



EPIPHANY UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

2026-27 Handbook (updated 05/25/2026)

History

Epiphany Universalist Church & School is a private, inclusive, value-aligned environment with programming designed to enrich the lives of those we serve. Our members range in age from infancy through Adulthood. We strive to accommodate families to ensure the quality environment their child deserves. I have been caring for children for over 30 years. Our family and congregation have always been child-centered, and we believe that a child's needs take precedence over all else. I have always been driven to care for children and have raised over half of my 14 children to adulthood through a caring approach that respects children for who they are as individuals.

Mission Statement

Our mission statement is: "Finding our true path through service to the most sacred members of our community," and we are building a safe space for members of our community through education, support, and outreach.

Philosophy

We believe that in the right environment, a child's natural curiosity and creativity will lead to endless opportunities to grow in knowledge and develop a lifelong love of learning. We provide that environment by ensuring a safe and nurturing atmosphere where your child will be encouraged to learn, explore, and create their way to exciting discoveries about the world around them. Their time with us will be a chance for your child to grow socially, cognitively, emotionally, and physically. As early as infancy, your child will be provided with natural learning opportunities appropriate for his or her age, developmental stage, and learning style. Flexible year-round hours with a diverse selection of classes and groups make it possible for us to

provide your child with the care and education that will help them become happy, healthy, lifelong learners while meeting their needs and the needs of their families. Our programming is a supportive addition to whatever education path your child is on. We support homeschoolers and students who attend formal schools alike. For individuals with higher needs, we offer additional support so that their needs are met in our classes and social groups.

Meals and Snacks

Meal	Starts	Ends	
Breakfast	Open	9:00 A.M.	
Morning Snack	9:00 A.M.	10:30 A.M.	
Lunch	11:00 A.M.	1:30 P.M.	
Afternoon Snack	2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	
Late Afternoon Snack	4:00 P.M.	4:30 P.M.	
*Supper	5:00 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	
*Evening Snack	7:00 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

- Supper and Evening snack are only available at the Sioux Falls Kids & Teen clubs

Weather Related Closings

We will close when it has been determined that the weather itself, or travel in said weather, presents a danger to staff and members. We will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to end the day early or cancel classes and groups for the following day. If we close early or cancel for the following day, parents will be contacted via text. We will not transport students in inclement weather to protect the safety of all members and staff. The club is automatically canceled in the event of a no-travel or extreme weather advisory for Minnehaha County or Valley Springs.

Important Records

Annually, we require updates of various forms, all of which are available on our website or will be provided to you. All forms and fees must be submitted and accepted before a start date is approved.

In addition, any time a family's information changes, such as address, place of employment, or

health insurance provider, new documents must be submitted.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority for Epiphany Universalist Church. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without the individual's prior written consent. We do not have surveillance cameras in the Church, Kids Club, Teen Club, or provide any type of video surveillance. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classes and groups, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, the names of children involved will never be given to families.

Safety

For the safety of our students, all staff, including educators, volunteers, helpers, and parent helpers, will be thoroughly vetted and trained before guiding other individuals. For this reason, please refrain from attempting to help, guide, or redirect other individuals when you are present with your child.

Membership Fees

Financial Agreements

One-time attendance for classes and groups: All fees must be paid upon registering for the class

Weekly or Daily memberships: Must be paid upon registration, or at drop-off for single-day attendance, and admittance to activities and groups is limited to space available.

Annual Members:

Annual members are locked into their rate for the entire 12-month session, and may pay weekly or monthly. We do have holidays, weather-related events, and other closures. It is a family's responsibility to find alternate arrangements for these times.

We are moving to an online portal for all payments and registrations. If you need paper forms, please let us know.

Payment Schedule

Weekly payments are due by 5 P.M. on Friday for the following week and can be paid through the website. Monthly payments are due by 5 P.M. on the Friday before the 1st. Those with a balance due for late pick-up or other fees will not be able to attend until all arrears are cleared. Same-day drop-ins and individual classes must be paid in full at the time of registration.

Late Pick-Up Fee

Single Class or Groups attendees:

Drop-off: Individuals attending an individual class or group may arrive 15 minutes before their class or group begins. Individuals arriving more than 15 minutes early or more than 15 minutes late without prior arrangement will be converted to the daily rate. If it is after closing, then a \$50 fee is assessed and must be paid before the individual is allowed to attend another event.

