

Love Discovery Learning

BEAR CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SCHOOL

Accident/Injury:

If it is not an emergency, apply first aid. Remember to wear gloves if there is blood. The first aid supplies are in the cabinet above the pencil sharpener and office supplies in the office workroom. There is a first aid kit on the playground in the shed. If it requires an ice pack, the ice packs are located in the freezer tray of the refrigerator in the office workroom. If it takes more than a hug to make it better, document it by filling out an incident/illness form. **All** injuries to the head should be documented by filling out the incident report form. This form should be signed by the parent. In addition, any injury – no matter how minor - should be immediately reported to admin, and the parents notified through Brightwheel. One copy is placed in the Director's box and the other copy is given to the parent.

DFPS Minimum Standards:

- *First Aid Kit: 746.4001, 746.4003*
- *Injury Form: 746.701, 746.705, 746.707*

Illness

If child complains of not feeling well,

- Ask them: "What doesn't feel good?"
- If he/she complains of pain, ask them: "Where does it hurt?" Have them point to the place on the body.
- If child feels feverish, take his temperature. The ear thermometer is located with the first aid supplies. If the temperature is greater than 100 degrees, the school office will notify the parents. We will sometimes notify the parent even if the temperature is less than that when the child is exhibiting other symptoms.
- Make the child comfortable on the cot (located behind the director's door) and allow them to rest for a while.

DFPS Minimum Standards:

- *How to determine if a child is exclusionary: 746.3601, 746.3603*
- *How to respond if a child is ill at school: 746.3605*

Please see the exclusion policy included at the end of this document.

Attendance

Teachers should sign in and out daily in the log book located in the workroom above the long drawers. This is a licensing standard. It is also how JoAnn determines paycheck amounts. If you are absent, please note the dates you were absent on your time sheet. **You are required to let administration know if you are going to be tardy or absent.**

If your absence or tardy is planned, it is your responsibility to find a sub in your place. If you can not, please let admin know so that we can work out a plan. There is a sub list located in the teacher work room above the microwave. Although a hard copy is provided for you, the most updated copy will be posted there.

If your absence is unplanned, please let administration know ASAP so that we can make a plan for your absence. **If your attendance record falls below 90% in a 90 day period, a probation meeting will take place, and a plan will be implemented to assist you in coming back into good standing. If you are on probation, you will not qualify for vacation hours or benefits.**

Paid time off is awarded in your yearly teacher work agreement. Once your PTO is used, your paycheck will be deducted for the hours that are not worked. Unused vacation hours will be rolled over, and will expire at the end of the following school year.

DFPS Minimum Standards:

- *Signing in and out: 746.801*

Licensing Tip: Research has shown that children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, and safety depend on consistent, caring interaction between children and their caregivers.

Children's attendance should be taken daily and logged into Brightwheel. If a child is absent more than two days, the parents should be contacted by the lead teacher using the Brightwheel messaging function.

DFPS Minimum Standards:

- *Signing children in and out 746.603*

Arrival/Dismissal

Arrival:

Teachers and assistant teachers should arrive by 8:30 daily. The classroom doors may remain closed until 9:00 AM in order to set the stage for the day's activities. The classroom is ready when the manipulatives are out, books selected, paints are mixed, art materials available, block and home center are neat, and the writing center stocked. Lesson plans should be available to be viewed in Brightwheel (at a minimum). The way that the stage is set for learning prior to the children's arrival, will greatly influence the productiveness of the day for the children and YOU! **Failure to honestly report your attendance is grounds for termination.**

Children should be greeted individually and warmly by the lead teacher while the assistant teacher greets the child in the room and helps draw him/her into an activity. As the teacher greets the child, it is a good opportunity to do a quick health check (This is DFPS licensing and implemented to help reduce children being exposed to contagious illnesses). You can greet the child and note any severe coughing, discharge from the eyes or nose, changes in skin color, bruising or swelling, cuts, sores or rashes. If you feel the child is ill or contagious, notify the school office and we will handle it from there.

No child should be allowed to go to the restroom without a teacher accompanying him/her during the first or last ten minutes of the day due to the congestion in the halls.

