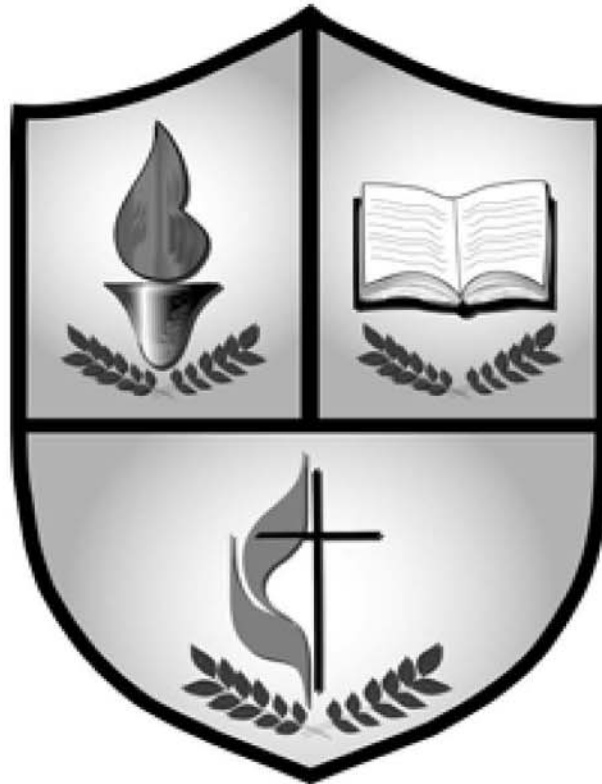




**BEN HILL UMC
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**



PARENT HANDBOOK

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"And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"

(Mark 10:13-14).

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**POLICIES OF
BEN HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

Welcome to the Ben Hill United Methodist Church Christian Academy. This Handbook has been provided for your use. It is designed to explain our program and show how you, our staff, and the Board of Advisors can work together for the best interest of your child.

GOD’S VISION FOR A PEOPLE CALLED BEN HILL

“The vision of Ben Hill United Methodist Church is to equip and empower the body of Christ with a biblically-based, global Christian ministry of love and concern through holistic prayer, worship, training, care, evangelism, outreach, and social consciousness to serve all God’s people.”

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY PHILOSOPHY

The Academy strives to promote excellence in education in a Christian environment and to provide various interactive and individual experiences that will enable each child to develop according to his/her potential. The Academy believes in the education of the whole child. Recognizing that a child’s early years are critically important to his/her physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development and well-being, the Academy will strive to enhance your child’s growth in each of these areas and to help him/her become well-rounded in a high-quality academic and Christian setting. The Academy will strive to make this one of the most rewarding experiences in your child’s early education.

OUR MISSION

The Academy is a ministry that is part of Ben Hill United Methodist Church. We are committed to providing our children and families a faith based, cutting edge, enriched learning environment that encourages physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

HISTORY

The Ben Hill United Methodist Church began its pre-school ministry in November 1973, for the purpose of providing day care service. The Academy during that time offered services for children ages 2–5. It was licensed for a capacity of 69 children.

In May 1974, the Academy was expanded to offer a developmental program. This program included the following areas of study: language, art, health and safety, reading readiness, physical activities, and recreational play. Field trips were planned throughout the year. The Academy is licensed for 115 students by Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (BFTS).

ACCEPTANCE OF A CHILD

The Academy's policy is to accept a child into a classroom based on the age that child will be on September 1st. A Child who is accepted into the Academy is expected to benefit from group experiences in this setting. If at the end of the first two (2) weeks it is determined that a child will not benefit from this experience, other arrangements must be made for the child.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

The Academy is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. After 6:35 p.m. (parents are given a five minute grace period) a late fee of \$5.00 per minute is charged for every minute after 6:35 p.m. that the child remains on the premises, payable at the time your child is picked up.

