

WELCOME!



Welcome to Mt. Hebron Nursery School!
We are delighted to have you and your child(ren) as
part of our school family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. About Us...	
Philosophy and Mission.....	1
Staff Members.....	2
2022/2023 Faculty/Staff.....	3
Nursery School Parent Group.....	4
II. Academic Program...	
Program Description.....	5
Program Goals and Activities.....	7
Curriculum.....	9
Health and Wellness.....	10
Nutrition.....	10
Physical Activity.....	12
Screen Time Policy.....	13
III. Classroom Practices...	
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	14
Inclement Weather Policy.....	15
Arrival and Dismissal.....	16
Parking Lot and Driveway.....	16
Playground Safety.....	17
What Your Child Will Need.....	18
Snacks.....	19
Birthdays.....	19
Field Trips and Special Guests.....	20
Parent Involvement.....	21
Room Parents.....	21
Parent Volunteers.....	22
IV. School Policies...	
Registration & Enrollment.....	23
Tuition.....	24
Communication.....	25
Allergies/Food Awareness.....	26
Virus Protection.....	26
Illness While at School.....	26
Medications.....	27
Guidance/Discipline Policy.....	27

Civility Policy.....	28
Grievance Policy.....	28
Suspension & Expulsion Policy.....	28
Inclusion Policy.....	29
Mt. Hebron Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy.....	30
Developmental Screening.....	30
Building Security.....	31
Building Safety Plan.....	31
Student Safety.....	31
Emergency Cards.....	32
Parental Permissions.....	32
Child Safety Protections.....	32
Pets.....	33

I. About Us

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement:

Mt. Hebron Nursery School is dedicated to fostering an environment that develops caring children who are life-long learners with creative and inquisitive minds.

Philosophy:

Mt. Hebron Nursery School is concerned with the development of the whole child. We give attention to the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of individual children in a group setting. We recognize that parents and caregivers play an integral role in the success of their child(ren)'s development. To that end, we create a nurturing environment in which staff, parents/caregivers, and children can learn from one another. This collaboration is essential to the success of the program.

Mt. Hebron Nursery School views each child as a unique person with individual strengths, interests, and needs. It is our goal to help each child develop to his/her full potential by providing a positive, safe environment and using developmentally appropriate best practices for exploring, problem solving, communicating, and learning to become self-sufficient. We are proud to be a part of and a support to our global community. We respect, appreciate and value the diversity of each child and family. We welcome all children and families of all abilities. Further, we understand that children learn and grow at varying levels and demonstrate a wide range of abilities. We work closely with each child to ensure that we are meeting individual needs and helping him/her feel successful and progress. We recognize that children learn in a variety of ways and embrace those differences in all that we do.

As part of a global community, we understand the importance of diversity. We welcome professionals of all abilities and cultural backgrounds and strive to reflect the diversity of our student population in the staff that we

hire. Mt. Hebron Nursery School supports its staff professionally and personally. We are proud to provide this support through a variety of best practices. MHNS provides a warm and nurturing environment where staff members are encouraged to work collaboratively as they strive to provide the best developmentally appropriate programming for their students. Several staff members serve as Early Childhood Consultants (ECC) to help implement and support best practices for the staff. Each staff member's skills and talents are recognized and utilized to enhance the MHNS team. Each staff member is encouraged to use these skills by serving on one or more schoolwide committees. Staff members also work collaboratively and share ideas at monthly staff meetings. Ongoing staff development occurs each school year and continued education is a part of each employee's yearly plan. All teachers' professional development is advanced through the MSDE Credentialing Program. Staff morale is boosted with a variety of activities focused on team building and social emotional growth. The director offers an open-door policy, which encourages staff to discuss any need that arises during the day or request a meeting for more in-depth discussions.

STAFF MEMBERS

MHNS requires that all staff meet Early Childhood Education requirements for the state of Maryland. Staff are required to attend continuing education training provided by the nursery school. Additionally, we request that all our staff members actively work to maintain the highest level of the MSDE credential program on an annual basis. Staff members set yearly professional and program goals through self-evaluations. They meet with the director to review evaluations and assess their progress.

2023-2024 FACULTY AND STAFF

Amy Schroeder
(Director)

Kelly Baumgartner
(Office Manager)

TEACHERS

Debbie Dansie (3 day 4 EXT)
Molly Entrot (3 day 3 EXT & Discovery Club Coordinator)
Marielena Garbark (5 day 4 EXT & Book Bear Librarian)
Kiera Johnson (3 day 4 AM)
Lindsay Machiran (2 day 3 AM/PM)
Lindsay Marrion (5 day 4 EXT)
Andie Martin (3 day 4 PM)
Karen Mattingly (2 day 3 EXT)
Andrea Muirhead (2 day 2 AM & Enrichment)
Jennifer Porter (3 day 4 EXT)
Laurie Turner (4 day 4 EXT & ECC)
Karen Wagner (2 day 2 AM & Enrichment)
Sarah Willey (2 day 2 AM & Enrichment)

ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Tracy Cogdill (5 day 4 EXT)
Jan Hoffman (5 day 4 EXT)
Michelle Hoy (3 day 3 EXT)
Terry Purnell (2 day 3 EXT)
Janel Radford (3 day 4 EXT)
Barb Sawyer (3 day 4 AM/PM)
Peggy Schaefer (4 day 4 EXT)
Anne Walsh (5 day 4 EXT & Book Bear Librarian)
Stuart Unkenholz (2 day 3 AM/PM)

SPECIALISTS

Sarah Bond (Staff Support)
Jen Buchwald (ELA Specialist)
Alex Cratin (Art)
Aimee Daly (Music & Staff Support)
Laura Diaz (Outdoor Curriculum)
Alison Finke (Physical Education)
Sharon Sanders (ECC & Discovery Club Coordinator)
Jen Shea (Staff Support)

NURSERY SCHOOL PARENT GROUP

We have a very active and supportive Parent Group at MHNS. We hope that new parents will be a part of the Parent Group (PG) and that returning parents will continue to be supportive. The PG traditionally has two fundraisers during the year to raise income to purchase extra items such as playground equipment, indoor play equipment, toys, and books. The Parent Group also does many "extras" for the staff to thank them for doing such a terrific job. Teacher Appreciation Week and end of the year "Thank You" Luncheon are just two of those examples. All of the things the PG does during the year take a lot of time, energy and people power. The Parent Group always needs and appreciates volunteers.

You may contact your Parent Group President after the school starts for volunteer opportunities. You will be informed of your new officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) at the Parent Orientation Meeting.

The Parent Group sponsors the Spring Fair, Family Movie Night, Restaurant Nights, Educational opportunities, and Gala events. We encourage, but do not require, all of our parents to become involved. You will find the interactions with other parents immensely rewarding.

For more info: www.mhnsparentgroup.com

E-mail: mhnsparentgroup@gmail.com

Find us on FaceBook and Instagram!

II. Academic Program

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Mt. Hebron Nursery School (MHNS) offers a dynamic, nurturing environment for children ages 2 to 5. We are a play-based center focused on healthy child development. Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children. You will see a commitment to this belief in all that we do. MHNS is a private, non-sectarian, non-profit school that has been caring for children for more than 50 years.

Class offerings include:

Class	Age Group	Time	Size	Staff
2-day 2	2-year-olds	9am-11:30am	6	Lead Teacher
2-day 2	2-½-year-olds	9am-11:30am	12	Co-Teachers
2-day 3	3-year-olds	9am-11:30am 12:30pm- 3:00pm	14-16	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
2-day 3 EXT	3-year-olds	9am-1pm	16	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
3-day 3	3- and 4-year-olds	9am-1pm	16-18	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
3-day 4	4-year-olds	9am-11:30am 12:30pm- 3:00pm	18-20	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
3-day 4 EXT	4-year-olds	9am-1pm	18-20	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
4-day 4 EXT	4- and 5-year-olds	9am-1pm	18-20	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
5-day 4 EXT	4- and 5-year-olds	9am-1pm	18-20	Lead Teacher/ Assistant Teacher
Enrichment Classes	3- to 5-year-olds	1pm-3pm	10:1	Lead Teacher

Licenses:

Our facility is licensed annually and fully validated and accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Childcare. We participate in the MD EXCELS program and have earned its highest score of a Level 5.

Facility:

We have six classrooms, a large multipurpose room for “specials” (music, physical education, and art), a kitchen/conference room for student and teacher use, a teacher work/resource room, child-friendly bathrooms, and a large, fully fenced-in playground. We have a wide variety of developmentally appropriate equipment and supplies in all of the aforementioned spaces.

Academic Year:

School traditionally opens after Labor Day and closes the Friday before Memorial Day.

Program Goals and Activities

Our program employs a set of early learning standards set forth by two sources: *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth Through Three Years of Age* and the *Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards*.

Our goals are to help children:

- Develop an interest in words through reading, listening, and writing.
- Expand communication skills.
- Develop beginning math concepts.
- Develop an awareness of the world around them through their five senses.
- Develop their physical skills, both gross and fine motor.
- Develop an understanding and acceptance of others.
- Learn to share with others.
- Develop the ability to express emotions in constructive ways.
- Develop creativity using a variety of media.
- Develop self-help skills.
- Learn to recognize and respect diversity in all people.

Our program includes the following activities:

* Greeting

* Fine Motor

- Puzzles
- Manipulative toys
- Art activities (painting, drawing, etc.)
- Tearing, cutting, gluing
- Cooking experiences
- Play dough
- Water/sand table

* Gross Motor

- Large blocks
- housekeeping
- dramatic play
- climbing
- painting

* Group Times

- Both large and small

- Stories
- Finger plays
- Poetry
- * Singing/Music
 - In classroom
 - Formal music program 20 minutes/week for all students
- *Physical Education (PE)
 - In classroom
 - Formal PE program for 20 minutes/week for 3-, 4-, and 5-day students
- *Art Education
 - In classroom
 - Formal art program for 30 minutes (every other week) for 3-, 4- and 5-day students
- * Sharing
 - Children are encouraged to engage in casual conversation with the group about selected topics under the direction of the teacher.
- * Snack Time
- * Outdoor Play
- * Curriculum Enhancements
 - Cultural arts
 - Area performers
 - Field trips

CURRICULUM

MHNS uses the Maryland state approved curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool*. *The Creative Curriculum* was developed by Teaching Strategies, a dynamic early childhood education company. Teaching Strategies provides the most innovative and effective curriculum, assessment, professional development, and family connection resources to programs serving children from birth through kindergarten. With groundbreaking solutions and a strong belief that the most powerful way to impact child progress is to improve teacher effectiveness, Teaching Strategies has been supporting the critical work of early childhood educators for over 25 years, with award-winning products like *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool*. This product was a significant investment for our school and is something that guides what we do on a daily basis.

