

Harmony United Methodist Church Preschool

Bylaws

I. Harmony Preschool Mission Statement

Harmony Preschool recognizes each child as a child of God and carries a commitment to help enable persons to live life in the fullness that Jesus proclaimed. Through the ministry of the Preschool, we extend this nurturing ministry of the church to children, families, and the community.

Harmony Preschool is part of the ministry of Harmony United Methodist Church of Hamilton, Virginia, and is administered by a Board of Directors that is directly responsible to and is administered by Harmony's Church Council. The Preschool is a qualified non-profit organization as defined by current state and federal tax regulations, is licensed by the State of Virginia, and is regularly inspected. It is intended that the Preschool will be self funded. Requests for financial support from the Church, if necessary, will be subject to the approval of the Church Council.

II. Program

The program of Harmony Preschool strives to direct attention to the Christian faith through value education – love, faith, hope, caring, sharing, forgiving, cooperation, and appreciation. The primary value permeating the program is that every person is valued by God. A primary goal is to provide an environment where each child has opportunities to develop a sense of self-worth and his/her own unique gifts as a child of God.

The educational philosophy of Harmony Preschool is that children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. This is best accomplished through the use of games, manipulatives, and learning centers rather than with drill and paper/pencil tasks. Learning activities are offered in fine and gross motor skills, art, music, math, science, and language development. The classrooms are set up to provide opportunities for free choice, large and small group activities, and individual needs.

CURRICULUM - Harmony Preschool has adopted a Learning Centers approach to curriculum. The cornerstone of this approach is ACTIVE LEARNING. For an activity to be judged active it must include five key ingredients:

- MATERIALS- a variety of interesting materials readily available to the children.
- MANIPULATION- Children free to handle, explore, and work with materials.
- CHOICE- Children have the opportunity to set their own goals and select materials /activities.
- LANGUAGE FROM THE CHILDREN- Children talk about what they are doing and what they have done.
- SUPPORT FROM ADULTS- Adults encourage the children's efforts and help them extend or build upon their work by talking with them about what they are doing, joining their play, and by helping them solve problems that arise.

Opportunities for choice are emphasized in this approach because children develop at different rates and their interests and experiences vary widely. When children are encouraged to make choices, they will initiate personally meaningful activities that are usually a better starting point for learning than narrowly defined tasks imposed by an adult. This approach feels strongly that children learn best in an environment that is stimulating, but ordered. The room is arranged to encourage both social interaction and solitary play, and to provide spaces for individual, small and large group activities. The space is divided into learning centers: Art, Home, Building, Hands On, Free Art, and Discovery. Each area is stocked with a variety of materials, equipment, and tools; these materials are well organized and accessible to the children. Children know where materials are, and can get them out and put them away without adult help.

In each learning center there is an adult to supervise, interact with, and encourage the children. Each center will have a planned activity and opportunities for free choice. A theme will be used each 1-2 weeks to provide a variety of learning experiences and to interrelate all areas of the curriculum. Only 6 children will be allowed to work in the Art, Building, Discovery, and Home Centers at any one time. The Free Art and Hands On Centers will accommodate 3 children at a time.

III. The Board of Directors

Membership

The Board of Directors will be comprised of 7 members to include:

The Committee Chairperson and three additional members of the church: to be nominated by the Lay Leadership Committee and appointed by the Annual Charge Conference

The Pastor or his designee (also a church member)

The Preschool Director

One Parent Representative to be named by the Preschool Director

The membership of the first Board of Directors will have the following staggered terms:

The Chairperson will have an initial term of 3 years; all other members will have two year terms, except the Pastor (or designee) and Preschool Director whose terms are unending. After the initial 3-year term of the Chairperson ends, the term thereafter will be 2 years.

The term year will be August 1st through July 31st.

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors determines the policies of the Preschool, and is responsible for ensuring that its program remains faithful to its mission.

More specifically, the Board:

- 1) Periodically reviews the mission statement of the school.
- 2) Manages resources effectively by approving and monitoring the annual budget.
- 3) Ensures staff and budget are in alignment with current enrollment levels. Develops contingency plans for staff expansion and/or reduction as necessary.
- 4) Ensures effective organizational planning by approving an annual organizational plan that includes concrete, measurable goals consistent with the Preschool's mission. Improves and strengthens the Preschool's programs and services by monitoring these goals.
- 5) Reviews the performance of the Preschool Director annually according to the job description developed by the Church Staff

- Parish Relations Committee, and provides frequent and constructive feedback between evaluations.
- 6) Ensures adequate resources by approving fundraising targets and goals, and develops and oversees fundraising efforts.
 - 7) Enhances the Preschool's public standing and visibility by serving as its ambassadors, advocates and community representatives. Develops a public relations program to advertise the Preschool to prospective parents and their children.
 - 8) Determines necessary committees, names their members, and monitors their work. The Chairperson or his/her designee will serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
 - 9) Develops and reviews the Preschool Operating Handbook.

Officers of the Board

Chairperson: The Chairperson will be chosen by the Church Council for a 2-year term (3 years term for the first Board), and will call and preside over all meetings of the Board.

Vice-Chairperson: The Vice-Chairperson will be selected annually by the Board and will serve in the temporary absence or disability of the Chairperson. However, in case of the death, resignation, or permanent disability of the Chairperson, the Church Council will name the new Chairperson.

Secretary: The Secretary will keep a full and complete record of all meetings of the Board.

Meetings

The Board will meet according to a schedule it develops annually. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson as needed. The times and places for meetings will be determined by the Board. Notice of changes to meeting times and locations will be given to all Board members at least 3 days in advance, except in cases of inclement weather.

Quorum

A simple majority of the total Board membership is necessary to constitute a quorum for the purposes of voting.

Voting

Each Board member is entitled to one vote. Absentee votes will be accepted when given to the Chairperson before the vote. Any action that can be taken by the Board can be conducted without an actual

meeting being held, provided that all members are contacted for their vote prior to any action being taken, and a majority approves conducting the vote by this manner.

IV. The Preschool Director

The Preschool Director is an employee of Harmony United Methodist Church and is chosen by the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) of the Church and approved by the Church Council.

In addition, the SPRC will:

- develop a job description for the Director and will conduct a search, interview, and hiring process for his/her selection.
- develop contractual terms for the Director, to include salary and benefits.

V. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin on August 1st and end on July 31st.

VI. Amendments

The Church Council shall have the power to make, amend, or repeal these Bylaws by a majority vote at any regular meeting provided that the amendments are distributed to the Council at least one month in advance of the vote.

Initially approved and adopted by the Harmony Church Council on this _____ day _____, in the year _____.

Signed,

Church Council Chairperson

Church Pastor