The Academy observes the following holidays:

- ◆ New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
- ◆ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s. Birthday (National Observation)
- ◆ Presidents' Day
- ◆ Good Friday and Monday after Easter (Spring Break)
- ◆ Memorial Day
- ◆ Independence Day (July 4th)
- ◆ Labor Day
- ◆ Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
- ◆ Christmas Break (refer to calendar)
- ◆ New Years Break (refer to calendar)

***** If the traditional holiday occurs during the weekend, we will observe the holiday on the Friday before the holiday.***



TUITION AND FEES

TUITION

2 year olds.....	\$155.00 per week
3 years (and older).....	\$150.00 per week
2 or more children in the same family.....	\$ 10.00 discount per week
* After School fee 4:30 pm—6:30 pm (Kindergarten only).....	\$40.00 per week

There is a 10% discount when tuition for the year is paid in advance.

In the event that your child is absent from the Academy at any time while enrolled, full tuition is still due (exceptions are listed under illness).

WITHDRAWAL

Ben Hill UMC Christian Academy requires a two (2) week notice before withdrawal.

REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES

- \$75.00 - PTA Assessment
- \$50.00 - Supply Fee
- \$25.00 - T-shirts and Sweatshirts
- \$25.00 - Insurance
- \$175.00 - Registration Fees (**Non-Refundable**)
- Yearly Activity fee TBD— Payable in full by September 30th.



Registration fees for two children in the same family is \$275.00.

BHUMC Christian Academy uses the **SMART Tuition** payment system to collect payments for tuition/fee billing.

What is Smart Tuition? *SMART tuition is a national 20 year old provider of tuition/fee billing and management services. Providing payment options that work for all families.*

Who does SMART currently serve? *Over 2,000 schools throughout the country like ours.*

Why SMART now? *To secure the stability of our school, quality of our programs and increase financial stability of the Academy.*

How will I pay my child's tuition? *That's what's so great about the company, you have several ways to pay your tuition: ACH auto-debit, mailed monthly invoice, credit cards, online payments, and phoned-in payments.*

What other services does SMART provide? *Reminder email tuition notices, follow up by phone or email for missed payments, customer service 24 hours /365 in English and Spanish and secure online account access.*

- ◆ If tuition is not received when agreed upon, you will be charged a \$15.00 late fee from BHUM-CCA and \$30 by SMART for follow up service.
- ◆ The Academy will not accept checks during the month of May. All May tuition must be paid by money order, debit, credit or cashiers check.
- ◆ The Academy charges \$25.00 for returned checks.

The Academy's Board of Advisors, reserves the right to increase fees and/or tuition at any given time during the regular school year. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing at least two weeks before any tuition changes go into effect.

MEALS

The Academy will provide each child a nutritious and well balanced morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack. These meals are cooked on site by the Academy's full-time chef and served to the students in a family- style setting.

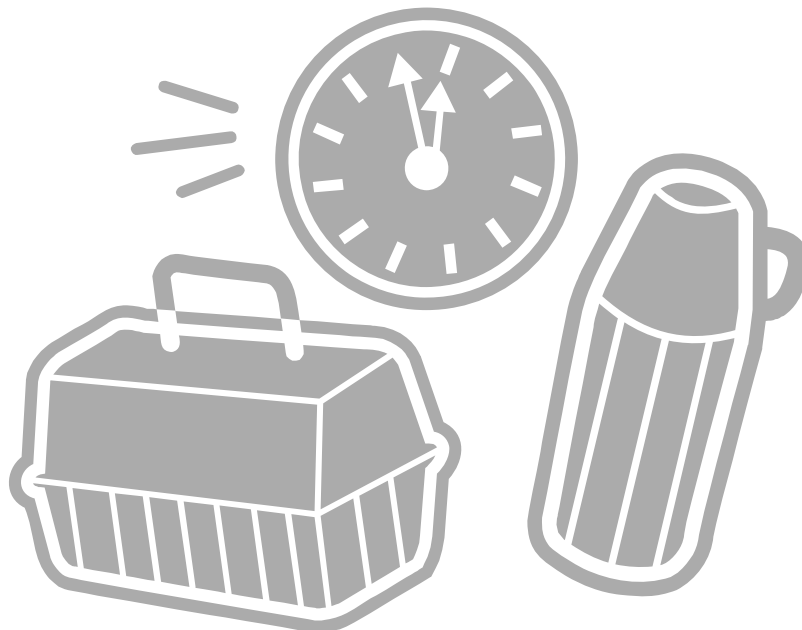
If you know your child will arrive after a scheduled meal, please ensure your child has been fed a meal prior to his/her arrival at the Academy.

