



# Riverchase Day School

## EST. 1992

### **Parent Handbook**

Riverchase Day School  
1953 Old Montgomery Highway  
Hoover, AL 35244  
[rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com)  
(205)989-8070

A ministry of Riverchase United Methodist Church

## **Introduction**

Riverchase Day School (RDS) is a vital ministry of Riverchase United Methodist Church. The Director, Assistant Director, administration, teachers, and support staff are accountable to the Day School Board which oversees the Day School operation and finances.

## **Philosophy**

The Day School provides a secure, loving, Christian environment in which young children may grow, learn, and develop spiritually, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. Students will learn through play and music with the opportunity to explore, create, develop, discover, and make choices. Learning activities, materials, and curriculum are developmentally and age appropriate for infants, toddlers, preschool, and kindergarten aged children. Staff and teachers are committed to identifying and embracing each child as an individual.

## **Admission**

All children aged 6 months (by the year they enter RDS) through Kindergarten are eligible to attend Riverchase Day School. Classes are filled on a first-come basis and is dependent on availability. A waiting list for each class is kept, and parents will be notified by the Director if a vacancy occurs. Riverchase Day School has a non-discrimination policy for all admissions.

## **Registration**

Registration for the next school year takes place in late January. For current families, summer session registration begins at the same time as school registration. The exact dates will be announced well in advance and emailed to currently enrolled or waitlisted families. It will also be published on the RDS Facebook page and the RUMC church bulletin. Registration is always offered first to current RDS students and their siblings. Next, it is opened to children of church members not currently in our program and RDS alumni. Finally, registration is opened to the community. A student's place is reserved upon receipt of a completed registration form, non-refundable registration fee, and supply fee for the school year. Both fees will be determined prior to registration for the following school year. Kindergarten registration requires a separate tuition commitment form.

## **Tuition**

On the first of each month, an invoice will be emailed out for the current month. This is sent as a courtesy. Tuition will not be refunded or excused for missing class due to illness or travel. The first month's tuition will be billed on July 1 and due upon receipt. Once paid, this will be a non-refundable charge due to our 30-day notice policy. Automatic withdrawals will be performed on the second day of each month. When you sign up for ACH withdrawals, you are authorizing RDS to manually debit your account when needed. A ten percent (10%) discount is given on the lowest tuition for the second and subsequent children of one family.

### **Forms of Payment:**

- Bank draft or credit card payment via the Playground app.
- Check written to RDS or exact cash (Must be walked into the office for receipt).

### **Delinquent Payments**

- Payments not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month are delinquent and a late fee of \$25 is assessed.
- When tuition exceeds 30 days past due, it is considered a voluntary withdrawal. The only exception would be a financial assistance plan that has been pre-approved by the Day School. The student may re-register at RDS if/when a space becomes available and only if the account is paid in full. A re-registration fee will also be charged.
- A service fee of \$25 will be charged for a returned check. After two returned checks, all future payments must be paid in cash.
- The RDS Board reserves the right to review any account and, upon proper notification, dismiss any student whose account is not in good standing. This ruling will be final.

### **Withdrawal**

If a student withdraws for any reason, families must give a 30-day written notice of the child's last day to the Director. A withdrawal email to [rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com) is required. Registration and supply fees will not be refunded. Tuition is required during that 30-day period.

### **School Calendar**

The Day School is open from August through May, with a six-week long summer session from mid-June through July. The Day School calendar follows local school systems for holidays, teacher workday closings, and most weather-related closings. However, please check the RDS calendar for specific days as some may differ from local school systems.

### **Inclement Weather**

If the local school system closes, due to inclement weather, we will not open. Decisions concerning delayed opening or early dismissal will be made on a case by case basis. Parents will be notified of school closing, delay or early dismissal via email and Playground. *Please make certain that you keep contact information updated in Playground.*

### **Hours of Operation**

The Day School Office is open Monday-Friday from 8:00AM to 3:00PM. Parents are *not* to enter the building during carpool times.