The Creative Curriculum is designed to offer teachers and caregivers clear and effective ways to focus their efforts on what's most important for each child's learning and development. They are based on the latest research, proven to be valid and reliable, and are fully aligned with Maryland's *Common Core State Standards* early learning guidelines, and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. *The Creative Curriculum* offers a revolutionary approach to early childhood learning. It is a framework that is inclusive and supports all learners.

Specific age group curriculum outlines are available upon request.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Mt. Hebron Nursery School is committed to creating a healthy school and work environment for our students and our staff.

MHNS is a part of the Let's Move Childcare (LMCC) program, which is designed to create a healthier future for all young children. Following the LMCC goals, we strive to "help kids build good habits by ensuring our program is a healthy environment for children to play and grow" (www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org).

MHNS recognizes the importance of developing lifelong healthy habits. We strive to provide a healthy learning environment by encouraging the well-being of our students. We emphasize good nutrition and healthy eating habits and include regular physical exercise and overall health education in our curriculum. We provide healthy snacks and food choices, healthy beverages (unflavored 1% milk and water), outdoor and indoor physical activity time (involving both structured and unstructured physical activity time), limited use of appropriate interactive technology and screen time, and parent and staff nutrition education.

Parents, please see the supplemental Health and Wellness brochure for more information.

NUTRITION

MHNS provides nutrition education and support to children and parents consistent with national dietary guidelines and state regulations. We strive to give nutritional guidance that is appropriate for our children's ages and respects their cultural background, religion, and medical needs. A regular, adequate and well-balanced diet combined with fresh air and exercise will maximize children's chance of normal growth and development and minimize the risk of illness.

While the predisposition to obesity may begin before birth, the roots of obesity are often established between the ages of two and five years. Careful planning of nutritious meals and snacks are essential to healthy growth and development for your child.

Our strategies to promote these health and nutrition goals include:

Providing positive eating environments by:

1. Sitting in social groups with peers and teachers positively encouraging children to eat something from their snack plate or lunch.
2. Discussing the nutritional value of food and the health benefits of good nutrition.
3. Discussing individual likes and dislikes, food groups, etc.

Developing food and food safety awareness through:

1. Providing classroom activities such as cooking, tasting, and smelling.
2. Providing families with information about healthy eating, appropriate portions, and nutritional standards required for different ages of children.
3. Providing information (through newsletters, bulletin boards, school mail) to families to assist and encourage them to provide meals and snacks that meet current standards and recommendations in relation to age-appropriate nutritional requirements.
4. Providing information to the families outlining MHNS policies and approaches taken to meet the nutritional needs of children through food brought from home and served at school.
5. Providing families with the opportunity to notify staff if children have particular medical and/or cultural nutritional requirements (See allergy policies and procedures, page 26).

Encouraging family participation:

1. Sharing recipes for food prepared at school with families each month.
2. Encouraging a variety of food (see “Cupcake Alternatives” handout), prepared at home, to be brought in for special occasions or birthday celebrations.
3. Educating families on a regular basis throughout the school year.
4. Participating in *Choose My Plate* and *Let’s Move! Healthy Eating!*

Teaching Daily Routines:

1. Children and staff wash hands before handling food or eating snacks/meals.
2. MHNS serves a daily snack which incorporates a variety of food groups, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
3. Families are encouraged to pack healthy lunches and appropriate portions.
4. Meals/snacks should include carbohydrates, proteins, and fat to give

children energy, while maintaining total calories within recommended ranges specific to a child's age group and level of activity. They should also have limited added sugar and sodium and increased dietary fiber.

5. School policy asks that no beverages be sent in from home for lunch (unless cleared with teacher due to dietary needs or allergies). MHNS provides 1% milk and/or water during meals and snacks.
6. Children have access to water at all times.
7. MHNS staff will respect and accommodate individual nutritional requirements. (Please see "Allergies/Food Awareness" in the School Policies.)
8. Guardians/caregivers will be notified when their child is not eating well, verbally, in writing or by leaving leftover food in lunch boxes to show adults what has been eaten.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

MHNS offers students a wide variety of opportunities for children to engage in physical activity. Students in all of our 3-, 4-, or 5-day programs attend a structured exercise class each week to develop gross motor skills, fine motor skills, flexibility and endurance. The classroom teachers incorporate gross motor skills and movement into their lessons on a daily basis. Circle times are structured so that children are not required to remain seated for extended periods of time. Teachers also use transitional time as opportunities for informal physical activity. Children are never excluded from physical activity.