Please inform the Academy of any allergies or special dietary needs for your child. If a special dietary meal is required, your child's physician needs to provide the Academy with written instructions for the diet. If accommodations cannot be made, parents/guardians may furnish the necessary food. Food and milk must be labeled with the child's first and last name, and the current date, and contain all the necessary food components as determined by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

Parents/guardians who wish to bring in a store bought snack or lunch for an entire class may do so by coordinating with the Director and teacher.

Meal Schedule

Breakfast	09:00 a.m. - 09:45 a.m.
Lunch	11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
PM Snack	05:00 p.m. - 05:30 p.m.



ARRIVAL

- ◆ Students should arrive at school no later than 9:00 a.m. If students arrive after 9:00 a.m. they will be required to submit an excuse from their doctor to be admitted to class.
- ◆ In an effort to control access to the Academy we ask that parents enter the building from 7:00-9:00 a.m. through the Academy's main entrance (**the double doors off the church's main parking lot**). The parking lot gate and doors to the Academy are locked promptly at 9:00 a.m. by security. Please be mindful of the time when dropping your child off.
- ◆ If you should arrive to drop your child off after 9:00 a.m. we ask that you enter the building through the church's office doors located behind the church (**the ramp doors**).
- ◆ The exit doors on the second floor should only be used in case of an emergency.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT PROCEDURE

Parents or guardians **MUST** sign their child (ren) in and out daily. Under **NO** circumstances are parents to send their child (ren) into the building to be signed in by another parent/guardian or Academy staff. In order to sign a child in or out the parents or guardians must be at least 18 years old. Signing in/out at the same time is prohibited.

DISMISSAL

- ◆ The academy closes at 6:30 p.m. during the school year. The parking lot gates and the main entrance to the academy are opened by security at 3:00 p.m. and remain open until 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ If you arrive to pick up your child before 3:00 p.m. or after 6:30 p.m. use the church offices (ramp) entrance.

LATE PICK UP

The Academy closes at 6:30 p.m. After 6:35 p.m. all parents are charged \$5.00 per minute late fee, payable at the time your child is picked up. All late fee payments are paid directly to the Academy.



ABSENCES AND TARDINESS

Children benefit from a punctual and regular attendance at the Academy. In order to take full advantage of the Academy's curriculum parents are strongly encouraged to have children in school no later than 8:30 a.m.

The Academy defines irregular attendance as being absent /tardy from class three to five days per week for a period of three to four weeks, without a reasonable explanation or medical excuse.

Chronic absenteeism/tardiness will result in a child being disenrolled from the program.

VACATION

The Academy will grant each child a half week tuition waiver to be redeemed at any time during the school year from August to May. Your child must not be present at the Academy during the time you wish to redeem your voucher. If your child is enrolled in the summer program they will also be given a half week tuition waiver to be used from June to August. Requests for tuition waivers need to be submitted **in writing** to the Academy office at least two weeks prior to redeeming.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, tune to Channel 2, WSB-TV Action News for information about Academy closings or delayed openings. The Academy will be closed if the public schools in the City of Atlanta are closed. When safe travel is possible the Academy will open. Parents may call the Academy at 404-344-8912 to verify that we were able to open. You may also call the Church's Main Switchboard, (404) 344-0618, to hear updated information.