### **Carpool**

- Each family will receive two (2) carpool tags.
- One additional carpool tag is available upon request by emailing [rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com). Anything after this will incur a \$5 charge.
- Each family (all siblings) should have only ONE (1) carpool number. If this is not the case, please email the office to correct the situation.

### **Arrival**

Early care arrivals (8AM): Students with an 8AM schedule will carpool at the RDS Front Office Door. Please stay in your car while your student is being unloaded. If you arrive after 8:30AM, please bring your child through the 8:45AM carpool.

Regular arrivals (9AM): Carpool will begin at 8:45AM and conclude at 9:00AM. Please arrive during morning carpool and allow a staff member to escort your child inside the building. Please inform administration prior to that morning if your child will be late due to an already scheduled appointment. If your child arrives after 9am, they must be brought into the building and checked in at the front office.

Teachers begin daily lessons/activities on time. Parents are strongly encouraged to arrive on time, so the child does not miss this vital learning time. Do not drop off children before 8:45AM as teachers are preparing for their day. Carpool helps get the morning off to a smooth start. Children begin classroom activities immediately upon arrival. This greatly lessens any separation anxiety. If you are experiencing your own separation anxiety, feel free to call the office for an update on your child.

### **Dismissal**

Regular Dismissal (1PM): Carpool begins at 12:45PM and ends at 1:05PM. Any student not picked up by 1:05PM will be taken to the office.

Extended Day Schedule (3PM): Carpool begins at 2:45PM and ends at 3PM. Any student not picked up by 3:00PM will be taken to the office.

### **Late Pickup Fines**

The late pickup fine will be \$25 per student for the first 10 minutes. Each minute after 1:15PM will be an additional \$1 per minute, per student. A form with the time of pickup will need to be completed by the office and signed by the parent/caregiver picking up. Students will only be released to authorized adults. (See "Security" additional information.)

### **Checkout Policy**

Children should not be checked out after 12:30PM for 1PM carpool and after 2:30PM for 3PM carpool. Parents must notify both the child's teacher (through Playground) and the front office (via email to [rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com)) if a child needs to be checked out.

### **Security Policy**

For security reasons, we monitor all persons entering the school area by video camera. We lock the doors between 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. All visitors must enter at the "Main Door" entrance and check in with the front office.

If someone other than the parent will be picking up your child, written notification is required. The parent must notify the office by sending an email to [rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com). We will not release a child to anyone not listed on the Playground Authorized Pick-Up List. This list may be amended by the parent at any time using Playground. *We will require a photo ID for anyone without a carpool hang tag.*

### **Communication**

RDS uses 3 methods to communicate with families:

1. Folders
  - a. Each student receives a folder to facilitate the transfer of information between school to the home and from the home to school. Please check it every evening for important information and to see your child's accomplishments.
2. Email
  - a. E-mail will also be used to communicate with parents. Please make sure your current email address is on file with Playground. Open communication between RDS and the families we serve is vital. The Director and teachers are available to speak with you all year. Please email the RDS office at any time with questions, comments or concerns.
3. Playground
  - a. You may also message your teacher using Playground. To set up a conference, call your child's teacher or the Director through the school office at 989-8070 during school hours. Please keep in mind that teachers will NOT have immediate access to messaging during the day. They devote their attention to their students during the school day. In the event that an immediate message must be shared with the teachers, please call 205-989-8070 or email the office at [rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com).
  - b. Bees, Toddlers, and Twos will receive a daily report from the teacher giving specific information about your child's day.

RDS Staff are not to communicate school-related matters with parents using their personal cell phones. This includes calls, text messages, and social media platforms.

### **Important Carpool Safety Guidelines**

- Always have your carpool sign prominently displayed during and throughout the morning and afternoon carpool.
- Do not walk into the building to pick up your child during carpool.
- Always put your car in "Park" while children are entering or leaving the car.
- Do not use cell phones during carpool.
- Do not pull around cars parked in front of you.
- Avoid involved discussions during carpool.