Dismissal:

For children:

The lead teacher should greet the parent with a positive comment about the child's day. The assistant teacher should use these "teachable moments" during dismissal to reinforce that day's concepts or have an additional story time with the children as the lead teacher dismisses at the door. No parent conferencing should **EVER** take place at dismissal to avoid speaking in front of the child or other parents. Plan to make a phone call later to the parent if there are concerns. Please let the director know this information prior so that she can be prepared when/if the parents call her. Conferencing should **ONLY** be done with the child's parent-**NOT** grandparents, nannies or caregivers.

A child should **NEVER be released to anyone other than the parents or those persons whom the parents have designated on the approved list.** Ask for the

driver's license of any person you do not know who are listed as approved. Do not be concerned whether the person is insulted or angry. It is the safety of the child that is most important! When in doubt or if you need support, notify the office.

DFPS Minimum Standards: 746.4101, 746.4103

Dismissal for staff: Teachers are free to leave after 2:00 (1:40 is the late pick-up deadline) when the room is ready for the next day. Rooms should be tidy and the tables, countertops and chairs are sanitized. **If you need to leave early, please see a member of administration. This is not to create hardship, but we must be aware of who is in the building.**

Late Policy: As per the late policy written in the handbook, please bring any children to the **appropriate extended care program** who have not been picked up by 1:40.

Cell phone policy:

In compliance with DFPS licensing standard 746.1203, a staff member who is counted in the teacher/staff ratio should NOT have a cell phone while supervising children. If you need to make a call, please use the workroom, narthex, room 9, or the director's office rather than the classroom. Hall monitors, although not counted in the student/teacher ratio, are responsible for supervision of children AND monitoring the front door for the safety of the school, need to abide by the same standard. We know that things come up and it is sometimes necessary to call or text someone during the hours you are at school, but please do not make those communications while in the classroom or hallway. Please make sure that your child's school has the main number of our school. We will **IMMEDIATELY** come find you if it is urgent.

According to the most recent Minimum Standard update, it is now considered a lack of supervision to use technology for a personal nature while being a caregiver to children. *See licensing addendum at the end of this document.

Classroom Set-Up

Lead teachers are responsible for setting up the classroom for the new semester. The teaching assistant is a participant in this as the teacher communicates what needs to be done. In August, workdays are specified on the school calendar. A winter workday is scheduled before the children return from Christmas break in January.

Although we know and appreciate that our teachers spend many hours of time in preparing for the new year, for the sake of clarity regarding August paychecks, the August hours are awarded at your contract signing appointment.

In addition, teachers/teaching assistants will prepare the classroom for summer on the last May workday and for special events.

*Hours subject to change based on school needs and back to school schedule.

Communication with Parents

The communication with parents begins with the first phone call in August to schedule a school visit.

Lead teachers are to communicate **weekly (at a minimum)** with parents via the Brightwheel. This should include topics, themes, special events, and reminders to the parents. It is recommended that a short letter from the teacher accompany this calendar. It may save you from having to repeat the same information to individual parents numerous times if you clarify in writing the plans/procedures for the month. A copy of the calendar is sent home during the last week of the month for the following month. Please note the due dates on the calendar. One copy of the calendar is posted for parents. A copy is also placed in the Motor and Music class teacher's box.

Teachers are to communicate **daily** with parents via Brightwheel. This should include the day's activities that the children were engaged in. Teachers will utilize the Brightwheel app to record diaper changes, meals, and general notes about the day.

Two weeks advance written notice of the schedule for your class for special events (Storybook Land/Circus Days, Thanksgiving Feasts, Thanksgiving Experience, Western Days, Spring Play, Super Summer Sendoff, Cookie Parties, Teddy Bear Picnics, etc), parties, and field trips **must** be given **by lead teachers** in order for parents to plan. We have many working parents that may need to schedule ahead of time to be able to come and attend with their child. The office will send reminders as well.

Teachers will conference with each parent **at least twice yearly** and as needed during the year as concerns or challenges arise. In **October**, lead teachers will conduct a phone conference with each parent. In **April and May**, the four-

year-old lead teachers will have a personal conference with each parent in readiness for a placement decision for the following year. Kindergarten class conferences are held two times a year on dates designated on the school calendar. In **April**, all other lead teachers will complete personal conferences with parents.

