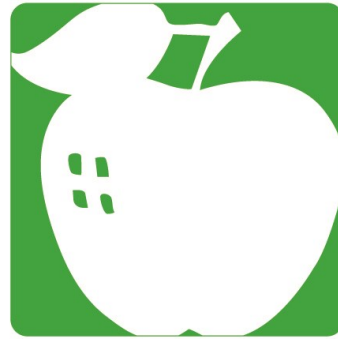
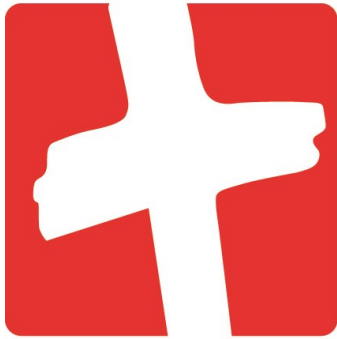


2024-  
2025

rome first school



a ministry of **ROME FIRST**  
united methodist church

# Parent Handbook

August 1, 2024

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Rome First School. On behalf of Rome First United Methodist Church we want to welcome you and your children to the ministry that is Rome First School (RFS). We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

All children attending RFS will be loved, cared for and educated in a manner consistent with Christian beliefs. We offer developmentally appropriate activities, experiences and socialization to correspond with the age of your child. It is our desire to help children grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

We look forward to getting to know you as the year progresses and welcome your interest and support throughout the year. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or me throughout the year as needed.

Sincerely,

Julie W. Grigsby, OGCE/OGA - Director

Rome First School

[rfs@romefirst.org](mailto:rfs@romefirst.org)

706-291-9331



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**School Calendar 2024-2025**

Teacher Pre-Planning	August 5 – August 7
Open House for Parents and Students	August 8
First Day of School	August 12
Labor Day – No School	September 2
Fall Break	October 7 – October 11
Costume Parade	October 30 (Rain Date October 31)
Fall Conferences – No School ( <i>Pre-K and Kindergarten only</i> )	November 4
Thanksgiving Program	November 21
Thanksgiving Holidays	November 25 – November 29
Christmas Holidays	December 16 - January 3
Classes Resume	January 6
MLK Holiday – No School	January 20
Registration opens for current families	February 3 (Closes on February 13)
President’s Day – No School	February 17
Registration opens for new families	February 18
Spring Break	April 7 – April 11
Easter Monday – No School	April 21
Spring Conferences – No School ( <i>Three’s, Pre-K, Kindergarten only</i> )	May 1
End of the Year Program	May 8 (Subject to Change)
Last Day of School	May 14
Teacher Post-Planning Day	May 15

***\*\*We follow the Rome City School System for inclement weather closings.***

**RFS Faculty 2024-2025**

**Ducklings T/H**

Casey Ellis  
Amanda Miller

**Ducklings M/W**

Molly Ryan Schrimsher  
Amanda Millier

**Busy Bees T/TH**

Molly Ryan Schrimsher  
Christina Nations

**Busy Bees M/W**

Ann Banks  
Chelcie Baker

**Turtles**

Sharon Krug-Fries  
Tammy Coleman

**Penguins**

Susie Deese  
Linda Barlow

**Frogs**

DeAnn Richardson  
Heidi Bush

**Lady Bugs**

Shannon Clayton  
Alexia Pence

**Owls**

Kathleen Cash  
Emily Edwards

**Lions**

Rachel Harvey  
Allison Hunter

**Tigers**

Sheila Tucker  
LeeAnne Darville

**Kinder Kids**

Susan Earnest  
Kate Terry

**Director**

Julie Grigsby

**Early Care Coordinator**

Ann Banks

**Art Teacher**

Jennifer Moore

**Music Teacher**

Christina Nations

**Spanish Teacher**

Olga Guerra

**Facilities**

Ronny Goodwin

**Rome First UMC Clergy**

Valerie Loner, Senior Pastor

## **Philosophy**

We believe the preschool years should be a time in which children feel successful, happy and relaxed. We will strive to provide a stimulating environment in which children learn through exploration and discovery.

RFS is a ministry of Rome First United Methodist Church. We believe the years your child spends here should help stimulate an awareness and love of God.

## **Goals**

Our goals are to provide each child with the following opportunities:

- To develop the whole child – spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually.
- To develop positive and responsible relationships with other children and adults.
- To provide a curriculum that is designed to offer age-appropriate activities that will encourage success and creativity.
- To provide a learning environment that offers each child opportunities to work on basic small and large motor skills necessary for pre-writing, pre-reading, math and science suitable to their developmental level.
- To promote our faith in God, by incorporating prayers, chapel visits and other age-appropriate religious activities in the classroom.