- Children should remain completely in the vehicle until they reach the unloading zone and a staff member assists them out of the car. This includes hanging out of the window or standing up looking out the sunroof.
- At pickup, Infants, Toddlers, and 2K students will be walked to the vehicle for the parent or authorized caregiver to buckle them before leaving the car line. We will have 2 lanes working so please be observant of the students, teachers, and other parents.
- At pickup, 3K and older will be assisted into the car. Everyone should remain in the vehicle. You will then pull up and out of the way to finish buckling your child. (See Car Seat Requirements) If the line backs up to Old Montgomery Hwy, cars must circle the upper Mission Center parking lot. We must keep cars off the highway.

### **Car Seat Requirements**

The staff of Riverchase Day School will not load a child into a vehicle that does not have a properly installed, age-appropriate car seat for the child.

Riverchase Day School reserves the right to contact the Department of Human Resources or the Hoover Police Department if children are not provided with properly installed car seats that meet the laws of the State of Alabama. State law requires that children age 4 and younger and under 40 lbs. be secured in a child safety seat with a 5-point harness. Booster seats secured with the vehicle's seat belt are not lawful until age 5. If you have any concerns about the installation or compliance of your child's car seat, please consult your local fire station. This is a free service.

### **Medical and Illness Policy**

Safety and well-being are our priority here at Riverchase Day School. Children attending RDS must be able to participate in all daily activities, including outdoor recess. Documentation from your child's health care provider may be required in certain circumstances. However, RDS reserves the right to request that a parent pick up a student if the child is not well enough to participate in daily activities.

Do not send your child to school if he/she exhibits any symptoms of contagious illness or signs of being uncomfortable due to an injury. If a student should arrive ill or become ill during the school day, parents will be contacted. Children who become sick at school must be picked up within the hour, once the parent/guardian has been notified. To keep other children and our staff healthy, your child can not return to school until he/she is symptom-free for 24 hours and able to participate in daily activities. Please notify us immediately if your child is ill so we can watch for similar symptoms in other children.

*Your child must be kept home or picked up for the following:*

- Temperatures- A fever is any temperature over 100.4<sup>0F</sup>
- Symptoms and signs of possible illness, including:
  - Unusual Lethargy
  - Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying
  - Uncontrolled coughing
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Wheezing
- Diarrhea- 2 or more watery stools
  - Children may return to school 24 hours after the last diarrhea episode.
  - In instances of uncontrollable diarrhea, the student may be sent home for the rest of the day, regardless if this is caused by medication. This is a health hazard for students and teachers.
- Vomiting- 2 or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours
- Parents may be required to pick up their child even after the first diarrhea or vomit at the discretion of the school administration.

#### Following an illness, the student may return:

- Chicken Pox- 5 days from first outbreak, all sores scabbed and with Doctor's release
- Conjunctivitis/Eye discharge (pink eye)- 24 hours after first antibiotic treatment
- COVID-
- Croup- two days after diagnosis, and with a doctor's note
- Flu (including all subtypes)- fever-free without fever reducer for 24 hours and able to participate in all activities.
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth- all sores scabbed, fever-free, no drooling if mouth sores are present
- Impetigo- 24 hours after antibiotic treatment, no drainage from sores that can't be covered
- Lice- day after treatment begins with no visible nits
- Meningitis- 24 hours fever-free without fever reducers Mumps- 10 days with a doctor's excuse
- Pneumonia- fever-free and no difficulty breathing
- Rash with fever- note from the doctor stating child has a non-contagious disease
- Ringworm- 24 hours after first treatment
- RSV- 5 days from diagnosis
- Scabies- day after treatment begins
- Streptococcal Infection- 24 hours after antibiotic treatment and no fever
- Surgeries- any child having surgery, even if outpatient, must remain at home and follow the Doctor's release.

The school has the right to seek its own professional opinion before deciding on the length of time a child must be out. Whether a child is at school or is required to stay home, the family is still required to pay tuition. If a child is missing a required vaccine for an illness that breaks out, that child will be required to stay home until cleared by the administrator. Tuition will still be required.

#### **Health Records**

A current Alabama Certificate of Immunization form for each student is REQUIRED to be on file in the Day School office for your child to attend daily. *Religious exemptions are not accepted.* Submit all updated immunization forms after each vaccine.