If a child has a medical or developmental concern, physical activities are modified on an individual basis so that every child feels successful and benefits from the activity. All children and teachers are encouraged to wear clothing and shoes that are comfortable and allow for freedom of movement. When the weather permits, classes go outside for 20 minutes of free play on the playground before the end of the school day. When the weather does not permit, teachers use that time for music and movement activities in the classroom. In addition, as members of "Let's Move Child Care," our students bring home monthly calendars which provide suggestions for activities for families to enjoy together that promote healthy, active lifestyles at home.

At MHNS, physical activity is valued as an integral part of childhood development and is incorporated throughout our curriculum.

SCREEN TIME POLICY

Definition of terms:

Passive technology means non-interactive television, videos, and streaming media.

Interactive technology means educational and age-appropriate technology designed to facilitate active and creative use and to encourage social engagement with other children and adults, including programs, applications (apps), noncommercial television programming, videos, streaming media, and e-books. Our smartboards are used in this capacity.

Policy:

Interactive technology is used with appropriate limits to enhance the learning opportunities provided to our students. MHNS, through a state technology grant, has provided iPads to each classroom to be used on occasion at center time. Educational games and activities are available for use by individuals and small groups which support the themes and concepts being taught in the class. This interactive technology provides creative opportunities, social engagement, literacy, and concept development. Timers are set for five to ten minutes to monitor the time spent on the iPads and teachers monitor the frequency that students visit that center. In addition, teachers occasionally use the iPads with the whole class to support the learning topic of the day. We do not use passive technology as a part of our normal day.

The staff at Mt. Hebron incorporates developmentally appropriate interactive technology to support and enhance the learning opportunities for its students.

III. Classroom Practices

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

In addition to the Parent Welcome and Orientation Night, we schedule a daytime (half-session) child orientation and brief parent overview at the beginning of the school year.

First quarter conferences will be scheduled as a check-in and review of the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) -- our MSDE-approved developmental screening tool. Students will have normal classes on these conference days. Parents will sign up for conference slots as they are able. (Please see school calendar for all relevant dates.)

Third quarter conferences will be scheduled later in the school year. School will be open on these days, but there will be **NO CLASSES SCHEDULED**. Childcare will be provided for students and their siblings while parents attend conferences with their children's teachers. (Please see school calendar for all relevant dates.)

At any other point in time during the school year, conferences may be scheduled with the teacher or director, but we will be unable to provide childcare.

If you have a question, a concern or information to give to your child's teacher,

PLEASE...

- Give the teacher a note with the information or with a request to call you, indicating the times you will be available.
- Call the teacher or director at school, before or after each session.
- Call the director at school, during school hours (9:00AM – 3:00PM, Monday through Friday).
- E-mail the teacher or director with the information.

PLEASE DO NOT...

- Discuss your child in front of him/her or in front of other parents.
- Talk with the teacher (or assistant teacher) about your child, as school is beginning or ending. These are inconvenient times for the staff as

- they are responsible for the students in their care.
- Wait, if something is on your mind.

Good communication between home and school is important for your child's development. New ideas and constructive input/feedback are welcomed and valued.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

We observe the same snow days as Howard County Public Schools. Notifications of closings will be announced over the radio and television. We recommend parents subscribe to the HCPSS Emergency page <http://www.hcpss.org/schools/emergency-closings/> .

We will use our REMIND App text alert program and also post announcements on the nursery school website www.mthebronnursery.org and our Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/MtHebronNurserySchool .

If Howard County Schools are CLOSED, Mt. Hebron Nursery School will also be CLOSED.

In the event of a LATE START (either 1 or 2 hour delay) in Howard County we will observe the following schedule:

- **AM classes**
 - 9:00AM-11:30AM classes will run from 10:30AM to 12:15PM
 - 9:00AM-1:00PM classes will run from 10:30AM to 1:15PM
- **PM classes**
 - 12:30PM-3:00PM classes will run from 1:15PM to 3:00PM.
- **Enrichment classes**
 - 1:00PM-3:00PM classes will run from 1:15PM to 3:00PM.

In the event that Howard County schools close while school is in session, MHNS will make a decision on a case-by-case basis.

IT IS NOT THE POLICY OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL TO EXTEND THE SCHOOL YEAR DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER BEYOND OUR CONTROL.

In the event there are concerns about the safety of children (due to inclement weather) during arrival and dismissal times, "Drop-Off/Pick-Up" will be instituted. Drivers should pull up outside the nursery school office door and

wait in their cars. Staff will assist children as they enter and exit the building. You may opt out of the carpool line and choose to enter the building with your child(ren) if you prefer. If planning to enter the building with your child(ren), please use the TOP parking lot and the church main entrance door.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Parents will be required to sign students in and out of the building. Sign-in logs are located outside each classroom. Parent volunteers and visitors will also be required to sign in and out of the building at the front office. (Enrichment students will be signed in/out by the teacher as needed.) In order to insure their safety, all students are to be picked up at their classroom door by an adult listed on the pickup authorization form.

Changes or exceptions to this policy must be given to the teacher in writing and in advance.

Punctuality is essential for our classroom teachers and your child. Please make every effort to be on time for **both** drop-off and pick-up. Repeated late pick-ups are problematic for our teachers and difficult for your child. *For repeated occurrences, a late fee of \$20 will be assessed for every ten minutes past the time that your child has not been picked up.*

PARKING LOT AND DRIVEWAY

Children's safety is our number one priority!

