

Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool Family Handbook

Welcome...

to our Good Shepherd Preschool Family!

As we journey through the school year our professional preschool staff and volunteers look forward to serving your family, and partnering with you, your child's primary teacher, in the development of your child.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your precious child; nurturing the spirit, mind, and body of your child in our early learning environment, through Jesus' love.

God's Blessings,

Your Preschool Team

Mission Statement:

Nurturing the spirit, mind, and body of children through Jesus' love.

Ministry Statement:

As a family of believers, empowered by the Holy Spirit and God's Word, we are called, children and adults together, to reach out to guide and nurture the faith of young children.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." -- Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

PHILOSOPHY:

Why We Do What We Do

We believe...

In a Christ-centered learning community that nurtures the developmental growth of the whole child; Nurturing each child spiritually, socially, emotionally, cognitively, physically

God created all children in His image, yet each uniquely different

Parents are their child's first and most important teachers

All children deserve the opportunity to develop and grow at their own pace as they become creative, independent thinkers

Children learn best when they have opportunities to play, imagine, create, and explore with other children in mixed age groups, promoting cooperative mentoring and leadership experiences, as well as in similar-age, skills-based, and child-selected small groups

Children develop social skills, critical thinking, cooperation, leadership, independence, and problem-solving skills as they learn through play and other active learning activities

Strong and caring communities are built by nurturing the development of individuals through Jesus' love

Staff

At Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool, all the staff are valued for their love of children, their passion for nurturing young learners, their experience in providing developmentally appropriate and individualized learning activities for young children, their education and training, and their dedication to Christian education.

Volunteers

All staff and volunteers working directly with children at Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool will have passed a Washington State Patrol background check. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact a teacher, or the Director.

Fingerprinting

All staff will have fingerprinting processed, and on file with the appropriate agencies, which will be conducted at the time of hire. This process is accomplished in compliance with the Child and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Act, RCW 43.43.830, for non-profit organizations.

First Aid and CPR Certification

At all times, there will be at least one staff member onsite with a current First Aid, CPR, and AED certification. All staff will be provided the opportunity to be certified to administer First Aid, CPR, or AED when determined necessary. Proof of certification will be kept on file with the Director.

Accident and Emergency

An emergency, injury, or illness occurring during school hours, requiring more than basic First Aid care, will be reported to parents as immediately as possible. Please ensure we have all emergency forms and contact information up-to-date. If changes occur during the school year please report them to our Director. In accordance with our emergency preparedness plan, we ask for the phone number of an emergency contact who can be at the school in twenty minutes or less. In the event of an accident, and Accident Form will be completed by a teacher or the Director, and a copy will be provided for the parent. The following steps may be taken:

- At all times, an adult will remain with the child.
- Basic first aid may be administered as needed.

- Parents will be notified as quickly as possible.
- Emergency services will be called if necessary.

Toileting

All children attending Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool must be completely independent in regards to toileting and personal restroom hygiene. Staff or cleared volunteers may coach a child in the steps they need to complete the process.

Insurance

Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool is covered by the blanket liability insurance policy of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and Preschool. The parent or legal guardian, or their insurance coverage, is considered primary in the event of an accident, illness, or injury requiring emergency transport or treatment.

Medications

No oral or injected medications will be administered at school by the school staff or volunteers, except in the case of an emergency epi-pen treatment. At their discretion, a parent or legal guardian may inform the school of any medication being administered outside of school.

Mandatory Reporting

Child Protective Services (CPS) must be contacted if any child enrolled is suspected of being a victim of abuse or neglect. State law mandates authorities to be notified within 24 hours. The CPS Intake Hotline is 360-993-7901. It is not the responsibility of school staff to investigate, rather to report, any suspicion of child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.

Safety

The front doors remain locked following the morning drop-off times. Door alarms are utilized in the Education Wing of the building. Children are accompanied by adult supervision to restrooms, playground, and classrooms. Student safety is a priority in our school. Please notify any staff member in the event you observe any safety concern in or around our facility.

Emergency Preparedness Plans

Emergency plans and procedures will be posted in each classroom in a readily available location.

If a fire occurs in the building, the building will be evacuated immediately, and emergency services will be contacted. The staff will implement fire drill and other drill procedures periodically throughout the school year. These drills will be recorded in the Emergency Practice Log.

Evacuation

When evacuation is determined necessary children and staff will exit the building through established routes, and they will gather at the established safe location. Communication with parents will take place when it is determined safe to do so.