Please notify the Day School office in writing of all changes or updates in immunization, health status or family home environment. All information is considered personal and confidential.

#### **Medications**

RDS cannot administer any medication\* to students.

*\*Exceptions- inhalers, epi pens and any other medications that are listed in a student's allergy action plan. A signed [medication form](#) is required to be on file. You must notify administration at [rds@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rds@riverchasedayschool.com).*

#### **Allergies**

Notify RDS if your child has an allergy (food, insect or other) or any special health concerns. You will need to provide a letter from your child's pediatrician documenting the allergy/health condition and, in the case of food or other severe allergies, an "Allergy Action Plan." This should include all details and specific steps that need to be taken to keep your child safe at school. A meeting with the administration is required for the well-being of your child.

#### **Discipline**

Riverchase Day School Teachers and Staff will work together to address behavior concerns for each child. Each child and situation will be handled in a manner that works best at that time and for that child.

It is **never** acceptable for a RDS teacher or staff member to:

- Physically touch a child (i.e. spank, pinch, squeeze, etc.)
- Withhold food (i.e. snack, lunch, drink, etc.)
- Yell in the class
- Belittle a child

### **Biting**

While biting is not an uncommon occurrence, we work hard together with parents to prevent this from becoming a habit. Biting by infants and toddlers is usually considered a relief from teething pressure and not behavioral. Usually pacifiers, teething rings, etc. can help with relieving pressure. Biting in older children is more behavioral. Should your child bite at school, we ask that you be willing to work with us as we look for a solution. While biting concerns can usually be resolved, we will ask you to pick up your child for the day after their third bite.

### **Potty Training**

*2K and under:*

We will do everything possible to assist in potty training your child in the two-year-old classes. Toilet training must be consistent and a joint effort between the home and school. Please keep an open discussion with your child's teacher.

At school, we recommend pull-ups with Velcro fasteners until the child uses the potty at home on a regular basis. Please keep in mind that training in a class setting is different than at home. If your child should have more than two accidents in a day, they will need to wear pull-ups instead of underwear until they have mastered toileting to prevent unsanitary conditions in the classroom.

A bathroom with a child size toilet is accessible to the 2K students. Please dress your child in clothes which are easy for them to manipulate. One-piece outfits, tight clothing, belts and leggings will frustrate your child and slow down the process of getting them on the potty.

### **Potty Trained**

*3K and older students are required to be potty-trained.*

We describe a child as "potty-trained" if the parent can drop off the child with no special instructions about taking them to the restroom. The potty-trained child recognizes when they need to use the restroom, pulls pants and underwear to ankles, sits on the toilet without verbal cues, wipes him or herself and washes hands when finished.

These students must handle potty-time alone. Teachers will verbally assist their students when needed; however, we ask that you teach and encourage your child to take care of their personal needs, like their clothing and toilet paper.

Occasional accidents might occur. However, if your child has 2 accidents in a day, we will request that you pick them up within 30 minutes of being contacted. We reserve the right to have you take your child out of school for an appropriate amount of time in order for this to work for everyone involved.

### **Field Trips**

Kindergarten field trips are facilitated with the help of volunteer parent drivers and chaperones. Permission slips for each child, signed by a parent, are required prior to the field trip. No child will be allowed to go on a field trip without a signed permission slip and transportation authorization. Some fees may apply, such as admission costs, etc. Specific details and information, including car/booster seat use and permission slips, will be sent to the parent prior to the planned field trip.

Volunteers, chaperones and/or drivers must make child care arrangements for any younger siblings. This will allow you to offer your undivided attention to your child and to the other children who are traveling with you.