The Nursery School uses the **first** entrance to enter the parking lot. This is ONE WAY. Drivers exit at the stop sign. The other entrance is used by the church. Nursery School parents, please do not enter the parking lot by the second entrance.

Please observe the ONE-WAY signs. *Remember to drive slowly as there are young children crossing the parking lot.* Please be constantly vigilant when backing up. It is imperative that we create a safe environment for our children even outside of our building.

For safety purposes, we ask that you do not park directly outside the nursery school offices. Those spaces are meant for quick trips to drop things off to the office or classroom, for parents with young siblings in cars, and for

delivery trucks. They are not to be used as parking spaces while you are in the building or on the playground. If you are planning to park for extended periods of time, please use designated parking spaces around the building. The parking alley to the right of the driveway by the church is prohibited as well.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Playground Rules:

- Children must be supervised at all times while on the playground.
- Keep gates locked.
- It is not okay to push or shove friends.
- It is not okay to run with sticks.
- Trees are not for climbing.
- Keep sand in sand box – please do not let children carry it to other areas of playground. FYI sand will ruin the rubber play surface if spilled on porous areas.
- It is not okay to throw sand or toys.

Please help to protect our investments in the sandbox, play surface, and grassy areas by talking with your children about appropriate play and use of school grounds and property.

During School:

Children are supervised by staff on playground when school is in session. If you are volunteering, we would like you to assist as well with playground monitoring. All other adults and siblings need to remain outside the play yard until the bell rings and children are safely back in their classrooms. This eliminates confusion and helps to make sure that all children are accounted for. Please do not remove your child from the playground. Teachers must be consulted, and students must be signed out from school at non-pick up times.

“OPEN” Hours: During the school day (9:00am-3:00pm) the playground is open for family use from 11:30am-12:30pm and 1:00-2:00pm. When school is in session, please refrain from using the playground, other than during that hour, so classes can safely utilize the space.

Before and After School:

Please make sure your children are supervised and are observing the playground rules. Parents, YOU are responsible for your children during non-school hours when using our outdoor facilities. Please also remember the playground is a FOOD-FREE zone.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED

- * Comfortable and washable clothing.
- * Outdoor clothing appropriate for the weather. Our goal is to go outside every day, weather permitting. Based on the daily schedule, we will go outside if the temperature is 32 degrees or above, the ground is not wet, and it is not raining or icy.
- * Please remember that closed-toe shoes work best. Sandals can often get caught in playground equipment. **Sneakers are required on PE days.**
- * Change of clothes, including long pants, shirt, underwear, and socks. Place these in a gallon-sized plastic zip bag with your child's name and give this to the teacher on the first day of school. These will be kept at school in case of an "accident." You may update these at any time, according to the season's changing weather.
- * A hand-grip type cloth tote bag to bring notes and artwork home from school. You may provide your own or purchase a bag from the Parent Group during Parent Orientation or online at the Parent Group Store www.mhnsparentgroup.com. These MHNS bags are available for \$10.00.
- * Please label all clothes, sweaters, jackets, totes, etc. with your child's name.

SNACKS

We provide a snack for the children each day. *If your child has a severe food allergy, please confer with your child's teacher to find a suitable arrangement for meeting his/her needs.* Please be aware that children attending the nursery school may have allergies which could prove fatal. We ask that you make sure your child does not have peanut residue on his/her hands or clothing before coming to school. Children will usually be given water with their snack each day unless it is a special occasion.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time for all of us. To celebrate your child's important day, you may send a special treat to school. Please keep in mind age-appropriate portions. See handout from your classroom teacher for child-friendly birthday treat ideas.

DO SPEAK TO THE TEACHER FIRST before sending any treats to school as there might be another party already planned. The teacher will be able to inform you of any food allergies.

ALLERGIES are prevalent and can be FATAL for some children. Please make sure to call/email the parents in the class prior to bringing in a snack to be shared.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN PARTY FAVORS (hats, gifts, etc.) TO TAKE HOME. If you wish to invite only part of your child's class to a party, please mail the invitations in order to avoid hurting the feelings of those not invited.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

The nursery school recognizes the significance of connecting the abstract learning activities in the classroom to real-world experiences. We are fortunate to have a wonderful Parent Group, which designates a Cultural Arts Volunteer. Often times, the Parent Group is instrumental in inviting guest performers for the children or sending the children on field trips. We invite many of our community helpers to visit: firefighters, police officers, nurses, dentists, and others. Also, many of our parents come in and share their occupations, hobbies, talents, ways of celebrating holidays, and family cultures with our students during relevant units.

For safety reasons, buses are our source of transportation for some school trips. However, there are some school trips where parents/caregivers provide their own transportation.

We can provide transportation for parents attending, but not admittance fees. Whenever possible, we invite siblings to attend. (Please know that we CANNOT have strollers brought on the buses for safety purposes, but you may follow the bus in your own car.) There are times, however, when we feel the presentations are not age appropriate for younger siblings and in some cases, space and cost can be a determining factor. When siblings are welcome, parents must provide their own transportation.

