

UCC NURSERY SCHOOL

Parent Handbook

2026–2027 School Year



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WELCOME

Welcome to UCC Nursery School!

We are honored that you have chosen our program to be part of your child's early learning journey. Since 1965, UCC Nursery School has provided a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment where children can learn, grow, explore, and build meaningful relationships.

Our goal is to foster each child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development through hands-on learning experiences, creative play, and positive interactions with peers and teachers. We believe children learn best through exploration, discovery, and play in an environment where they feel safe, respected, and valued.

We recognize that parents are a child's first and most important teachers. We strive to build strong partnerships with families through open communication, mutual respect, and collaboration.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of UCC Nursery School is to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging learning environment that promotes the development of the whole child. Through play-based learning and meaningful experiences, children are encouraged to develop independence, confidence, creativity, compassion, and a lifelong love of learning.

PHILOSOPHY

At UCC Nursery School, we believe:

- Every child is unique and develops at their own pace.
- Children learn best through play and hands-on experiences.
- Positive relationships form the foundation for learning.
- Social and emotional growth is equally important as academic readiness.
- Families and educators work together to support children's success.
- Children thrive in environments that promote respect, kindness, and inclusion.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

UCC Nursery School offers developmentally appropriate preschool programs for children ages two through four.

Class offerings include:

Two-Year-Old Program

- Monday/Wednesday
- Tuesday/Thursday
- 9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Three-Year-Old Program

- Tuesday/Thursday
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- Monday–Friday
- 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Four-Year-Old Program

- Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- Monday–Friday
- 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Registration for currently enrolled families begins in January. Registration opens to the public in February and continues until all available spaces have been filled.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is required at the time of enrollment.

Children must be two, three, or four years of age on or before December 1 of the school year in which they are enrolled.

Prior to attendance, families must submit all required enrollment forms, emergency contact information, medical records, and any additional documentation required by the school.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

For the safety of all children:

- Children must be accompanied into the building by a responsible adult.
- Children may only be released to a parent, guardian, or authorized individual listed on the child's enrollment forms.
- Any individual not listed on enrollment forms must provide written authorization from the parent or guardian and present valid photo identification.
- Court orders regarding custody or visitation restrictions must be provided to the Director and kept on file.

Parents and caregivers are responsible for supervising children until they are released to school staff and immediately upon dismissal.

Families are asked to arrive promptly for both drop-off and pick-up. If an emergency will delay pick-up, please contact the school as soon as possible.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

The safety of our families is a priority.

- Please turn off vehicle engines while parked.
 - Do not leave children unattended in vehicles.
 - Do not park in the front circle unless authorized.
 - Handicap parking spaces may only be used by vehicles displaying the appropriate permit.
 - Children should remain with their supervising adult at all times while entering and exiting the building.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is designed to support the development of the whole child through age-appropriate activities and experiences.

Learning opportunities include:

- Literacy and language development
- Early math concepts
- Science and discovery
- Creative arts
- Music and movement
- Dramatic play
- Social-emotional learning
- Fine motor development
- Gross motor development
- Outdoor play and exploration

Monthly lesson plans and newsletters are provided to families to keep them informed about classroom activities and learning experiences.

DAILY SCHEDULES

Each classroom follows a consistent daily routine designed to provide children with a balance of active play, structured learning, social interaction, and quiet activities. Schedules may be adjusted based on children's interests, special events, weather conditions, and developmental needs.

Activities may include:

- Free Choice Centers
- Circle Time
- Art Experiences
- Music and Movement
- Story Time
- Sensory Exploration
- Science and Discovery
- Outdoor Play
- Gross Motor Activities
- Snack Time
- Small Group Learning

Families will receive monthly calendars and newsletters highlighting classroom themes, special events, and learning activities.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

At UCC Nursery School, we believe children learn best in a supportive environment where they feel safe, respected, and valued.

Our staff use positive guidance techniques to help children develop self-control, responsibility, empathy, and problem-solving skills. We focus on teaching appropriate behaviors rather than punishing inappropriate behaviors.

Behavior guidance strategies include:

- Modeling respectful behavior
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Redirection to appropriate activities
- Offering choices when appropriate
- Teaching conflict resolution skills
- Helping children identify and express emotions appropriately
- Providing natural and logical consequences when developmentally appropriate

Children are never subjected to corporal punishment, humiliation, ridicule, threats, or any form of physical discipline.

We use 1-2-3 Magic, a small period of breaks is given when behavior is extremely disruptive or if a child is at risk of endangering themselves or others.

If a child experiences ongoing behavioral challenges, staff will communicate with the family and work together to develop strategies that support the child's success.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

The health and safety of all children and staff are priorities at UCC Nursery School.

Before attending school, each child must have:

- A current health examination on file
- Required immunization records or approved exemptions as permitted by New York State law
- Completed emergency contact information
- Any necessary medical action plans

Parents are responsible for informing the school of any changes in their child's health, medical conditions, allergies, or emergency contact information.

Each family must have a signed Illness Protocol on file.