## **General Overview:**

RFS serves children from one year old through kindergarten. Our program operates under the guidance of the Director of Rome First School and the Preschool Advisory Board.

We have created an age appropriate curriculum using a variety of resources. You will receive communication from your child's teacher regarding class schedule, activities, upcoming events etc.

Listed below are some specific examples of how our teachers have been trained to work with young children:

- The teacher will be prepared, on time and stay focused on her classroom by being observant at all times.
- The teacher is the "Living Bible" a child experiences. Children catch the teacher's attitude and beliefs through her actions and her voice.
- The teacher will model good conflict resolution with co-workers, parents and children.
- The teacher will plan appropriately for the child's age level.
- Communication with the child will be done on the child's eye-level. Stooping, kneeling or sitting at their level.
- Guidance by the teacher can often be encouraged through a good sense of humor.

- The teacher will have a positive use of body language in dealing with students.
- The teachers will be kind, but firm. Children feel more secure when they know the teacher is in control and unafraid of the children.
- The teacher will accept the child as an individual created by God no matter how undesirable his/her behavior becomes.
- The teacher will condemn the behavior and not the child.

## School Policies, Guidelines & Procedures

### Telephone

The telephone number for RFS is 706-291-9331. During hours of operation, you may reach the director or teachers at this number. You will have the ability to leave a message for those times when a person cannot answer the phone.

### Age Requirements

Your child will be placed in a class based on their age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. It is beneficial to the child to remain with his/her age group to experience age-appropriate activities.

### School Hours

School hours are **9:00 am – 1:00 pm**, Monday-Thursday. Our teachers work hard in preparing the best learning environment possible for your child. They arrive early to make sure everything is ready for the day. **Please help them by not bringing children to the classroom before 8:55.** The afternoon carline begins at 1:00. The line moves at various speeds depending on many factors. Please be patient early in the year as everyone gets adjusted to the carline procedures. **Your child should be picked up no later than 1:15.** Please let us know if you are running late by calling the school or your child's teacher. We need to respect our staff member's time and allow them to prepare for the next day.

### Special Classes

In addition to our regular preschool curriculum, students receive special instruction from our Music, Art and Spanish teachers. We offer Music to all of our RFS students, Art to our Three's, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes and Spanish to our Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes. Jennifer Moore is our art teacher, Christina Nations is our music teacher and Olga Guerra is our Spanish teacher.

### Chapel

Chapel is held on Monday at 10:00AM each week. There will be a variety of Bible related activities and devotions led by our Senior Pastor, Valerie Loner.

### Arrival and Departure

Children in the toddler room (Ducklings) must be escorted to and from their rooms by their parent or guardian. Please do not park on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue – park on 3<sup>rd</sup> street near the playground so you do not block the car line.

Children on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (Turtles, Busy Bees, Lions, Love Bugs and Kinder Kids) will line up at the front door on E. Third Ave. Please follow our traffic pattern: from E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. turn onto E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. at the 4 – way stop turn right onto E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., proceed to the walkway area. If your child's class is on the first floor (Penguins, Ladybugs and Frogs) you will line up on 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Children on the first floor will enter the building through the "back door" from 3<sup>rd</sup> St. We are asking parents to assist us with getting children out of the car. A staff member will meet you and take the child into the building. A staff member will be there to greet you and your child until 9:15 a.m. If you arrive after that time, you will need to park and walk your child to the door.



Please be patient if you have to wait a few minutes in the car line.

### **Dismissal**

The traffic pattern for pick up is: from E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. turn onto E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., turn left into the large lower parking lot of Rome First UMC line up in the parking lot in a serpentine fashion and turn right onto 2<sup>nd</sup> St. At the 4 – way stop, turn right onto E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., proceed to the walkway area. Parents with children in classes on the first floor (Penguins, Ladybugs and Frogs) will pick up their child from the “back door.” In the interest of safety we are asking for parent’s assistance this year in putting children into the car. Please put your car in park, exit your vehicle and meet the teachers bringing your child out to you. Please make sure not to back up traffic at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Please have your child’s nameplate on the sun visor of your vehicle to make loading easier.

You must have a car seat appropriate for the age of your child. Please have your car seat on the passenger side to be near the sidewalk.

If an emergency arises which prevents you from picking up your child, please call the preschool office or notify the teacher.