DISCIPLINE

It is the Academy's policy to promote positive self-esteem by using positive reinforcement, interesting choices and activities, allowing children to problem-solve among themselves without teacher interference.

It is the Academy's policy to prohibit corporal punishment by all employees in the performance of their duties as well as parents while in the center.

The Director may suggest a behavioral plan when negative behaviors disrupt the learning environment. In extreme circumstances we may determine that the child's emotional and educational needs may be better met in another setting. The Academy's policy is not to release the names of children involved in behavioral incidents to other parents.

BITING

A young child may not always be able to communicate effectively with words and may sometimes bite another child. The Academy staff will make every attempt to prevent this from happening. However, at some point your child may be bitten or bite another child. The staff member present will treat the wound and notify you on the incident report form. Biting incidents are confidential. A conference will be held with the Academy Director, teacher, and parents/guardians to discuss this concern and possible options.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

A medical examination is required of all children enrolling in the Academy prior to their admission. Each child is expected to have the appropriate documentation completed and signed by a physician and returned to the Academy to be kept on file. It is mandatory that these records be up-dated when necessary. If your child has an allergy or food restriction the office must have documentation on file from their pediatrician. All children are required to have a current Immunization Certificate from a physician or health department within 30 days of enrollment.



ILLNESS

If your child has a high fever, is vomiting or shows signs of a communicable disease or sickness, please do not bring your child to the Academy. If it is detected that your child has these symptoms or becomes ill while at the Academy, you will be contacted immediately. It is at the discretion of the Director to determine whether a child previously ill is required to present a signed physician re-admittance form. In the event a child has been diagnosed with an infectious/communicable disease such as head lice, chickenpox, measles, mononucleosis, tuberculosis etc., a notice will be posted on the classroom door to inform others of the problem, the date it was detected and precautions to take.

Should a child have to be out for an extended illness (absent two or more weeks), the first week's tuition will be waived. For each additional week, up to two (2) consecutive weeks, 50% of the tuition for that week will be waived. A physician's completed return to school form may be requested before your child can be readmitted to the Academy.

MEDICATION

It is the Academy's policy NOT to dispense medication (will be looked at on a case by case basis).

FIELD TRIPS

At the Academy we believe that field trips are an exciting way for children to see the information they learn in the classroom come alive in real world experiences. These trips are planned for children ages four through school age. Parents will be notified in advance of upcoming field trips. In order for your child to participate in field trips parents/guardians must give written consent for each trip.

All children must wear their Ben Hill United Methodist Church Christian Academy T-shirts/sweatshirts on field trips. All Academy children participating in field trips must depart from and return to the Academy.

CHAPERONES

Parents are invited and encouraged to accompany classes on field trips. Parents are responsible for covering their own cost for field trips unless they are notified in advance that the Academy will cover the cost. All chaperones are to sign a chaperone log that will be located in the Academy's office.



CURRICULUM

In a Christian school the bible is the most important subject, and with that as our guiding force, the Academy uses the A Beka Curriculum. The A Beka Curriculum was created solely for faith based programs. The curriculum addresses the development of the “whole child” by teaching biblical lessons in reading, history, mathematics, science/health and English. All subject areas are designed to meet the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and creative development of your child (ren).

As a state licensed pre-school program, the Academy’s curriculum also embraces the Georgia Early Learning Standards for each age group and content area. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods that focus on cognitive learning, reading readiness skills and math concepts. In addition, various other activities are included in the curriculum throughout the year, including, but not limited to, the following: Black History, dental health, and a variety of field trips, multi-cultural studies, career activities, videotapes, DVD’s, and special program presentations.

The Academy curriculum also includes weekly spiritual devotion, jazz dance, Tae-Kwon-Do, computer science, music, science and Spanish.