### **Enrichment Classes**

- *Chapel:* Students attend Chapel once a week. The teachers lead songs and tell stories designed to teach children of God's love for them and others. Jesus Christ is the foundation of our Faith here at Riverchase. While we know RDS has a diverse student body, teachers will not be able to withhold any child from Chapel classes.
- *Music:* Our Music teacher leads the children in song, movement, and use of musical instruments. The 4K and Kindergarten classes participate in a music performance during the school year.
- *Happy Feet:* This weekly program combines physical education and creative movement designed to develop balance and coordination skills. Tennis shoes are required.
- *Spanish:* 4K and Kindergarten students attend Spanish class weekly. They are introduced to the language, culture and traditions.
- *Nutrition and Gardening:* 4K and Kindergarten students will participate in a "hands-on" program geared to promote life-long, healthy habits and proper nutrition. This class meets once a month and will include cooking demonstrations, guest speakers and a field trip. Students will also have the opportunity to assist in planting, cultivating and harvesting fruits and vegetables in the school garden.

### **What to Bring**

Each student is expected to bring the provided RDS school bag with the following items clearly labeled with the child's name:

- Complete change of clothes including socks placed in a **labeled** Ziploc bag.
- Folder (provided by RDS)
- Snack (2 for those that stay until 3pm)
- Lunch & leak proof cup or water bottle (see food policies)
- VELCRO Pull-Ups and wipes (2K)

*WE DO NOT ALLOW NUT PRODUCTS OF ANY KIND IN THE INFANT, TODDLER, AND 2K CLASSES*

Please do NOT bring toys or any items that have special value. We cannot be responsible for items that are lost or broken.

### **Items needed daily for Bees, Lambs, Owls, and Turtles**

- Diapers or pull-ups labeled with child's name. *Please no washable diapers.*
- Bottles-premixed (infants). *Please no glass bottles.*
- Wipes
- Send (2) drinking cups-one with water for the playground
- Pacifiers, blankets, and security toys (if needed)

*\*All items must be clearly labeled. \**

### **Food Policies**

RDS does not provide snacks or a lunch service. All snacks, drinks and lunches will need to be sent from home with each child to school. Please send "finger food" items that your child can easily eat on their own. Precut the food to the proportion best for your child due to choking hazards. We do not have the ability to refrigerate or heat any food items. (except for infant bottles). If necessary, include an ice pack. Please make sure your child has eaten breakfast before arriving at school.

We ask that you *do not* send the following:

- Glass containers or cups



- Red, pink or purple juices
- Chocolate, candy and/or soda
- Fast food

### **Special Policies for Bees, Lambs, Owls, and Turtles and 2K:**

- Do not send peanut butter or nuts (any kind).
- If you want your child to wear a bib, put it in the lunch box where it is easier to find.
- No Juice boxes. "Sippy cups" only.
- Please do not send gum, popcorn, hot dogs or gummy fruit snacks as these are choking hazards.

### **What to Wear**

Send your child in comfortable, washable clothes appropriate for school activities. They will get dirty during the day! As your child begins potty training, send them in clothing that is easy to facilitate the process. Please encourage your child to learn how to work their clothing as they are capable, i.e. snaps, belts, buttons.

A complete change of clothing (socks too) should always be in your child's bag. Label them with your child's name and store in a large zip-top bag. As the weather changes, remember to change the clothing in the bag. Important: Jewelry and small hair accessories are not allowed in the Infant, Toddler, and 2K classes because they pose a choking hazard.

On the playground, appropriate clothing and shoes are a safety must. Tennis shoes with socks are suggested. When needed, parents should apply sunscreen in the morning, prior to school.

Flip-flops, costume shoes, high-heeled shoes, and rubber rain boots are NOT permitted.

During the winter please send a jacket, coat, hat and mittens for outdoor playtime. Teachers will assist your child in putting on their outdoor wear. In very cold or rainy weather, the children will have indoor playtime in the Fellowship Hall or "Big Gym".

### **Missing Item Policy**

To ensure your child's comfort, safety, and readiness for the day, each child must arrive with:

- A healthy snack(s) and lunch
  - If there is no lunch, a parent will be called to bring one.
- A filled spill-proof, water bottle
- A complete change of clothing (weather-appropriate and labeled)
- Napmat (if your child is in a napping classroom)

If a child arrives without one or more of these required items, the school will provide the missing item(s). A convenience fee will be added to your account as follows:

- Snack: \$2 per snack
- Water: \$2 per water bottle
- Clothing/Shoes: \$2 per item/set
- Nap Mat: \$3/day

This policy helps us maintain consistency in the classroom and ensures that all children are cared for without interruption.