A current list of names of people that are authorized to pick your child up from school should be on file in your child’s classroom. Please send a written note to the teacher informing them of any changes. No child will be allowed to leave with an unauthorized person

### **Early Care**

Early Care is available to parents with children in the two and three year old classes, pre k and kindergarten. Early Care is held in the Turtle classroom and begins at 8:00 and ends at 9:00. Please come to the “front door” (on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ave.) The teacher on duty will be responsible for getting the children to their classrooms. The cost is \$4 a day per child. This year drop off needs to be scheduled through Ann Banks who is the coordinator. **Ann’s email is:** [achristian29@bellsouth.net](mailto:achristian29@bellsouth.net)

### **Tuition**

Monthly tuition is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. After the 10<sup>th</sup>, a \$20.00 late fee will be charged. There will be a \$25.00 fee for all returned checks. Please make checks payable to Rome First School.

<u>Tuition Schedule</u>		<u>Registration Fee</u>
Two Days/wk.	\$215.00	\$125.00
Three Days/wk.	\$235.00	\$125.00
Four Days/wk.	\$255.00	\$125.00
Kindergarten	\$290.00	\$125.00

Tuition remains the same regardless of the number of days in attendance each month. Because we base our class ratio and commitment to teachers’ salaries on our enrollment, we cannot make adjustments on tuition when your child is absent, whatever the reason.

When a child is registered, we expect him/her to continue for the full school year. One month's written notice is required in the event that it is necessary to withdraw your child from our program. The notice should be sent to the director. If notice is not given, you will be responsible for the next month's tuition.

### **Inclement Weather**

We follow the Rome City School system for inclement weather closings. Early release/Delayed starts due to weather will be determined independently by the school director. Listen to local radio stations for school closing announcements.

### **Health/Safety**

Your child's health is very important to us. It is very important to keep your child home if they are not feeling well. Please read these policies carefully.

**ONLY A HEALTHY CHILD SHOULD ATTEND SCHOOL.** Please keep your child at home if he/she displays any of these symptoms:

- Fever (100.4 or higher); a child must be fever free without medication for 24 hours
- Vomiting and / or diarrhea within 24 hours

**Therefore, if a child gets sick while at school, he/she will NOT be allowed to return the following day**

- Any symptom of childhood diseases such as Scarlet Fever, German measles, chicken pox, or whooping cough. Please notify us if your child has been exposed to or comes down with a childhood disease.
- Please notify us if anyone in your household has been treated for lice.
- Common cold
- Croup
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection – boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or eye infection

No child should come to school visibly ill. If a child becomes ill at school or in the event of an accident or injury, he/she will wait in the office until a parent is notified. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT WE HAVE CURRENT PHONE NUMBERS (CELL NUMBERS ARE GREAT), so that we will be able to contact you. In the event of a serious injury requiring immediate medical attention, the child will be taken to the emergency room at Floyd Medical Center.

**Please advise us of any food allergies your child may have with written instructions for the teachers. Medications cannot be administered by our staff.** This includes prescription and non-prescription medications. If your child's dosage cannot be worked around school hours, you are welcome to come to the school and give it.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

Teachers, administrators, and all other school personnel (including volunteers and substitutes) are bound by the laws of the State of Georgia as Mandated Reporters, to report any *suspected* cases of child abuse or neglect. Please refer to **O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 (c) (1)**.

### **Clothing and Possessions**

Dress your child in comfortable PLAY clothes that can get dirty and are bathroom friendly. Pants with elastic waists are ideal for this age group. **Please do not send your child in open toe sandals or flip-flops. These shoes can be hazardous when your child is running and playing on the playground. We recommend tennis shoes.** Remember children need appropriate clothing for outside play. We plan to go outside daily, including the winter months, as weather permits.

Please label any removable clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc. with your child's name.

We encourage children to share special discoveries they make at home or on trips. Meaningful books, pictures, records, tapes, nature items, etc. are welcome. **Toys from home are not allowed**, unless the teacher has recommended them for a classroom activity. Guns, knives, ropes and other toys that encourage rough and violent play are not allowed. We cannot be responsible for lost or damaged toys from home.

### **Toilet Habits**

If your child is not potty-trained, please send a bag with an extra change of clothing, diapers and wipes. Label your bag and all of the clothing. Cloth diapers are not allowed at RFS.

Some children upon entering the 3-year-old class will still be working on potty-training. Our teachers will encourage them to use the restroom at regular intervals during the day. Please pack a change of clothes in their backpacks each day in case of an accident.