We welcome parents/caregivers/guardians on all field trips. However, we recognize that it is not always possible for all to attend. It is not required, nor expected, that you attend. If you cannot join us, we will make every effort to make sure your child is appropriately supervised and has a parent chaperone assigned to him/her. To that extent, any parent attending a trip may be asked to help chaperone someone else's child.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

COME SHARE: a talent, a career, a hobby, a family tradition, or information pertaining to our units.

COME VOLUNTEER: in cooking, art education, computer skills or by chaperoning on a field trip.

Talk to the Teacher, Parent Group President, or Director if you would like to be involved in any way.

Please do not bring a sibling with you when volunteering at school. Teachers need your help which can become compromised when your attention is diverted. Your preschool child will value this quality time that you spend with him/her.

We are always in need of recyclable items. Occasionally, we will post notes or send home notes, asking for specific items. If you know of good resources for obtaining usable materials, please let the Director know. Recyclable items should go directly to rooms/teaching teams requesting them.

ROOM PARENTS

If you are a Room Parent, the following job suggestions may be of help:

- Call/e-mail parents with reminders about special snack and parties.
- Begin an E-mail distribution list for getting information to class members as needs arise.
- Organize classroom parties, celebrations, teachers' gifts, etc. The MHNS Parent Group provides a detailed description of Room Parent Responsibilities.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent and adult volunteers are an integral part of our daily classroom experience. We are fortunate to have so many generous families who are able to volunteer their time in the building and as chaperones on field trips.

Our primary goal is to keep our children safe. The Maryland Office of Child Care requires any staff member or school volunteer to make an immediate oral report of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. If there is ever a time as a volunteer that a circumstance calls for a report, your director can help you through the process.

Before you can volunteer, ALL parent and adult volunteers must complete a brief MHNS Volunteer Orientation available on our website (slide show format) or in our front office (printed form with signature page). This should be completed annually.

IV. School Policies

REGISTRATION & ENROLLMENT

ONLINE Pre-registration will begin on OCTOBER 1st for class enrollment for September of the following year. Children who are members of the Mount Hebron Presbyterian Church receive a 10% tuition discount. Siblings of children currently enrolled in school get first preference during the registration process. In-house registration will begin the month of December, then in mid-January registration will open to the pre-registration lists.

Requirements:

- To register for the 2023/2024 2-year-old program, the child should be two by September 1st, 2023.
- To register for the 2023/2024 3-year-old program, the child should be three by December 31st, 2023.
- To register for 2023/2024 3-day 3-year-old program, the child should be four by April 1st, 2023 or have some previous preschool experience.
- To register for the 2023/2024 4-year-old program, the child must be four by December 31st, 2023. Once these slots are filled, registration becomes available to children turning four by December 31st, 2020.
- To register for the 2023/2024 5-day 4-year-old program, the child must be four by September 1st, 2023.

You may register a child by filling out a registration form and paying the yearly registration fee, which is NON-REFUNDABLE and NON-APPLICABLE to the tuition fee.

Parents **must** have medical forms completed no later than the first day of school. This is a state of Maryland requirement.

TUITION

Tuition is due on the FIRST DAY OF EACH MONTH. We do not issue monthly bills, so please put these due dates on your calendar. There are 9 monthly payments due: The first is due prior to the first day of school and then each month from September through April. You do not need to make a May tuition payment unless you enrolled after the start of the school year or your child is returning for the following year. *Please make checks payable to: Mt. Hebron Church.*

Payments can also be made with a credit card via PayPal. There is an annual \$75 fee for each family who wants to take advantage of this convenience. The annual credit card processing fee is due by August 1st of each school year to register for this service.

If you are unable to make your payments on time, please contact the school office by the payment due date. Payments NOT received by the 10th of the month will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee. Bank fees of \$25 will be charged for returned checks.

We will not be able to reimburse due to illness or weather-related school closings. Expenses in running a school are continuous, and we ask for your cooperation in this matter.

Students are enrolled for the entire year unless special arrangements are made with the director. If for any reason you must withdraw your child, WRITTEN NOTICE MUST BE GIVEN TO THE DIRECTOR THIRTY DAYS IN ADVANCE in order to allow adequate time to fill the vacancy and to absolve your tuition obligation for the remainder of the school year. **Any tuition and/or fees due during those 30 days are required to be paid, including one additional month's tuition bill.**

The first tuition payment of the school year is due annually by May 1st for CURRENT students or at the time of registration for NEW students and will not be refundable after June 1st of that same year. Current tuition rates can be found on our website.

