us/pub/pdf/church_bulletin.pdf)

Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect; however, Section 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia **requires** that designated professionals who have contact with the children immediately report their suspicions. It is not necessary to prove that abuse or neglect

has occurred. Reports can be made by calling your local social services department or the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline or 1-800-552-7096. Reports can be made anonymously. If you choose to provide your name, it will not be released to the reported family, except by court order. Persons reporting in good faith are immune from civil and criminal liability pursuant to Section 63.2-1512 of the Code.

The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution (Safe Sanctuary) aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. Lower United Methodist Church and Buoys and Gulls Preschool adhere to the United Methodist **Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Guidelines** to help provide a caring and secure environment for children in all phases of church life and to establish standards to reduce the risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse in children.

The policy of Buoys and Gulls Preschool states that if any of our staff members suspects a child is being abused or neglected, we will contact the Department of Social Services immediately.

### **PARENT CONCERNS PROTOCOL**

Buoys and Gulls Preschool encourages parents to voice their concerns on any matter involving their child, school practices or activities of the preschool. Parents, staff leaders and church members should immediately report any knowledge of harassment, abuse, or misconduct to any of the following persons: Buoys and Gulls Preschool Director, Pastor of LUMC, or the Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair.

If you have questions or concerns dealing with policies or procedures listed in the Buoys and Gulls Handbook, or concerns about a classroom teacher or teacher's aide, first contact the B&G Preschool Director. Concerns related to the Preschool Director or B&G Preschool Policy should be directed to the Preschool Committee. The Preschool Committee may further direct action to the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee. Contact information for these individuals is provided in B & G Parent Handbook section titled **Stay Connected**.

All issues of concern must be put in writing and provided to the B & G Preschool Director in order for action to be taken. Buoys and Gulls Preschool and Lower United Methodist Church (LUMC) strives to maintain confidentiality on matters of concern.

## **STAY CONNECTED**

- To reach someone during the day, call or text the director. Even if the director is not on site, your message will be forwarded immediately to a teacher.
- The church office secretary is available Monday – Thursday, 8:30-12:30
- Visit LUMC website to view upcoming events and learn about the LUMC community. [www.Lowerumc.com](http://www.Lowerumc.com)
- Like Buoys and Gulls Preschool and Lower United Methodist Church on Facebook to see pictures of B&G events and classroom
- Email us at [buoysandgullspreschool@gmail.com](mailto:buoysandgullspreschool@gmail.com) or [lumc@va.metrocast.net](mailto:lumc@va.metrocast.net)
- Call or text director, Kelly Walden: 804 -694-9033
- Call LUM church office: 804 -776-6250
- Contact Pastor or Staff Pastor Parish Committee Chair: 804-776-6250

## **SUMMARY**

These policies have been set forth by the Buoys and Gulls Preschool and in accordance with the guidelines for weekday preschool ministry programs in United Methodist Churches to clarify and give meaning to our program. Our preschool will continue to succeed by adhering to our established policies and by encouraging open communication among the children, families, and staff. The information contained in this Parent Handbook is a part of our commitment to you and your child, and we assume you will be responsible for following our policies. Please keep this handbook as a reference throughout the school year. Thank you for sharing your child with us!

## **PARENT HANDBOOK and BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SIGNATURE OF UNDERSTANDING**

Parents,

Please sign and return this form to school for our records.

- I have received and read my Parent’s Handbook. I understand and will follow the school policies outlined in the handbook.
- I have reviewed the behavior management guidelines with my child(ren).

Child’s/ Children’s Name(s):

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Print Parent Name	Sign Parent Name	Date

I understand if I have any questions, I will contact staff.