REST AND RELAXATION

Each child in the Academy will have the opportunity for an afternoon nap each day. Please provide two (2) crib sheets or two (2) large towels for use on his/her mat. This bedding is to be taken home every Friday, laundered, and brought back to class with your child every Monday. The Academy cannot be responsible for bedding that is left in your child’s cubby over the weekend. Parents are asked to place their child’s name on their bedding items.

Children are provided with toys at the Academy and should only bring toys from home on special occasions, such as “Show and Tell.” From time to time, books and records may be brought and shared with the group, as directed by the teacher. The Administrator MUST approve all records, cassettes, and videotapes, before being viewed in a classroom.



UNIFORM AND STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

All students of the Ben Hill United Methodist Church Christian Academy are required to wear a uniform. This is to ensure modest, appropriate, and economical dress, and to de-emphasize external clothing and strengthen acceptance of each child because of their true internal worth. All students are required to wear the school uniform beginning the first day of the school year. NO EXCEPTIONS will be made. Teachers have been instructed not to accept students into their class who are not properly dressed in uniform.

The Ben Hill T-shirt/sweat shirts can be worn with navy blue bottoms.

The Academy dress code is published and evaluated annually and is strictly enforced.

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY - GIRLS

Jumpers:	Plain navy (school apparel only)
Skirts or Skorts:	Plain navy
Blouses:	White short sleeve with Peter Pan collar White long sleeve with Peter Pan collar White Polo style shirts
Shorts or Slacks:	Navy (school apparel only)
Sweaters:	V-neck or crew neck cardigan
Belts:	Navy or black (three and older only)
Socks:	Navy or white crew, knee socks or stockings
Shoes:	Dark (navy or black) shoes or tennis shoes
Hair accessories:	Students three years old and up may wear navy or white headbands, scrunches, bows, and barrettes
* No hair beads (All Students)	



UNIFORM AND STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

Continued-

SCHOOL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS – BOYS

Slacks:	Navy slacks
Shirts:	White short sleeve knit shirt White long sleeve knit
Shorts:	Navy shorts
Sweaters:	V-neck or crew neck cardigan
Belts:	Navy or black (three and older only)
Socks:	Navy, black socks only
Shoes:	Dark black or navy shoes or tennis shoes
Hair:	Conservatively cut and neat. No braids, extreme designs or ponytails.
Jewelry:	No earrings

NOTE: Only plain white T-shirts are to be worn underneath uniform shirts.

T-shirts (1) and sweat shirts (1) are included in the registration fee. Additional T-shirts/sweat shirts may be purchased through the Academy Office. The uniform slacks, navy shorts, slacks jeans, may be worn with the T-shirt/sweat shirts .

Parents/Guardians are asked to provide an extra set of uniforms, to be left at the Academy, for emergencies. All clothing must be labeled. The Academy cannot be responsible for clothing that is not labeled. If no change of clothing is available for a child, the child will be permitted to wear Academy clothing home. Parents/Guardians are asked to please launder and return Academy clothing the following day.

We discourage the wearing of jewelry by children, with the exception of medical alert bracelets due to the potential harm that may come to themselves and others. The Academy will not be responsible for lost jewelry.



GROWTH DEVELOPMENT & EXPECTATIONS

Children between the ages of 2 and 5 change dramatically in five major areas: emotional and social skills; physical growth; thinking and reasoning skills (called cognitive development); language development; and sensory and motor development. Children usually progress in a natural, predictable sequence from one developmental milestone to the next. However, the exact timing varies from child to child. Also, many children tend to make progress in one area, such as learning new words, while another skill, such as counting, levels off.

Emotional and Social development begins with excitement about being around other children at age 2. However, most children at this age play near each other rather than with each other (this is called parallel play). By age 5, most children seek and enjoy friendships. Often they identify a playmate as their "best friend," although their choice may change frequently. Two-year-olds start to recognize the differences between boys and girls. By age 5, children understand many of these differences and often like to dress or play in ways they identify with their gender.