COMMUNICATION

Here at MHNS, we are in partnership with you as parents/caregivers. The only way we can have a successful relationship is to have effective communication. You can reach out to us and receive information from us through a variety of platforms:

- Give us a call.
- Set up an appointment or stop in for a visit.
- Email us or jot us a note.
- Visit our website www.mthebronnursery.org
- Open your child's school bag and read his/her mail.
- Read our monthly newsletter.
- Emails from office, teachers, room parents, MHNS Parent Group.
- Sign up for REMIND App for school wide messages.
- Parent bulletin board, parent resource bin, parent library.
- Parent/teacher conferences (Formal 2x per year/Informal at your request).
- Volunteer in classroom.
- Communication logs outside classroom.
- Classroom message boards.
- MHNS Comment Cards.
- Follow us on Facebook – Mt. Hebron Nursery School
- Follow us on Instagram - mthebronnursery

ALLERGIES/FOOD AWARENESS

As an “allergy friendly” school, MHNS works diligently to maintain an environment that is safe and as free as possible from foods that may trigger allergic reactions in those children who have moderate to severe food allergies. We strive to create an inclusive environment where all children feel safe, happy, and included. We do not serve any snacks that contain peanuts or tree nuts; however, we cannot always guarantee each classroom snack has been produced in a nut-free facility.

All parents of students experiencing issues with food-related allergies are asked to label school snack items, stored in our kitchen, that are safe for their child’s consumption. For those students experiencing life-threatening allergies, we offer parents the option of providing their own snacks for their child.

We ask that families use our picnic benches and the area **beyond** the fenced-in playground when serving their children snacks or lunch outside of the school day. The MHNS playground is a food-free zone.

Upon enrollment, please notify us if your child suffers from any allergies of which we should be made aware. Specific forms regarding your child’s allergy must be completed and returned to the front office. A special medication administration form should also be completed and signed by a physician and must accompany any medication that needs to be kept at school. We ask that you contact your classroom teacher or front office staff for any details.

VIRUS PROTECTION

Our hand-washing policy requires that all parents or caregivers dropping off students make sure that every child washes his/her hands thoroughly prior to entering the classroom.

ILLNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

Children are accompanied to the office when not feeling well. If a child has a temperature and complains of not feeling well or is injured, his/her parents will be notified and will be asked to pick up their child.

MEDICATIONS

It is not the policy of MHNS to distribute medications to the children UNLESS it is a life-threatening case. (For example, if a student needs to be treated with an EPI pen for bee stings or nut allergies). Prior written permission from the child's physician is required when medication is left on the premises—see website or office for Medication Order Form. Medications may not be left without an accompanying form.

GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE POLICY

At MHNS, we strive to teach self-control and caring attitudes which foster a love of others. Staff members will always specify and model acceptable and positive behavior.

Positive Behavioral Practices:

We use positive approaches as we guide the children in developing interpersonal skills and self-regulation skills. At the beginning of the year, the class and teacher work together to develop rules for the classroom. They are posted, reviewed, and referred to, as needed, throughout the school year. Children are encouraged by staff to use appropriate language – "using their words" – to express their feelings and communicate with their friends.

As students need additional support from the staff to maintain appropriate behavior, they are offered choices which allow them to participate in the decision-making process as well as to be redirected to a more productive activity. When a situation arises, staff members discuss with the student what happened and, with the student, decide on a more appropriate choice. This allows the student to reflect on the situation, assess his/her choices, and develop problem-solving skills.

As students are able, they work with the teacher, or individually, to use the *Problem Solving Box* to guide their decision-making process and help them become more independent in making appropriate choices. A *Calming Area* is available in each classroom, which may be self-selected or suggested by the teacher. This area allows the student a quiet place to regroup, relax, and then rejoin the class activities. Should a student need time to step away, take a break, and/or further reflect on the situation, he/she may spend a brief time with the director, allowing reconsideration of the choices

made and planning for rejoining the class. As our students grow and learn, they develop self-confidence in handling situations in the classroom and become more skilled at working with their friends to problem-solve and make appropriate choices. In addition, they develop interpersonal skills and strengthen friendships.

CIVILITY POLICY

MHNS values civil behavior that supports a safe, engaging and supportive environment on school property and at school events. MHNS recognizes the importance of diversity and is committed to a culture that fosters free and open communication. MHNS believes that an environment of mutual respect and civil conduct between and among students, school employees, parents, volunteers, and the general public is critical to the achievement of a positive environment for students and staff.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

The tradition and practice of MHNS has been that problems are best addressed and resolved by the frank and open discussion of differences.

If a parent or guardian should experience a grievance, the following procedure should be followed:

- The grievance should be raised directly and confidentially with the director.
- Forms for reporting a grievance are available on the web site and in the nursery school office.
- The grievance will be dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity.
- If the grievance is not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the Nursery School Board can be consulted.

SUSPENSION & EXPULSION POLICY

At MHNS , we are dedicated to fostering an environment that develops caring children who are life-long learners with creative and inquisitive minds. We understand that this environment is created when children feel safe, appreciated, respected and successful.

The staff is trained to work with a wide range of childhood behaviors. Should challenging behaviors arise, the staff will offer redirection to the children and guidance toward more positive behavior. Should issues continue to occur, the staff will work with the families and caregivers to offer support. We can offer assistance through support within our school by making plans that meet the needs of the individual student, as well as getting support from agencies within the community, including but not limited to The Care Center, Child Find, and the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).

We will notify families and caregivers should challenging behaviors arise in order to create an inclusive plan to offer this support. In the unlikely event that the behaviors become detrimental or dangerous to the learning and development of any child, MHNS will need to consider the option of suspension or expulsion.