NOTE: Please discuss any concerns you have **FIRST** with the director. Then, a plan can be made regarding how best to approach the situation. If you are concerned about a conference, please let her know so that she can schedule time to attend the conference to support you.

In the best interest of the child, keeping the lines of communication open between the parents and the school is so important. Always begin with a positive statement!

Compensatory Incentives

1. All teachers that have a teacher work agreement are given one week of paid time off based on hours worked per week. (For example: If an employee works 24 hours a week, they are awarded 24 hours of paid time off per school year.) These hours roll over for one school year if not used. Teachers may not use any paid time off during their first 90 days of employment.
2. Teachers are also given holiday pay based on the following criteria:
 - a. Teachers must be employed for 90 days before being paid for a holiday
 - b. Holiday pay is only paid for your scheduled time between 9:00 and 1:30. We do not pay holiday pay for extended care hours.
 - c. Teachers must be in good standing with the school, and must not be on probation.
3. The School Board will host periodic teacher appreciation events. This is their gift to you. Please make sure to thank them after each event!
4. Administration will host and plan teacher breakfasts and luncheons. At times, we will host them "pot luck style" and we would love for you all to participate!
5. All of your professional development courses are paid for by the school as long as they are:
 - a. School sponsored event

b. Approved by administration

6. All employees are eligible for a health membership, dental insurance, and vision insurance. There are stipulations to this benefit, and can be found in the "Benefits Eligibility" addendum that can be located at the end of this document.
7. When the budget allows, we will award Christmas bonuses that are awarded by longevity, and End of Year bonuses that are performance and attendance based.

Confidentiality

Discussing students or staff or problems at our school is unprofessional. It is unprofessional whether it is verbal, written or on social media. Stories are altered as they pass from person to person. Our strength depends on keeping our problems "in house" and growing together.

Our reputation is built by word of mouth and is just as easily destroyed by the same!

NEVER discuss a child in our school with ANYONE other than the parents-not grandparents, nannies or carpool person. If there is a problem or concern, call the child's parent. Discuss any concern with the director first so if there is communication from the parent, she can respond appropriately.

Curriculum

As of September 2021, BCUMCS has adopted the following curriculum:

1. Infants-2 year old class – Frog Street
2. 3's, Pre-K, and Transition – CLI Engage Circle
3. Bible (2's and older) – Abeka Bible Curriculum

As an educator at BCUMCS, you are required to use the aforementioned curriculum as your **main** source of material that is to be presented in your classroom. You are allowed to supplement with art or special activities, but your lesson plans should follow your curriculum. Please denote what daily activities are taken from your curriculum or which activities are considered supplemental art or a special activity.

Your director should be your first point of contact when you need help managing the curriculum. You are not allowed to exempt your class from curriculum activities or age level appropriate activities as deemed appropriate by the curriculum. If you are unsure of how to incorporate curriculum into your schedule, you should immediately schedule a conference with your director.

As of August 1, 2022, all academic assessments given by BCUMCS staff will be provided by the assigned curriculum. No other assessments are approved without the written permission of the school director.

Documentation-Student Record Keeping

1. Documentation of all communication including phone calls and conferences regarding a child should be kept by the teacher. Brightwheel has a notes tool for you to do this.
2. Developmental records are necessary so that end of the year summaries can be written for each child. These records must be kept in the child's folder on school premises and available for periodic checks. (DFPS)
3. Unusual or unreasonable behavior should be reported to the director and DOCUMENTED in the student's file. This is vital in order to best help the child. We do not diagnose but are the facilitators to get the child the proper support, services and environment necessary to help them succeed. It is difficult to approach parents without specifically observed behaviors and techniques that have been employed to help the student succeed or control a behavior without success.
4. The teacher will document the child's experience during the school year by taking pictures and compiling a photo album to be given to the child at the end of the school year. If the teacher does not wish to create a photo book, an alternate form of "end of the year memorial" is allowed **with permission from the director.**
5. The teacher is responsible to create and maintain a substitute folder.
- 6.