Physical development slows down from the rapid growth during infancy. From age 2 through ages 5, most children annually gain about 3 lb (1.4 kg) to 5 lb (2.3 kg) and grow about 3 in. (7.6 cm).

Cognitive development, or thinking and reasoning skills, progresses from a simple to more complex understanding of time, letters, counting, and colors. Children are able to follow increasingly more detailed commands. Play gradually becomes more inventive and richly imaginative.

Language develops rapidly between ages 2 and 5. By age 2, children usually can say at least 50 words. They can recognize the names of many objects and some body parts (such as arms and legs). By age 3, children are learning new words quickly. Most can speak between 150 and 200 words and can follow two-part directions, such as "Wash your face and put your shoes away." They also start to use plurals and short complete sentences that most of the time are understood by others outside of their family. Four-year-olds use longer sentences and can describe an event. Most 5-year-olds can carry on a conversation.

Sensory and motor skills become more refined, from being able to walk up stairs, kick a ball, and draw simple strokes to basic tumbling and drawing rough figures of people and other recognizable objects. Children also gradually learn to dress themselves and handle their toilet needs independently.

Communication skills are often categorized as receptive language and expressive language. Receptive language is the understanding of words and sounds. Expressive language is the use of speech (sounds and words) and gestures to communicate meaning.

Although speech and language continue to develop through adolescence, children usually reach major milestones in predictable stages by 6 years of age. However, the exact pace at which speech and language develop varies among children, especially the age at which they begin to talk.

PARENTS INVOLVEMENT

At Ben Hill Christian Academy we view parents as a child's first teacher and partner in the education process. Therefore, parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in school activities, such as group meetings or lectures, classroom activities, and conferences with the teachers and Director.

Individual classroom conferences are held twice during the academic year, or upon request when needed by a parent or staff.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to have lunch with their child/children at the cost of \$3.00 per person, per meal. Please notify the Director prior to reporting to the class or lunch area.

PARENTS VISITS

Parents/Guardians observation is welcomed. Parents must report to the Administrative Office to "sign in" and secure a "Visitor's Badge." The visitors badge must be worn until visit ends. Visitors **MUST NOT GO DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM.** Please be considerate and do not detain teachers, this will prevent them from their primary duties in caring for the well being of the students.

PARENTS TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Academy's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an excellent opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to work together. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, September through November, and January through May. The officers conduct monthly planning and business sessions. The PTA encourages and supports parent/guardian participation in various activities throughout the school year. The PTA also sponsors optional fund-raising projects for the purpose of enhancing the educational program and resource needs at the Academy.

PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Guardians are required to bring their child/children into the building and to the assigned classroom. Parents/Guardians are asked not to leave their children in the classroom until the teacher has acknowledged the child's presence. The parents/guardians must provide all necessary items (extra clothing, tissue, etc.) that are stated in this handbook. Check with your child's teacher for specifics.

- ◆ Parents/Guardians are required to comply with all health immunization requirements as stated by Georgia Department of Human Resources.
- ◆ Following notification of illness, parents/guardian, or an authorized designee must pick up the child immediately.

PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

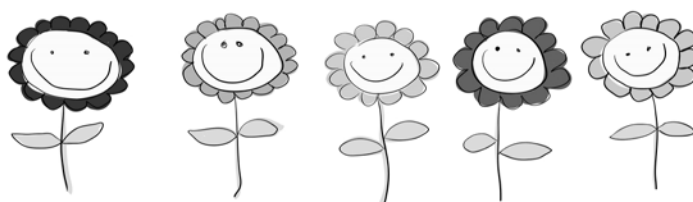
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- ◆ Parents/Guardians must notify the Academy office of any change of address, employment, home or business telephone number as soon as possible. Emergency numbers must always remain current.
- ◆ Parents/Guardians must comply with requirements for immunizations/health checks as mandated by the State.
- ◆ Pay tuition as agreed upon in a timely manner.
- ◆ Supervise your child (ren) before entering and after exiting the classroom.
- ◆ Notify the office immediately about a change in pick up arrangements. Your child (ren) will not be allowed to go home with anyone except authorized persons. Proper identification will be requested before the child will be released.
- ◆ Provide court documents regarding visitation rights if you are separated or divorced. Staff cannot refuse a parent the right to visit or pick up their child (ren) from the Academy without this documentation on file.
- ◆ Communicate in a professional manner with staff and other parents in such a manner that is a good role model for children, i.e. no profanity, shouting, name calling, no confronting other parents or children with accusations.
- ◆ Any services that the Academy staff may provide to parents must be provided outside the Academy. The Academy will in no way be held liable for these services.
- ◆ Effective with the 2009 - 2010 school year each family is to provide **FIVE (5) HOURS MANDATORY VOLUNTEER WORK PER STUDENT** at the Academy.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The Christian Academy administrative staff and teachers are required to complete a total of ten (10) clock hours of continuing education courses annually in Early Childhood Education, and Infant and Child First Aid and CPR. The kindergarten lead teacher is required to hold a bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education, grades Kindergarten-5th.

It is the Academy's policy to follow the rules and regulations set forth by Bright from the Start, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning regarding staff/child ratios. These ratios are maintained at all times to ensure the safety of our children and ensure that each child is able to take full advantage of the curriculum and classroom experiences at Ben Hill United Methodist Church Christian Academy.



BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthday parties are always welcome. When having birthday parties for a student in the classroom, please make sure that children enrolled in the class are involved. The classroom teacher can give you an accurate head count. If you wish to invite individual students to your child's party outside the Academy, we ask that you mail these invitations (no exceptions). Addresses can be obtained by completing the address form below. Forms should be submitted to the Academy office at least two weeks prior to your event. The Academy will contact the parent(s) of the child whose address is being requested prior to the release of an address.

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND INDEMNITY AND PARENTAL CONSENT AGREEMENT

MINOR RELEASE

I, THE MINOR'S PARENT AND/OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF BIRTHDAY PARTIES AND THE MINOR'S EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITIES AND BELIEVE THE MINOR TO BE QUALIFIED, IN GOOD HEALTH, AND IN PROPER PHYSICAL CONDITION TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH ACTIVITY. I HEREBY RELEASE, DISCHARGE, COVENANT NOT TO SUE, AND AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND SAVE AND HOLD HARMLESS BEN HILL UMC ACADEMY FROM ALL LIABILITY CLAIMS, DEMANDS, LOSSES, OR DAMAGES ON THE MINOR'S ACCOUNT CAUSED OR ALLEGED TO BE CAUSED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE MINOR'S ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION OR OTHERWISE, INCLUDING NEGLIGENT RESCUE OPERATION AND FURTHER AGREE THAT IF, DESPITE THIS RELEASE, I, THE MINOR, OR ANYONE ON THE MINOR'S BEHALF MAKES A CLAIM AGAINST BEN HILL UMC ACADEMY, I WILL INDEMNIFY, SAVE, AND HOLD HARMLESS BEN HILL UMC ACADEMY FROM ANY LITIGATION EXPENSES, ATTORNEY FEES, LOSS LIABILITY, DAMAGE, OR COST ANY MAY INCUR AS THE RESULT OF ANY SUCH CLAIM.

Date of Event: _____

Child's Name you wish to Invite	Parents Name Print/Initial	Address (Street) (City) (State) (Zip)



... CONTINUE IN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND HAVE FIRMLY BELIEVED,
KNOWING FROM WHOM YOU LEARNED IT AND HOW FROM CHILDHOOD YOU
HAVE BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH THE SACRED WRITINGS, WHICH ARE ABLE TO
MAKE YOU WISE FOR SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

(2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15)



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