INCLUSION POLICY

MHNS programs are designed to welcome and embrace all students including children with disabilities and special health care needs. Using formal and informal assessment tools, along with county Child Find and IEP recommendations, teachers strive to identify those students exhibiting special needs. Modifications and accommodations are then tailored to individualize routines, activities and expectations. Examples may include using a multi-sensory approach, presenting concepts and skills using various modalities, designating specific placement in whole group settings, using visual cue cards as a communication support, allowing for easy access to classrooms and playground, and providing an asthma/allergy friendly environment along with staff members who have attended medication administration training.

Specialists, such as our physical education (PE), music, and art teachers, along with an occupational therapist consultant, may provide additional one-on-one support and activities to address individual needs and health care. Teachers and families may confer, as needed, to share observations, goals and progress. All MHNS staff members have had MSDE ADA training as a requirement of their employment.

Please let us know if your child has any health care needs or disabilities that we should be made aware of or if assistance will be needed during the

school year.

MT. HEBRON NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

MHNS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in its educational policies, admission policies, and other school-administered programs. When early childhood programs foster comfort and respect with regard to differences, they create a foundation for children's ability to thrive in our culturally complex world.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

The Maryland State Department of Education has mandated a state guideline for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. All children up to kindergarten entry attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs will need to have a developmental screening conducted.

Developmental screening is important as it could help identify a child in need of additional resources or services. Providers or pediatricians can link parents to these resources and services, many of which are free. Children who receive these services and resources at earlier ages are often able to make better gains in their development rather than waiting until later ages.

Developmental screening is used to celebrate a child's achievement as well as refer him/her for support and services when there is an area of concern. Developmental screenings, along with regular physical exams, hearing tests, and vision tests are important ways to monitor a child's growth and development. A child's development can be measured by how a child learns, speaks, moves, behaves, and relates to others. Skills such as smiling, waving, and talking are developmental milestones.

Results from developmental screenings indicate which children would benefit from a full evaluation and assessment. Children who receive early intervention services generally do better in the long term than those identified later. Upon completion of the screening, we will meet with you to discuss the findings and to discuss whether a referral to another agency for further evaluation is necessary. There are many free resources in our county and state.

- Children 24-36 months are required to have two screenings per year.
- Children 37 months-Kindergarten entry are required to have one screening per year.

This is a mandatory state regulation in order for your child to attend our program or any other licensed childcare program in Maryland.

The screening tool our program uses is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3). More information will be distributed to parents at the Parent Orientation. Parental consent forms will be available at the start of the school year.

BUILDING SECURITY

Main entrance Nursery School doors are equipped with coded locks. Parents will be given a unique parent code for the school year. The locks are programmed to be in “passage mode” during peak arrival times/dismissal times. Office staff will be available to admit visitors or guests. Please do not give your parent access code to **anyone**. All playground doors are locked from the outside.

All visitors to the school will be admitted by a staff member and must sign in at the front office.

All parent or adult volunteers must sign in on classroom volunteer logs found in communication binders outside of each classroom.

BUILDING SAFETY PLAN

MNHS has established an emergency plan encompassing a variety of situations and the staff has been trained accordingly. In addition, emergency evacuation procedures are posted in each room and practiced throughout the year.

STUDENT SAFETY

The staff is trained in emergency preparedness and First Aid/CPR. The school is periodically inspected by the Howard County Fire Marshal. Unannounced Emergency Evacuation Drills will take place monthly.

In the event of an emergency which would require an evacuation, we will evacuate across the parking lot to Hebron House. When possible, the website will be updated, REMIND App text alerts and e-mail alerts/notices (via Facebook) will be sent to parents. We advise that you keep e-mail addresses and emergency phone numbers current.

We will be following Howard County School closings in the event of inclement weather. There may, however, be times when the nursery school might have to make its own emergency announcements. In this case, those emergency announcements can be found on the nursery school web site www.mthebronnnursery.org.

EMERGENCY CARDS

Emergency card information for each child needs to be kept current. It is imperative that we have an emergency card for each child and the school be informed immediately of any change in address, telephone number(s) or email address. Returning families should review their card each year to make sure information is correct.

PARENTAL PERMISSIONS

MHNS distributes a Parental Permission form for all children at the beginning of the school year. Please look for this form and return it signed with your preferences.

Additionally, there are times when non-profit organizations offer services or programs for the benefit of our children. Pictures may be taken. If you choose not to have your child's picture taken, waivers for those special circumstances can be completed. Parents photographing or videotaping MHNS activities are asked NOT to post photographs for public viewing.

CHILD SAFETY PROTECTION

The school will fulfill its legal obligation to any child for the well-being of that child.

- The law requires that all childcare persons report suspected cases of child abuse to Protective Services.

- In the event of a legal separation or divorce, we are obligated to release a child to either parent unless we have legal documentation affirming that only one parent has legal guardianship.
- Please help keep all our children safe. Make an effort to properly close all doors upon entering and exiting the building, as well as the playground gates. Be aware of any strangers in the facility or on the school grounds and please inform us of their presence. The safety of your child is our primary concern. Please do not hesitate to keep us advised of potentially dangerous situations.

PETS

Pets are not allowed in the school yard or in the building at any time.

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are reviewed on an annual basis by the Parent Handbook Review Committee.