Lock-Down

When a lock-down, or shelter in place, is determined necessary children and staff will remain in a safe place until the “all clear” is determined. Staff will make efforts to maintain low volume and visibility to maintain safety as much as possible.

Earthquake

Staff will assist children in finding cover under sturdy furniture, doorways, or structures, avoiding glass windows as much as possible. All will stay put until safety is assessed. Parents will be notified when it is determined safe to do so. Other steps will be implemented as determined necessary.

Emergency Kits

At the beginning of the school year parents will be asked to provide a large sealable bag (gallon size) containing such as: non-perishable snacks, 1 or 2 bottles of water, a picture of family/loved ones, a copy of a favorite song, verse, or prayer which parents feel will help their child find comfort in the event of an emergency causing separation, trauma, or fears.

Emergencies – Communications

When it is determined safe to do so, parents will be communicated to in regards to any unforeseen emergency situation.

Weapons

There are no weapons of any kind allowed at Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool.

No Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in the buildings or on the grounds of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & Preschool.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool welcomes and admits children and families of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin, and beliefs to all programs, classes, and activities.

Family Disputes

When parents or families are experiencing disputes, Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool will not become involved. GSLP cannot deny a parent or legal guardian from removing a child from school unless the appropriate legal paperwork is on file with the Director.

Visitors

As a general rule, we cannot accept child visitors, such as house guests, out of town family, and the like, without special clearance with the Director. Parents and children interested in our program may visit the classroom together to see first-hand the learning opportunities we have to offer. An appointment may be scheduled with the Director.

Absence and Illness

The school cannot refund tuition payments for any absences caused by vacation, weather, or illness, or any other unforeseen circumstance.

For the consideration and wellness of all children please do not send your child to school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

Pink eye

Deep Cough

Inflamed nostrils

Heavy nasal discharge

High Fever, or within 24 hours of a 99° or higher temperature

Contagious rash

Contagious diseases

Head lice or nits

Vomiting (in the past 24 hours)

Diarrhea (3 or more times in past 24 hours)

Fatigue that prevents participation and regular activity

Please call...

Please call the school (360-567-3636) if your child will be absent. Be sure to ask for a written message to be delivered to your child's teacher. You may also send an email message to both the Director and teacher email addresses. Children should remain away from school for 24 hours after a fever has subsided. In the event of head lice, or any other health concern that can spread to others, please notify the school, so the proper precautions may be taken in the classrooms (names of children will never be published).

Clothing

Play clothes that encourage self-help are preferred. We experience many fun and messy play learning activities. Please remember coats for outdoor activity on cooler days, so your child is comfortable when we have outdoor play learning time. We typically have cooler weather during this time of day most days of our school year. We recommend athletic-type shoes with rubber soles, rather than sandals or other open-toes shoes, or shoes with hard or plastic soles for the playground. Please mark clothing and belongings with your child's name to help prevent loss. Students must have an entire extra set of clothing to change into in the event of any accidents. See more details under "backpacks." Hats may be worn to school. We will ask children to remove hats for such times as Chapel Times, Snack Times, and Circle Times.

Backpacks

We require a backpack large enough for your child's folder, papers and projects, and a complete extra set of clothing, for those rare accidents. Please replace this outfit right away in the event your child comes home in their spare set.

Toys from Home

We prefer children keep their toys at home, except in the event of a special share day. Of course, if your child has a small comfort object that is necessary in rare moments, or if we are working with you on a separation anxiety concern please make arrangements with your child's teacher.

Birthdays

We recognize birthdays are special celebrations – birthdays may be celebrated at school with special treats, arranged in advance with your child's teachers. Please check with your child's teachers in regards to any classroom allergies and appropriate snacks.

Please distribute any outside party invitations outside of school time. With an okay from a teacher, you may place invitations in cubbies, or have them go home in folders for the week.

Snacks

We ask our school families to take turns signing up to provide simple healthy snacks for the group on a snack calendar. This will usually amount to about one time per month, unless you would like to provide snacks more often. We serve snack family-style in the classroom. If you would like to incorporate any current learning themes into the snack you provide, please communicate in advance with a teacher. Please refer to the healthy snack suggestions list for ideas (Birthdays may be an exception to "healthy" guideline).

Accommodations for Individual Student Needs

Recognizing God has blessed all children with unique differences and needs, efforts are made to reasonably accommodate all students at Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool. We strive to keep all children safe, while providing a high quality learning environment and experiences for all students.