Pick-up: If parents are not available to receive their child or fail to pick up their child within 30 minutes after the end of their last class or group, then staff members will first try to contact the parents using all phone numbers provided. If parents are unreachable after 30 minutes, staff will try to contact all emergency contact persons. If staff members are unable to contact emergency contact persons, then they will notify the Department of Human Services and/or the Police Department.

Placement:

Placement between Preschool classes, Kids Club, Teen's Club, Epiphany Academy, and adapted programming is determined at the entry interview and will be adjusted in the individual's best interests as needed. Annual memberships require an annual contract.

Insufficient Funds

All payments rejected for insufficient funds will incur a \$60 penalty. Missed payments and late fees must be paid immediately unless other arrangements have been made.

Holidays and Vacation

Spring/Summer: We are closed 7/3, any other closures are TBD

Fall/Winter: TBD

Membership Fees and Non-attendance

Membership fees are due regardless of attendance for those with membership contracts.

Educational Support

Epiphany Academy in Valley Springs is curre

Epiphany Universalist Church's clubs and other programs are not a school, but we do offer support to members at all stages of their academic journey.

Study Spaces

We have a comfortable lounge as well as other areas for studying. These areas are to be kept free of clutter, garbage, food, and drinks.

Tutoring

We have staff present at all times to support members, which includes academic assistance. We also have study groups, and if needed, one-on-one tutoring can be arranged.

Daily Schedule and Activities

We will post our current offerings online, and they will be available to members first. Public offerings take place a few days later.

Open Play

"Open-play" (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) activities are available to members while we are open. We just ask that members refrain from areas where current activities have already started if they have not signed up for them. Open play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

Outdoor Play

We do not currently have an outdoor playground, but we do have classes like "bubble time" outside. We do have a green space for members to engage in outdoor fun, such as tag or a book club.

Nap/Rest time

We are not a childcare facility, so we do not have a nap or rest time. If a child is too tired to participate in an activity, we will have them lie down until they can be picked up. Infants, younger siblings, or small children of individuals attending activities may nap in an appropriate parent-provided item as long as they are supervised by parents. Members who nod off in the lounge or similar areas will be left be as long as they are in a safe position.

Multimedia

We have multiple spaces for computers and multimedia that members can enjoy. We may even host movie times on occasion. If you sign your child up for the movie, you are agreeing that it is appropriate for them.

Taekwondo

We offer Taekwondo classes, and they require an additional waiver.

Bullying

Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide individuals in finding appropriate ways to interact with others. Students who cannot be guided into treating others with love and respect will be permanently barred.

Pets & Visiting Animals

Service animals are always welcome, but, as this is a community space, we do not allow pets. We can make exceptions on a case-by-case basis, but it is generally reserved for situations where they are being used in a class.

Free Assessments & Computer-based Learning

Epiphany Universalist uses IXL, CK-12, and Prodigy, in addition to other programs, as needed to assess students' levels and enrich their learning. While we are not a school, we believe in supporting the learning and growth of children and society as a whole.

Library

We have a good number of books for members to read in our library/ lounge area. These books may not leave Epiphany without permission.

Field Trips

Epiphany offers a variety of experiences both on and away from the campus. The liability waiver includes a permission form to allow our staff to transport the individual at no cost to the activity. This could be trips to local playgrounds and trips to local businesses. This includes but is not limited to: the Zoo, The Butterfly House, The Washington Pavilion, The Museum of Visual Materials, and local restaurants. Appropriate ratios are maintained at all times.

Epiphany Universalist Church uses volunteer vans, cars, trucks, etc., for field trips. Head counts shall be taken before leaving the school after entering the vehicle, during a field trip, after taking children to the restroom, after returning to the vehicle, and upon returning to the school. When children leave the vehicle, the vehicle shall be inspected to ensure no children are left in the vehicle.

Food Service Policy

At Epiphany Universalist Church, members are welcome to the nutritious meals and snacks. All of the food provided is either pre-packaged and purchased with church funds or potluck-style and made by volunteers. All of the food served at Epiphany is free of charge. Please inform us if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so that a substitution can be made. For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child, or have them eat at home.

Food From Home

We are a community space; you are welcome to bring a meal for yourself or to share. Some children prefer the food from home, and that is fine with us. We only offer refrigeration for food provided by us, volunteers' food, food brought to share, and breastmilk.

Food Allergies/ Action Plans

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form. This form will be posted in the food preparation and serving areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well.