### **Birthdays**

Your child's birthday is a very special time. We will be celebrating birthdays inside the classroom or outside on the playground. As an alternate, parents can just send in birthday treats. Please coordinate with your child's teachers.

### **School Pictures**

Each year the children will have individual and group pictures taken. These will be made available but are not required to be purchased. Parents will be notified in advance of the date.

### **Field Trips**

Scheduling field trips will be dependent on each individual class. If we do have field trips, transportation will be provided by the parent. Parental consent is necessary for a child to participate in a field trip.

### **Lunch**

All children should bring **a lunch AND snack AND drink each day**. Please include any utensils your child might need. Simple lunches are best for preschool. Juice boxes, sippy cups and cups with straws work best for drinks. Please label all lunchboxes and contents you want returned home. Lunchables are fine, but please make sure your child can assemble them themselves. We will not have access to microwaves to warm up food this year. There is limited access to refrigerators.

Pizza is offered on a rotating basis once per week either on a Wednesday or Thursday. The cost of the pizza is \$1.00/slice. Pizza must be preordered and paid for on Pizza Day.

### **Fund Raisers/Annual Fund**

Our fundraisers benefit, support and enrich our preschool program. Although we benefit greatly from these fundraising events by purchasing books, teacher resources and developmental materials, we respect your decision regarding your preference concerning participation.

### **Newsletters and Calendars**

During the last week of each month a calendar will be sent home with your child. Please put this information in a safe spot for reference to important dates. We feel that this is our most effective way to communicate to you what your child will be doing each month. A newsletter will also be sent home each week.

### **Teacher Communication**

Open communication between parents, teachers, and the director is encouraged at all times. Rome First School has 2 established Conference Days during the school year. Conferences are held in the fall for our PK4 and Kindergarten students and in the spring for our PK3, PK4 and Kindergarten students. The purpose of these conferences is for sharing information and ideas about your child's growth and development. Additional conferences may be arranged at the teacher's request or the family's request if needed.

We will share upcoming events and school pictures on Instagram *@romefirstschool*. In addition, a director email will go out every Monday morning via MailChimp.

### **Report Cards**

Progress Reports will be sent home to all students in December and May. These progress reports provide a clear picture of each child's growth and development, ensuring that all parties are aware of the child's progress and any steps needed to support their success.

### **Discipline**

Discipline in our school will focus on positive behaviors. Each child will be treated in a positive manner with gentle reminders of classroom and church rules. When a child misbehaves, the first course of action will be redirecting the negative behavior and finding alternatives to help the child get back on the right track. In most instances, this is all that is needed to eliminate unacceptable behavior. Time-out is also used (1 minute per age). Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used to discipline your child. If a problem arises that becomes consistent and our discipline methods are proving to be ineffective, the child may visit the director's office. At that point we will involve the parents to work on how we can solve the problem together.

### **Dismissal Policy**

It is the goal of the Preschool at First United Methodist Church to provide each child with a well-rounded, Christian educational program in a safe and healthy environment. However, for different reasons some children or parents may not find a favorable match with our program. If this is the instance, the following may apply:

- **The child is not ready for school:** Children adapt to new experiences at their own pace. It has been our experience that most children will adapt to the preschool structure within 3 weeks. If however, after this time a child remains unhappy or distressed by our environment, we may offer an agreement between parent and director and decide to remove the child from the program until a later date.

- **The child displays socially unacceptable behavior:** Children who exhibit very aggressive or threatening behavior, i.e. biting, punching, or kicking, endanger the safety of other children. In these instances, we will work with both the child and parents to turn this behavior around. If there is no significant progress made as a result of these efforts, we will have to withdraw the child from the program. Every effort will be made to try and put the child back in the program at a later date if an opening occurs.
- **Failure to follow preschool policies and guidelines:** The preschool operates under specific guidelines and policies set by RFUMC, the Preschool Advisory Board, and the Preschool Director. In order for our program to be successful, it is important for everyone, both parents and children, to observe these policies and guidelines. Should either the parents or the child demonstrate a consistent difficulty in observing these policies and guidelines, we may drop the child from our enrollment.
- **Failure to pay tuition:** Notices are sent out and late fees are charged when a student's tuition is not paid on time. If a student's tuition is not getting paid after repeated notices the director will, with the advice and counsel of the Preschool Advisory Board, dismiss the student from Rome First School.

#### **Right to Amend**

This handbook may be amended by the school board at any time during the year with proper notification of these changes being communicated in writing to parents and students.