Dress Code

As professionals in the area of early childhood education, our dress should reflect this professionalism. Parents and other visitors' first and lasting impression of our school is based on what they observe. You represent a Christian school and will be the ones to whom people entrust their children. Dress should be comfortable (we are working with children), professional and modest. Clothes should fit but not be too tight or revealing. Pants, capris, skirts and dresses are acceptable attire at BCUMCS. Shorts are acceptable as long as they are no more than 3 inches above the knee. T-Shirts are only

appropriate if they are a "teacher tee", a solid color t-shirt, a BCUMCS tee, or a T-shirt made by School Board for staff use.

Lunch/Snack

A short song prayer or prayer is appropriate before eating. Remember, the teachers should sit at the table with the children during lunch and snack. This is a time to interact informally with the children and to model good manners and conversation. Snack time is a good opportunity to teach independence to children. Children are able to pass out napkins and cups, learn to pour from a small pitcher, clean up their own place and throw away trash. Water is the drink that will be used for snack. Please remind parents of any allergy issues in your classroom.

Pay Scale/Paydays

There is no set pay amount for the teachers in our school. When a teacher is hired, the director/assistant director/bookkeeper will decide on a pay rate that takes the following things into consideration:

1. Years of Experience
2. Education Level (e.g. High School Diploma, CDA, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, etc...)
3. Placement as a lead/aide

If you choose to discuss pay with your co-workers, please keep in mind, that pay is set on an individual basis, and pay discussions with admin will not contain information about other teacher's pay. If they make more or less than you, please see above for the reasons why. **Your pay will not be adjusted because of a coworkers pay rate.**

Raises are awarded based on company budget, attendance, merit and contribution to the school, performance, and other factors as deemed appropriate by budget committee.

Paydays for scheduled staff will be every other week on Friday. Please see the assistant director for information about pay schedules and direct deposit information.

Paydays for subs will be no later than the first day of the month for the days worked the month prior.

Planning-Curriculum

1. There will be one to two planning meetings a month depending on the training schedule. Staff meeting and age level planning meeting attendance is required and is to be for the duration of the meeting.
2. Lead teachers are responsible for creating lesson plans with attention to the philosophy of BCUMCS and the individual needs and goals for each student. These plans should be communicated to the teaching assistant. Lesson plans are usually due on Monday at 8:30 AM for the current week. (This will allow time over the weekend if needed.) Please note these dates on the school calendar. A copy of the lesson plans should be available in the classroom and on Brightwheel. (DFPS licensing standard)
3. Each age level will submit a list of developmentally appropriate skills and objectives for their age level annually.

DFPS Minimum Standards: 746.2201, 746.2203, 746.2205, 746.2206

Playground

Please enjoy the playground and help make it a fun and safe place for all the children. This is the place where children are most likely to get injured. There must be enough adults supervising and watching at all times so we can minimize the number of injuries. There should always be more than one teacher on the playground. Teachers should spread out to all corners of the playground. Any “blind spot” where a child can go without a visual line of sight by a teacher needs to be monitored by an adult. One teacher should be positioned near the door to monitor “in/out” by children. **All** adults on the playground supervise **all** children on the playground. If you see a potential for injury or accident, INTERVENE! Class time should be allotted to discuss playground rules and boundaries. Please discuss the attached playground rules with your class before going to the playground for the first time and any time afterwards when there might need to be a “reminder”.

When you are outside, you are simply transitioning to an outdoor classroom that you are required to teach in. You should be walking around, engaging with children, maintaining a safe environment, and constantly teaching. Extending language is a major component of being a teacher. Failure to do this is a failure to complete your job duties.

First aid on the playground: There is a first aid kit in the shed to doctor minor “boo-boos”. Ice packs are stored in the refrigerator in the workroom.

Restroom procedure: If a child needs to go to the restroom, please walk the child to the hall monitor (if you are not leaving only 1 teacher on the playground) and then release the child to her. If your exit from the playground leaves only one teacher supervising, make verbal and visual contact with the hall monitor before releasing the child and return to the playground.

Playground cleanup: Each week every class is involved in playground clean up. It is the responsibility of all and children should help. The playground clean up schedule follows.