ILLNESS EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

Children should remain at home if they exhibit any of the following:

- Fever within the previous 24 hours without fever-reducing medication
- Vomiting within the previous 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- Unexplained rash
- Severe cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Eye drainage associated with conjunctivitis
- Symptoms of a communicable disease
- Any condition that prevents participation in daily activities

Children must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication before returning to school unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider.

Parents are asked to notify the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable illness so that appropriate notifications can be made while maintaining confidentiality.

MEDICATION POLICY

Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications will not be administered by staff.

Emergency medications, including EpiPens, inhalers, and other medically necessary emergency medications, may be administered according to physician instructions and required documentation.

All medications must:

- Be in the original container
 - Be clearly labeled with the child's name
 - Include dosage instructions
 - Be provided directly to school staff

Medications may never be sent in a child's backpack.

ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

Families must notify the Director and classroom teacher of any:

- Food allergies
- Medication allergies
- Environmental allergies
- Medical conditions
- Developmental concerns
- Special accommodations

Individual health plans will be maintained as needed to ensure the safety and well-being of each child.

TOILETING POLICY

Children enrolled in the Three-Year-Old and Four-Year-Old programs are expected to be toilet trained prior to enrollment.

Toilet trained generally means that a child:

- Can communicate the need to use the restroom
- Can use the toilet independently with minimal assistance
- Can manage clothing with limited support
- Experiences only occasional accidents

Staff understand that accidents happen and will provide reasonable assistance when needed.

Children enrolled in the Two-Year-Old Program are not required to be toilet trained. Families must provide diapers, pull-ups, wipes, and any other necessary supplies.

If toileting concerns become ongoing and interfere with a child's participation in the program, staff will work collaboratively with families to develop an appropriate plan of support.

*Please note that any three-year-old or four-year-old that has a bowel movement accident, we will call home for someone to come and change the child.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Children should come to school dressed for active play, art activities, outdoor exploration, and occasional messes.

Families should provide:

- A complete change of clothing
- Underwear
- Socks
- Seasonally appropriate outerwear

All items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

For safety reasons, closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles are strongly recommended. Flip-flops, platform shoes, and other unsafe footwear should be avoided.

Although washable materials are used whenever possible, clothing may become stained during normal classroom activities.

SNACK AND FOOD POLICY

UCC Nursery School is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, including those with food allergies.

To help protect children with food allergies, UCC Nursery School is a **peanut and tree nut aware school**. Families are asked to carefully review all food items sent

to school and avoid products containing peanuts, tree nuts, or foods processed in facilities that may present a significant risk to children with allergies.

Snack guidelines include:

- All snacks must arrive in their original packaging whenever possible.
- No homemade foods will be allowed.
- Families will be informed of any classroom-specific allergy concerns.
- Staff reserve the right to prohibit food items that may pose a safety risk to children with allergies.

Children will be encouraged to practice healthy eating habits, proper handwashing, and good table manners during snack time.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are an exciting part of the preschool experience. Families wishing to celebrate a child's birthday or "unbirthday" at school should coordinate with the classroom teacher in advance.

Teachers will work with families to ensure celebrations are simple, inclusive, and safe for all children, including those with dietary restrictions and allergies.

CUBBIES

Each child will be assigned a cubby for artwork, newsletters, notices, and classroom information.

Families are asked to check their child's cubby daily to ensure important information is received promptly.

UCC Nursery School is not responsible for personal belongings that are lost, damaged, or misplaced.

TOYS FROM HOME

Children are encouraged to leave personal toys and special items at home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher.

Personal items can be difficult to share and may become lost or damaged during the school day.

Special sharing opportunities may be scheduled throughout the year at the teacher's discretion.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Field trips provide opportunities to extend classroom learning through hands-on experiences and community exploration.

Parents will receive advance notice regarding all field trips, including destination information, schedules, and supervision requirements.

Written parental permission is required before a child may participate in any field trip.

UCC Nursery School staff do not transport children. Families are responsible for transporting their own children to and from field trip locations.

Participation in field trips is voluntary. Alternative arrangements may be discussed with the classroom teacher if necessary.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Open communication between home and school is essential to a child's success.

Communication methods may include:

- Monthly newsletters
- Classroom calendars
- Remind app
- Email communications
- Parent conferences
- Telephone calls
- Informal discussions
- School notices

Families are encouraged to share concerns, questions, or important information with their child's teacher or the Director.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled annually and may also be arranged upon request.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Families are encouraged to participate in school activities whenever possible.

Opportunities may include:

- Special events
- Holiday celebrations
- Field trips
- Fundraising activities
- School-wide events

All volunteers must follow school policies and procedures while participating in school activities.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCY DELAYS

UCC Nursery School follows the Liverpool Central School District's weather-related closing decisions.

When Liverpool Central School District closes due to weather conditions, UCC Nursery School will also be closed.

When Liverpool Central School District announces:

- A one-hour delay, UCC Nursery School will operate on a one-hour delay.
- A two-hour delay, UCC Nursery School will be closed.
- An early dismissal, UCC Nursery School may modify or cancel programming as necessary.

The Director reserves the right to close the school or dismiss early when conditions warrant.

Families will be notified through established communication channels whenever possible.