### **Class Parties/Celebrations**

RDS sets specific parties to allow parents to attend each year based on the age level. Your child's teacher will give you information regarding the parties parents are invited to attend. Large events will also be scheduled and planned based on age level.

Parent volunteers are asked to make child-care arrangements for siblings, as classroom space is limited. Students and teachers will appreciate your undivided attention and help.

### **Birthdays**

If you would like to send a small birthday treat (cookie, doughnut, mini cupcake etc) with your child to celebrate his/her birthday with classmates, arrangements must be made, no less than 48 hours, with your child's teacher. For parties outside the classroom, please include every child in the class if you want the teacher to distribute your invitations.

### **How You Can Help Your Child Benefit from RDS**

- Encourage regular attendance (except in case of illness).
- Encourage a healthy diet.
- Follow a regular bed-time routine.
- Arrive at school on time so as not to miss the morning routine.
- Use carpool to drop off and pick up your child instead of walking them in.
- If your child arrives after 9am, they must be brought into the front office to be checked in.
- Check the folder daily for notes, newsletters and important information.
- Post the monthly calendar and refer to it each morning.
- Encourage your child to share his/her daily experiences and discuss them with interest.
- Reinforce concepts, skills and classroom rules at home.
- Inform the Director or your child's teacher of any out-of-the-ordinary situations such as family illness, moving, etc.
- Keep personal irreplaceable items (toys, "lovies", cosmetics, jewelry, electronics, candy or gum) at home.

### **Staff Qualifications**

A background check is completed on each member of the RDS staff. Additionally, each employee completes a CPR, AED and First Aid certification course. CPR certification is renewed every two years. RDS staff are required to complete six hours of Professional Development programs each year.

### **Curriculum and Religious Teaching**

RDS has a dedicated staff member that serves as the curriculum coordinator. The curriculum coordinator works alongside RDS teachers and staff to promote age appropriate skills in various categories, including emotional/social skills, cognitive skills, gross motor skills, physical development and language/literacy skills.

There is also a religious component to our curriculum. Students have a weekly chapel lesson that ranges from 10 to 20 minutes depending on the age of the child.

### **Staff to Student Ratios**

<b>Class</b>	<b>RDS Child to Staff Ratio</b>	<b>DHR Mandated Child to Staff Ratio</b>
Bees	1 to 4	1 to 5
Lambs/Owls/Turtles	1 to 4	1 to 7
2K	1 to 8	1 to 8
3K	1 to 10	1 to 11
4K	1 to 12	1 to 18
K	1 to 16	1 to 18

### **Tried and True Children's Consignment Sale (T-N-T Sale)**

A semiannual fundraising event for the school. See [riverchase-tnt.com](http://riverchase-tnt.com) for details!

Consignors bring seasonal children's clothing, shoes, toys, books, electronics, baby furniture, strollers, high chairs, car seats, décor and much more.

Sellers receive 70% of the sale price and the school gets 30%.

This sale is run entirely by volunteers. There are many volunteer opportunities for our parents to help the school. Consignors and Volunteers get to shop the special presale for the first choice of the sale items.

*For more information, please go to: [www.riverchase-tnt.com](http://www.riverchase-tnt.com) or email [rdstnt@riverchasedayschool.com](mailto:rdstnt@riverchasedayschool.com)*

### **TNT Supports the following ministries or causes:**

- Riverchase Children's Ministry- Missions and VBS
- Riverchase Student Ministry- Discovery Weekend and Grunt Week
- The Charlie Jean Foundation- Supports families at Children's Hospital with a child currently battling cancer
- Noah Crowe Fund- Current or former students in need of financial assistance due to medical condition

Please read, sign, and return this page to your child's teacher. Forms may also be emailed to  
rds@riverchasedayschool.com

---

Riverchase United Methodist Church  
Riverchase Day School Parent Agreement

I/We the parent(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I/we have read the  
Parent Handbook of Riverchase Day School and agree to comply and cooperate with all policies and  
procedures within.

---

Parents Name

Date

---

Parents Name

Date