Infant, Toddler, and Two-Year-Old members

Again, we are not a daycare or childcare facility, but we do serve members of all ages. If your baby or young child will be attending a class or play group without you, all necessary items for the individual's well-being must be provided, and all contact information must be up to date.

Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers. For health reasons, we are not able to store bags of frozen milk for extended periods.

We recommend, when possible, that all new foods be tried at home first, since a child could have an allergic reaction to foods they have not had before. If you choose to introduce your child to a new food at Epiphany, then you assume all consequences of doing so.

What to Provide

Clothing and Items from Home

Extra clothes, a water bottle, sunscreen, and weather-appropriate clothing may be left at Epiphany's clubs for individuals with monthly or annual memberships.

Play Clothes

Please bring your child to Epiphany's clubs in comfortable clothes and shoes that are in good repair. Comfortable, washable clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program, especially in arts and crafts.

Children should be dressed appropriately for their scheduled activities. All children occasionally get their clothes wet or have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child into an extra set of clothing provided by the family. Although we do have some spare clothing donated, we prefer to use these in emergencies. Please be sure to clearly label all items of clothing if you choose to send spares. Let us know whenever your child's clothing or other items are missing.

Pullups, wipes, and other items

We do have a few options of pull-ups, diapers, wipes, and feminine hygiene supplies in the unisex bathroom for those who need them.

Items from Home

We ask that you understand that we prefer items of value, such as iPods or handheld gaming systems, to be left at home, due to the risk of damage or loss. If you choose to bring these types of items, you will be responsible for them. Epiphany Universalist Church is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

- Members under 14 may not be dropped off before we open.
- Individuals taking classes or attending activities may arrive 15 minutes before their start time.
- Individuals must be picked up within 15 minutes of their last activity, unless they are members.

Health and Safety Policies

Illness

Our priority at Epiphany Academy is to provide a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following are experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101 (under the arm) or greater, until they have been symptom-free without fever-reducing medication for 48 hours
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications) (Two instances) until diarrhea stops for 48 hours.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting (One instance), the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 48 hours.
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues for more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- Impetigo, for up to a minimum of 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth sores have dried and crusted, and no fever
- Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment have been completed
- Mumps, for a minimum of 9 days after the onset of symptoms
- Hepatitis A virus, for up to a minimum of 1 week after the onset of illness
- Measles, for a minimum of 4 days after the onset of rash
- Rubella, for a minimum of 6 days after the onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness that requires exclusion
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling

A child who becomes ill while at Epiphany Universalist Church will be isolated to limit the exposure of other children to communicable diseases. An ill child will be isolated until their parent arrives. For this reason, we ask families to make every effort to pick up a sick child as soon as possible.

Epiphany Universalist Church reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed healthcare professional stating that the child is not contagious and must be approved by the administration. A doctor's note does not guarantee admission.

*Parents will be notified by telephone and text. Please contact Epiphany Universalist Church & School via phone or text whenever your child is ill. If parents do not respond within 30 minutes, then we will contact the emergency contacts.

Notice of Exposure & Reporting Disease

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be shared by text or email. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease and has attended classes, groups, or activities here, please notify the Epiphany Universalist Church & School immediately.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, The Epiphany Universalist Church will notify the health department.

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in schools and other public spaces, such as the flu, diarrhea, and conjunctivitis (also known as pink eye). Parents are encouraged to assist their children with handwashing whenever possible.

Other times, your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- Upon arriving at the club or when changing activities
- After each diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from outside
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60°F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands, and the faucet should be turned off. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging it at home as well.

Medications

Prescription and over-the-counter medications: If they must be given by a staff member, they must be in the original container and clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. Epiphany Universalist Church staff will not administer any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form. Forms can be obtained from our staff.

Epiphany Universalist Church will not administer Tylenol for Fever. To administer Tylenol to a child under 2 years old, Epiphany Universalist Church will need a doctor's note with dosage and times.

Medications are stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at Epiphany Universalist. The Medication Authorization Form must remain with the medication at all times. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at Epiphany Universalist Church.

Medications are administered only by Staff. When a medication is administered, the staff will document the type of medication, the dosage, and the time it was given.

Physicals and Immunizations

We prefer that individuals attending our programming be vaccinated, but we are not a child care center, so this is not enforced. We believe it is best to stick to your child's physician's guidance.

Documentation of Accidents/Incidents

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Epiphany Universalist Church using an Accident/ Incident Report. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

Documents of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working with a child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to understand emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

Documents of Special Health Care Needs

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the student's emergency binder. All staff must familiarize themselves with this plan in the event of an emergency. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific healthcare needs. No child will be turned away due to special health care needs unless it would be unsafe.

Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure

Parents must complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents and the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Epiphany Universalist Church staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the church, the Director will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick-up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will remain under the supervision of the appropriate staff until a parent arrives.
- If the child requires immediate medical attention, the staff member who witnessed the emergency will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable, and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's file and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Director will contact the parent(s).

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

All students will be supplied with a non-toxic sunscreen of SPF 50 or greater and insect repellent when appropriate.

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters

As individuals who interact with children daily, each staff member of Epiphany Universalist Church is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the South Dakota Department of Human Services and possibly the police whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

Tobacco Use

Cigarettes/ Vapes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on premises, including parking lots and outdoor areas.

Access Policy

Any person present and working with children will be required to have a record check, appropriate training, and approval to be in the club and to be present with children. Parents or guardians of potential members wishing to tour may do so during or after hours, but may not interact with members under age 18 or with a disability that makes them vulnerable.

Agents of outside agencies, such as Birth-3 or DSS, will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any care

responsibilities or be unattended. The primary responsibility of supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the member's helper, guide, or group leader, unless he/she delegates it to another staff or volunteer for the best interests of the students. Buildings are locked at all times, and only staff may open doors for visitors. If staff don't know the visitor, they shall ask for ID and get authorization from the Director. If at any time staff observe anyone on the church or club's property without their knowledge, they will notify the director and may call local law enforcement.

It may be treated as a dangerous adult situation; staff will follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure. Non-agency persons on the property for other reasons, such as maintenance or repairs, will be monitored by a staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

An individual who has been convicted of abuse, neglect, or a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian), who is required to register with the sex offender or child abuse registry:

- Shall not be employed by, act as a contractor or volunteer at, or be allowed admittance to the church or club.
- Shall not be on the property while minors or other vulnerable individuals are present, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's minor child to and from the club. The offender may not enter the building at any time, and the student will be escorted to and from the offender.

Affidavit Policy

At times, families may face difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregiver and child, families may choose to ask an Epiphany Universalist Church staff member to provide such a statement. Our program's priority is providing the best possible care, support, and guidance, and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. Epiphany Universalist Church can only provide affidavits regarding what individual employees, volunteers, and legal-age helpers have witnessed firsthand. The church and club itself cannot give an opinion.

Guidance Strategies

Reasons for Misbehavior

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct, and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions are often called child guidance and redirection. Positive guidance and redirection are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility, and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's undesired behavior.

All staff and volunteers are trained on Epiphany's Child First procedures for the guidance and care of children.

Effective guidance and redirection focus on the child's development. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation, and a good understanding of the child. Epiphany Universalist Church staff will use only positive guidance techniques that put the child's perspective and best interests first. .

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions: "Am I..."

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open-ended questions?
- Encouraging problem-solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- At the child's eye level?
- Using patience?
- Thinking in a child-first mindset?

Understanding Misbehavior

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems.

Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave:

- Test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between here and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or is being held to expectations beyond their developmental level.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry, sleepy, or have another need that is not being met.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.
- There is a lack of trust in the caregiver.

Preventing Misbehavior

Intervention strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Remembering that all inappropriate behavior comes from an unmet need.
2. Ensuring their needs are met.
3. Using the child-first mindset
4. One-on-one relationship-building activities, such as modeling and social stories.
5. Using our A, B, C model: Antecedent, Behavior, Communication
6. Ways for the student to serve the school, others, or their community.
7. Noticing and describing the child's body, face, and actions, labeling of feelings, and acknowledging the true intent.
8. Assessing, teaching, or scaffolding missing executive skills.

Biting Program

Before age three, biting is somewhat common. When a child repeatedly bites:

1. Identify stressors—not enough structure, too much structure, not enough rest, eating, bowel habits, connection, attunement, etc.
2. Suggest a stress reduction program at home and here.
3. Shadow the child and monitor for triggers. There is nothing you can do to help a child learn other ways of getting needs met after the bite has occurred. You must catch the child before the bite. Most bites occur during transitions and unstructured time.
4. Say, "You wanted _____(take an educated guess as to what the child wanted). Say _____ (acceptable words) or do _____(acceptable action)!"
 - Make visuals of alternatives to biting: Say, "My turn," put up a STOP hand, play with a different toy, move away, etc.