Considering the needs of all children in our care, at times staff may find it appropriate and reasonable to change entire units of study or lesson plans to accommodate for an allergy or other physical or cognitive limitation.

Food Allergies

At times, the Preschool Staff may determine a necessity to inform a parent of a product used in the classroom environment which causes safety concerns due to allergies. In such instances, the parent will be given a 24-hour notice to provide a similar item as a safe alternative.

When possible, we will have food labels available upon request. Our staff will continue to read all labels, and keep any of our students with food allergies from eating or handling any products containing allergens. In some cases, this means providing an individual student or group of students with an alternate product. If a label is not available, and the food could contain allergens, common sense tells us to err on the side of caution, and provide an alternative snack or activity for a student. Parents of children with food allergies will need to provide a variety of safe snacks for the Preschool to have on hand for their child if the need for a substitute arises.

Teaching children to know how to make safe choices, adapt to their environment, handle their emotions, and to be secure in their individuality, are important life lessons. These “teachable moments” begin at a developmentally appropriate level in the early years. Together with parents, we strive to train children by guiding and encouraging them to become individuals with a healthy sense of well-being, learning what safe choices might be for themselves as individuals.

Registration Requirements

In order to enroll at Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool a child must be three years old by August 31. Discretion is reserved by the Director and the Preschool Board.

A child must be fully toilet-trained, and independent in regards to personal bathroom hygiene, in order to be enrolled at GSLP.

Tuition Payments

Tuition calculations are made to cover the entire program/school year. Then, a monthly payment amount is calculated based on the annual tuition total, due in nine equal installments. This means holidays, illnesses, vacation, snow days, etc., do not change the monthly amount due. Tuition payments are arranged through Vanco’s *Simply Giving* program at no additional cost to you. Payments will be deducted on the fifth day of each month, unless the fifth day occurs on a weekend or holiday, in which case the payment will be deducted on the next weekday. In the event of any emergency regarding your electronic transaction, please notify the Director at least five business days prior to the scheduled deduction, or as soon as possible, to see if arrangements can be made. This is typically allowed on a one-time basis. If a family would like to pre-pay the full annual tuition prior to the start of the school year, or pay the balance due at any time during the school year, arrangements can be made with the Director.

If a family must make payment arrangements other than our “Simply giving” Auto-Pay method, CHECK payments must be in a sealed envelope, and the payment must be deposited in the Preschool Office Mail Slot/ Lockbox. Please note the name of the student on the envelope. In the event of a CASH payment, CASH must be hand-delivered to the Director, and the payee must receive a handwritten receipt at the time of payment. CASH payments may not be handed to any staff member other than the Director. If the Director is not in, payment must be made on the following class day, directly to the Director.

Late Fees

Tuition is always due by the fifth day of each month, except in the event the fifth of a given month occurs on a weekend or holiday. There will be a \$15 late fee added to late payments. If you communicate in advance, arrangements may be made through our Director, on a case by case basis.

Financial Assistance

Partial financial assistance is available through *Sammy’s Fund*. This fund is made available through donations from friends and partners of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & Preschool. Please see the preschool website or talk to the Director for more information.

Withdrawal from the Program

If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your child from the program, a **two-week written notice** is required from the parent. If the child is in attendance during any part of the month of withdrawal, no portion of that month’s payment may be refunded. At least five business days is required to stop an electronic tuition payment before it processes.

Registration Fees

Registration fees are due at the time of registration, and are non-refundable. These fees assist in covering the expense of equipment, curriculum, paper, art supplies, and other operational costs. They do not apply toward tuition, and they are non-refundable.

Family Discounts

There is a \$15 per tuition payment discount provided for the second child enrolled, and a 50% off per tuition payment provided for the third family member enrolled simultaneously in our early childhood program. Additionally, after the first child, the registration fees for additional family members simultaneously enrolled will be provided a 50% discount. Please make arrangements with the Director.

Student Arrival Each Day

Students may begin to arrive at the classrooms no more than ten minutes prior to the start time for class. Class start times may vary. Please take your child to use the restroom facilities and wash hands prior to entering the classroom each day. Thank you for your help in keeping germs at bay.

Student Pick-Up Each Day

Please arrange to pick up your child at the specified dismissal time. Students will be in the pick-up area at that time. Your child will be ready to enter your car from the pick-up area. You may use our drive-through, or you may park in the parking lot and walk up to the porch area, or enter the front doors into the main entry area. Teachers may help children enter the vehicle. Please be sure your child is secured in their required approved child restraint system prior to your departure. This is the responsibility of the parent or guardian transporting the child. Any child remaining ten minutes past the dismissal time will be escorted back to the classroom area to wait.