Because tuition covers the entire school year and operating expenses continue during closures, tuition is not refunded for emergency closings, weather-related closures, or other unforeseen interruptions.

As UCC Nursery School operates within the United Church of Christ, occasional schedule adjustments may be necessary due to church functions, memorial services, or facility needs. Families will be notified as far in advance as possible.

We ask that children waiting with their caregivers before and after class to not run or yell in the building or the sanctuary.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

UCC Nursery School maintains emergency plans for situations including:

- Fire emergencies
- Severe weather
- Utility failures
- Medical emergencies
- Building evacuation
- Shelter-in-place situations
- Lockdown procedures

Emergency drills are conducted regularly in accordance with applicable regulations.

Emergency contact information must be kept current at all times.

TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICY

Tuition supports the ongoing operation of the nursery school and is based on annual enrollment rather than attendance.

Tuition rates for the 2026-2027 school year are:

- Two-Day Program: \$2,475
- Three-Day Program: \$2,640
- Five-Day Program: \$3,300
- Two-Year-Old Program: \$2,640

Families may choose one of the following payment options:

1. Full annual payment due August 1, 2026
 2. Semi-annual payments due August 1, 2026 and January 1, 2027
 3. Trimester payments due August 1, 2026, November 1, 2026, and February 1, 2027
 4. Monthly automatic payments due August 1, 2026 through June 1, 2027
- A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is required at enrollment.

The first tuition payment is non-refundable.

Accounts not paid within ten days of the due date may be assessed a late fee of \$10.

Returned payments may be assessed a \$20 processing fee.

Families with more than one child enrolled at UCC Nursery School will receive a 10% sibling discount.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Families wishing to withdraw a child from UCC Nursery School must provide written notice to the Director at least two weeks prior to the child's final day of attendance.

Families remain responsible for tuition through the end of the current payment trimester.

Registration fees and previously paid tuition are non-refundable.

The school reserves the right to terminate enrollment when tuition obligations remain unpaid, school policies are repeatedly violated, or the program is unable to meet a child's needs despite collaborative efforts with the family.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

UCC Nursery School welcomes children and families of all backgrounds.

Enrollment, participation, and employment opportunities are provided without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or any other protected status as required by applicable law.

We strive to create an environment where every child and family feels welcomed, respected, and valued.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information regarding children and families enrolled in UCC Nursery School is treated confidentially.

Records are maintained and shared only as permitted by law and necessary for the operation of the program.

Staff members are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding all children, families, and program matters.

MANDATED REPORTER STATEMENT

Under New York State law, childcare professionals are mandated reporters.

If there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment, staff members are legally required to make a report to the appropriate authorities.

The safety and well-being of children is always our highest priority.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEDIA RELEASE

Photographs and videos may occasionally be taken during classroom activities, special events, and school programs.

Parents will indicate their permissions regarding photographs and media use on enrollment forms.

Photographs will never be used for promotional purposes without appropriate parental authorization.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

UCC Nursery School is committed to maintaining a respectful and positive environment for children, families, staff, and visitors.

Parents and visitors are expected to:

- Treat staff, children, and families with respect.
- Use appropriate language and behavior while on school property.
- Follow school policies and procedures.
- Address concerns through respectful communication.

Threatening behavior, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or disruptive conduct may result in restrictions on access to school activities or other appropriate action.

CONTACT INFORMATION

UCC Nursery School

215 Blackberry Road
Liverpool, New York 13090

Director: Sarah Bentley

Phone: 315-652-3650

Email: nurseryschool@uccbayberry.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**2026-2027
UCC NURSERY SCHOOL
CALENDAR**

September 9	Parent Only Orientation (evening)
September 10/11	Meet the teacher day-children
September 14	First day 2's M/W 3's M/W/F/ 3's M-F/ 4's
September 15	First day 2's T/TH/ 3's T/TH
September 28/ September 29	School Pictures
October 12	No School - Columbus Day
October 28/29/30	Halloween Celebrations
November 3	No School-Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 11	No School - Veterans Day
November 19	"In-House" Open House
November 25-27	Thanksgiving Break
December 11	No School- Staff training
December 21/22	Holiday Celebrations
December 23-31	No School - Holiday Recess
January 1	No School- New Year/ Holiday Recess
January 18	No School - Martin Luther King Day
January 28	Open House for "Fall" 2026
February 15-19	Winter Recess
March 9	No School- Staff Training
March 26	No School - Good Friday
March 29	No School- Easter Monday
April 12-16	No School- Spring Break/Good Friday
May 28/31	No School- Memorial Day Weekend
June 2 (tentative)	Annual field trip to Zoo
June 22	Last day of school 2's T/TH/ 3's T/TH
June 23	Last day of school 2's M/W/ 3's M/W/F/ 3's M-F/ 4's

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the UCC Nursery School Parent Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year.

I understand that the policies and procedures contained within this handbook are intended to promote the safety, well-being, and successful operation of the program.

I agree to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

I understand that UCC Nursery School reserves the right to revise policies and procedures as necessary. Families will be notified of significant changes.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Director Signature: _____

Date: _____