DFPS Minimum Standards:

- *Supervision: 746.1205,*

Playground rules are attached at the end of this handbook.

Positive Discipline

BCUMCS uses positive discipline practices to promote development of social and emotional skills. We approach each situation from a developmentally appropriate set of expectations depending on the child and his stage of development. It should always be our goal to move the child toward independence and personal responsibility for his/her actions. With toddlers, redirection is most appropriate. As children become more verbal and mature, conversations between the teacher and the children should encourage thoughtfulness about choices and how to make amends. If a child is very upset, he may be offered the opportunity to sit away from the group and think about his choices for a few minutes until he is calm enough to resume class activities. It is sometimes helpful for the child who may be disrupting the class to spend some time in the director's office. However, the child should not be forcibly removed from the classroom by the teacher. Please call the office and ask for support. At that time, the class may need to move outside to the playground or other activity to give that child time to calm.

Children may not be placed in a buckle chair for “time out”. If a child needs a reflection time, the teacher should assist them in identifying a better choice, and then supporting them in that process.

Safe Sanctuary

Safe Sanctuary is a child safe program mandated by Bear Creek United Methodist Church. Training will be given annually regarding the policies and procedures required. BCUMCS abides by the policy of the church.

Special Events

Our special events coordinators, JoAnn Cox and Emily Davis, coordinate the following events:

Storybook Land/Circus Days (alternating years), Christmas Pageant, Dad's Night, Western Days, Spring Play and Super Summer Sendoff. JoAnn sets the schedule and coordinates the parent volunteers for each special event.

Additional special events, coordinated and planned by the teachers and/or age level are Thanksgiving celebrations, and Mother's celebrations. The Christmas, Valentine and Easter parties are planned and provided by the parents under the supervision of the teacher.

Enrichment Classes (Chapel, Music, Motor)

Music and motor class schedules are developed by the assistant director and the enrichment teacher(s). One classroom teacher (either the lead or assistant) must stay with the class during music and motor time.

The chapel schedule is set by the assistant director. Chapel is attended once a week. All teachers should attend chapel with their class.

Supply Shopping

Shopping lists are due according to the school calendar. Please help our BCUMCS Super Shopper, JoAnn, by turning in your shopping lists when due. Before turning in the shopping list, PLEASE, shop **Room 9** first so duplicate supplies are not unnecessarily purchased. The shopping list is turned into the assistant director's box.

If you buy supplies or items on your own, please use the Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate form. Reimbursement for tax is not given.

Reimbursements are limited to \$5.00 unless pre-approved by the director.

Termination of Employment

Termination of employment that is initiated by BCUMCS is at the sole discretion of the school director. Reasons could be, but are not limited to the following:

1. Violation of DFPS Minimum Standards

2. Violation of the BCUMCS Discipline and Guidance Policy
3. Refusal or inability to follow provided curriculum
4. Unprofessional behavior
5. Insubordinate behavior
6. The report that the employee has committed a crime that exempts them from being able to care for children in a licensed facility
7. A gross neglect of standards provided by TRS
8. Failure to comply with any probationary guidelines set forth by the director

Termination of employment that is initiated by a BCUMCS employee may be made at any time, provided a two week notice is given. Failure to do so will cause the employee to be listed as “not rehire-able”, and the employee’s file will be noted with a violation of the employee handbook and that professional standards were not met. If a two weeks notice can not be given for a medical or personal reason, a meeting with the school director can be set to discuss before the employee’s file is negatively impacted.

Training/Professional Development

1. All staff must complete 30 hours of training required by DFPS. There are specific training guidelines, and those guidelines can be found in an addendum located at the end of this document.
2. If a teacher is unable to attend the conferences paid for and provided by the school *after* BCUMCS has paid for the conference, the teacher will need to obtain the additional hours required at her own expense. The training hours will need to meet DFPS guidelines.
3. There may be a training event outside school hours and attendance could be encouraged to maintain staff development and growth.

DFPS Minimum Standards: 746.1301, 746.1303, 746.1305, 746.1307, 746.1309, 746.1311, 746.1313, 746.1315, 746.1317, 746.1321, 746.1323, 746.1329