Late Pick-Up Fees

If a child has not been picked up by ten minutes past the designated dismissal time, a parent may be charged a fee of \$5.00, except in the event of a rare emergency. In the event of an emergency, please notify the Director, or the Preschool or Church Office, as soon as possible, prior to your arrival to pick up your child.

Inclement Weather / Snow Days Policy

When our local school district, Evergreen School District, declares a closure or a late start, due to inclement weather or road conditions, Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool will be CLOSED for the day. Please refer to local news for updates. Our staff will also send messages via email or other social media or alert systems. Tuition is not refunded for closures due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

School Calendar

The Preschool calendar for each school year begins after the normal start date for the local school district. The preschool year runs through the end of May. Major school vacation days and holidays will coincide with the local school district. Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool will have additional non-attendance days in observation of certain religious holidays, some parent-teacher conference days and professional educator trainings and conference days.

Student Management / Discipline

A variety of positive guidance techniques are incorporated in our classrooms. We realize children are learning how to co-exist in a classroom and group environment. A fair amount of redirection is expected in the early childhood setting. When a behavior concern occurs we implement steps to help children learn from a situation. Unless the immediate safety of any child is in jeopardy, this may mean a teacher may observe a situation first, to see how the children involved might problem solve their way through it. This may be followed up by a discussion, or a teacher may feel the need to step in and help guide in problem solving. Teachers may implement strategies such as redirection of activity, conversation, a brief break, use of the "Peace Box," (a box of calming activities or fidget objects) or others. In the event of an ongoing or repetitive behavior of concern, or with any behavior causing a safety concern, parents will be notified. Intervention steps may be planned and implemented with family involvement and support. Referrals may be made for additional outside resources to aide in improving or resolving an issue. A

parent may be asked to remove their child from the program in the event of dramatically unsafe behavior. The Director and the Preschool Board may be involved in the removal process.

Parent Conferences

Conferences with parents may occur one or two times per school year. There may be a fall and/or spring conference. Student developmental progress toward kindergarten-readiness, individual goals, and achievements will be discussed. Additional conferencing may occur, at the request of a teacher or parent.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports will be shared with families at a parent conference during the school year.

Curriculum

We aim to support parents as their child's primary teacher. Our curriculum is a blended faith-based and academic curriculum, targeting specific developmental readiness goals. Through play, children experience social growth, develop their communication and problem solving skills, gain early reading, writing, and math skills, practice decision-making, as well as develop a sense of self and belonging to a community of young learners.

Our daily lessons incorporate learning goals from age-appropriate, researched-based resources including, but not limited to, *Creative Curriculum* philosophies, *Voyages* faith-based curriculum, *Spark* Fitness and Nutrition Curriculum for early childhood, and *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum

Kindergarten Readiness

Curriculum and program planning aligns with the Washington State Early Learning Standards.

Assessments

Teacher observation of students, and the use of formative assessments are practiced in our program. At times, a more formal approach may be taken. A collection of work sample evidence of learning is gathered over time to share with parents at conference time, and may be sent home throughout the duration of the school year.

Resource and Referral for Additional Services

Parents may contact our Director for referrals in regards to speech and other learning and developmental support resources and services.

Open House / Social Events

Events are scheduled throughout the year. Please refer to the annual and monthly calendars for this information.

Preschool Ministry

Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool is one of the ministries of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & Preschool.

Policy-Based Governance

The Preschool Board oversees the Preschool Ministry, creates, maintains, and modifies policy, and is responsible for maintaining the Professional Preschool Ministry Staff. The Preschool Board is entrusted to ensure the Preschool Ministry operates according to the Mission and Ministry Statements, and Philosophy of the program. The Preschool Board Chairperson or Members may be elected or appointed. Please see the Preschool Board Manual for more details.

Day-to-Day Operations

Operation of the day-to-day functions and programming are the responsibility of the Preschool Director and the remainder of the Professional Preschool Staff to ensure the integrity of the program.

Grievances

It is proper protocol to discuss any concern with the individual staff member who may be involved in a situation or disagreement. If a mutual agreement cannot be reached the Director may be involved. If needed, the next communication may be made with a Preschool Board Member. At times, another member of the ministry leadership staff, such as the Director of Family Ministry or Pastor, may be asked to become involved to aide in conflict resolution. Objectivity is important, and the goal is mutual agreement or mutual compromise and resolution.