While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember that it is also an unacceptable behavior in any environment.

Severe Biting Policy

The following process will be followed if a child's behavior continuously takes away from the care or safety of others.

- Meeting with parents and administration to discuss a plan of action to increase positive behavior.
- Logs must be kept to identify triggers and patterns of repeated, undesired behavior. Upon written request, these logs will be made available to the parents and/or evaluator.
- If aggressive behavior/ biting occurs two times in the same day, the child must leave the club immediately. The child will be removed from the activity while waiting to be picked up. If the behavior occurs a third time in the same week, the child must be picked up immediately and take the following day off so that a preventive plan can be put in place.

Daily Communication

Epiphany Universalist uses text or email to communicate and share photos, notes, and incidents. We encourage staff and volunteers to be present and attentive, and to avoid using their phones, so only necessary updates will be issued.

Cultural Competence

Epiphany Universalist is committed to respecting each family's culture and diverse needs. We recognize that culture influences every aspect of an individual's development and is reflected in child-rearing beliefs and practices. We believe it is important to support and preserve the child's home language usage, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions. We recognize that children can and will acquire the use of English even when their home language is used and respected.

Epiphany Universalist Church carries out this philosophy of cultural competence in the following ways:

- Families are treated with respect and sensitivity from our first meeting.
- Families' financial limitations are respected at all times, and clear understanding of payment expectations from the time of enrollment.
- We aim to learn accurate information about each family, including their culture, faith, beliefs, and cultural traditions (we encourage each family, if they feel comfortable, to share this information with us at the time of enrollment). This information is important as it relates to meals and snacks, holiday recognition, etc.
- Families are asked to inform us of the best way for them to receive communication (e.g., verbal, written, text, email).
- Families whose first language is not English are encouraged and assisted in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive benefits for children of knowing more than one language and in providing strategies to support, maintain, and preserve their home language. Epiphany Universalist Church & School will continue to work hard to further our knowledge of culture, language, and diversity.

Transitions

Your child may spend different parts of their day with different groups or at different locations depending on their interests and abilities.

Questions/Concerns

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the individual most directly involved.

If the concern is not resolved, the Director can be reached at 605-496-5060 or RevLissa@Epiphany-Universalist.org.

Emergency Procedures

Fire, Tornado, Bomb, or Other Emergency Situations

Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted near the exits in each building. Fire and tornado drills are conducted every three months; all classrooms are required to participate. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to each class's designated spot.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called as soon as it is safe to do so following an emergency. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency.

Blizzard/ Severe Winter Weather

The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel classes for the following day

Missing or Abducted Child

In the event of a missing child, the staff will search the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director to assist with the search.

- If the child cannot be located within a reasonable time, the Director will notify the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office and the child's parents.
- In the event of an abducted child, the staff must immediately contact the Director and the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office, and the child's parents.

Power Failure

Staff members and children should remain in the building and, if possible, continue activities as usual, or go outdoors or off-site until power resumes.

- If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the Church and clubs will close, and parents will be contacted.
- The director and staff are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately make arrangements for their child.
- Activities will resume if possible until parents arrive.

Special Needs Care Policy

Epiphany Universalist is committed to the principle of inclusion and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are committed to every child equally, regardless of their special needs, and will learn more about each child's specific needs and find the resources necessary to accomplish our common goal of providing the best care for each child. We believe that including children with special needs can enrich the learning experience for all children, and Epiphany Universalist Church will make accommodations for children with special needs in accordance with the ADA.

To ensure that we are meeting the individual needs of each child enrolled with an identified special need, the following procedures and programs are followed:

- Staff receive ongoing training on inclusion and special needs, tailored to the specific needs of enrolled children.
- Confidentiality of children and families is respected and maintained at all times.
- Children with special needs will be included and encouraged to participate to the fullest extent of their abilities.
- Staff and families collaborate to meet the child's individual needs.
- Communication with families is ongoing and responsive to their needs.
- A variety of teaching strategies is used to meet each child's individual needs.
- An individualized special needs care plan will be created with the help of the parent/guardian, doctor, and Epiphany Universalist Church & School to ensure that all parties are aware of the care practices that need to be in place.

Epiphany Universalist Church Handbook Agreement

I/ We the parent(s) or guardian(s) of _____ have read and agree to adhere to the Epiphany Universalist Church & School 2025/26 Handbook.

Parent or Guardian Signature	Date:

Parent or Guardian Signature	Date: