**Little Shepherd Preschool**

**Parent Handbook**

**2020 - 2021**

**Our Philosophy**

**At Little Shepherd Preschool, we provide a nurturing Christian environment where children learn by way of hands-on, multisensory, playful explorations. We tap into children’s natural curiosity about the world, and students are challenged by way of an integrated approach including the content areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, Social/Emotional Development and Physical Development/Health.**

**Fees & Tuition**

Little Shepherd Preschool is a ministry of the Church of the Good Shepherd, however, tuition and fees are necessary for the operation of the program.

A registration fee and a supply fee made payable to Little Shepherd Preschool must accompany the child’s completed application for enrollment. Fees are non-refundable.

Monthly tuition was figured by taking the total cost of a child’s full year of classes and dividing by the number of months that school is in session. There are no refunds in tuition for absences due to illness, holidays, vacations, etc. Tuition is due by the 7th of each month (August through April). Payment of tuition will be accepted in the form of cash, checks, money order or cashier’s checks. **Checks should be made payable to Little Shepherd Preschool**.

The method of tuition payment (with the exception of August) shall be as follows: an envelope with your child’s name will be sent home prior to the first day of class each month. The envelope is to be returned with tuition inside by the 7th of each month. A charge of $5.00 per day will be added for each day that tuition is late. A child may be dropped from the program if payment has not been received by the 10th of each month.

Children may be dropped from the program due to lack of payment. If a child is dropped from the program because of non-payment of tuition and wished to re-enroll, an additional registration/supply fee will be charged. Re-enrollment may or may not be possible depending on the availability of space in the program.

Checks returned for any reason other than bank error will be charged a fee which will be added to the amount of tuition. If two checks are returned within the period of one school year, checks will no longer be accepted and only money orders, cash, or cashier’s checks will be accepted as payment for tuition.

A one-time snack fee will be collected from each child to cover the snack cost for the year. The amount will be determined at the start of the school year. This fee has taken the place of monthly snack donations from each child.

**Discipline**

A written copy of our discipline policy is included in each enrollment packet. No child will be admitted to the program without a completed, signed discipline policy on file.

**Arrival & Dismissal Procedures**

The arrival/dismissal procedure at Little Shepherd Preschool is as follows: For arrival, the preschool hallway locked door will open 5 minutes before class time. A responsible parent/guardian will park and bring their child down to the preschool hallway, help their child hang up his/her backpack and make sure they get into their classroom. For dismissal, the preschool hallway locked door will open approximately 10 minutes before dismissal time. Parents/guardians will sign their child in and out each day in the Sign In Binder located in the hallway. Parents/guardians will submit signed written forms disclosing those persons authorized to sign his/her child out. Any changes to this list must be made in writing and given to a staff member prior to dismissal. Staff members will require identification (a valid driver’s license) of those persons picking up children from school. All children must be signed out no more than 10 minutes after dismissal or a late charge of $10.00 will be charged. An additional $10.00 will be charged for every 5 minutes thereafter that the child is not picked up. After 30 minutes past dismissal time, if parents and persons authorized to pick up the child cannot be reached, the Oswego police will be contacted. A signed copy of the Late Pick-Up Policy must be included in the child’s file prior to participation in classes.

**Daily Schedule**

Our class schedule will include: student choice time, large group meetings, small group exploratory centers, fine and gross motor activities, and snack. We keep our schedules flexible and fluid as to best meet the needs of the children each day.

Hand washing is done when arriving at school, before and after snack time, after using the bathroom, and any time we feel it is necessary for the health and safety of the children in the program. Bathroom breaks are as individual children need them.

**Hours of Attendance**

**Morning Class: 9:15 AM – 11:45 AM**

**Afternoon Class: 12:45 PM – 3:15 PM**

**Report an Absence**

Please notify the school if your child is going to be absent for any reason. If a child needs to be picked up before dismissal of his/her class, it is necessary to notify the teacher that day.

**School Closings**

Little Shepherd Preschool will follow the Oswego District #308 calendar. A calendar will be issued at the beginning of the school year. In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the emergency weather policy of Oswego District #308 which is broadcast over the local radio station, news programs, and on the district website. Every effort will be made to reschedule preschool classes cancelled due to these emergency closings, and no refunds will be given.

**Health**

It is necessary that each and every family cooperate fully with the school health program. Our guidelines are designed to protect the well-being of all students and to guard against avoidable absences. Children may not attend classes when there are symptoms of illness, as the school has no provisions for the care of sick children.

If a student or family member has a communicable disease, such as chicken pox or strep throat, the school is to be notified so that the families of other students and the health department can be informed as required.

If your child becomes ill while at school, he/she will be isolated from the other children. If his/her parents and/or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact persons listed on the child’s forms will be contacted.

Children will not be admitted to school and will be sent home if the following symptoms exist:

1. Diarrhea or vomiting within the past 24 hours
2. Fever within the past 24 hours
3. Any type of rash, unless we receive a physician’s note stating that such rash is not contagious
4. Pink eye/conjunctivitis
5. Head Lice
6. Any communicable disease

These are all serious conditions in the school setting and must be dealt with immediately to prevent the spread of disease to other children.

**Health Forms**

Illinois health forms are required for the admittance of any child into our program. The State of Illinois requires that all children in a preschool setting have a physical examination dated not more than six (6) months prior to enrollment in school. All children entering a preschool for the first time are also required to have a TB test within 6 months of their enrollment in the program, unless a physician indicates on the physical form that one is not necessary. A lead assessment is also required by the State of Illinois for all children under 7.

We are unable to make any exceptions to the above rules as they must be followed for us to remain licensed by the State of Illinois.

**Medical Need**

Since our preschool classes meet for two and one half hour sessions, it should not be necessary to routinely administer medication to children attending our school. Should the need to administer medication to a student during the time he/she is at preschool arise, a medication form signed by the child’s physician should be turned into the office along with the medication. All medication must be in the original packaging and contain a label with the child’s name on it. Medication will only be administered by the director of the program or the child’s teacher. If the procedure for administering the medication is not clear, a parent/guardian will be asked to come to school and demonstrated the proper method of administration of the medication.

**Field Trips**

Field trips are very exciting and educational for students. With this is mind, we schedule field trips that enhance our educational units. The success of our field trip program depends on parents to transport/supervise the children. Parents are responsible for the transport of their child to the field trip location. We welcome parents as partners in the educational process, including field trips. Parents are expected to supervise their child and encouraged to participate in our adventures.

**Carpools**

Many families find carpooling convenient; however, it is the parent’s responsibility to make all arrangements for carpooling. When a carpool is arranged, please notify your child’s teacher in writing so that the appropriate forms may be changed. State regulations require us to have written permission on file before we may allow a child to go home with a driver other than a parent and/or guardian.

**Dress**

Our day is filled with creative, messy play and accidents can, and do, happen, so we recommend that your child dress appropriately. We ask that you dress your child in clothing that they can easily get on and off by themselves for bathroom breaks. Please avoid difficult clothing such as belts, body suits, tight pant, etc. Pay special attention to your child’s shoes and be sure he/she can safely perform gross motor tasks (walking, jumping, balancing, running). Label all of your child’s clothing, especially hats, coats, mittens, gloves, and boots.

Please send a **complete** change of clothes in a zip-top bag labeled with your child’s name for emergencies. Please be sure that it includes: underwear, shirt, pants, and socks.

**Backpack**

Please send your child with a bag to carry home daily papers. A simple open top tote bag with handles or a regular size backpack work best. Once again, please be sure your child’s name is on his/her bag or backpack.

Please do not let your child bring any toys from home unless it’s a “Show and Tell” day. Not only can they become distracting, but we cannot guarantee they will not be lost or broken.

**Snack**

A one-time snack fee will be collected from each child to cover the snack cost for the year. The amount will be determined at the start of the school year. This fee has taken the place of monthly snack donations from each child.

Monthly snack calendars will be posted in the hallway and in the classroom. Food served to children will be free of tree nuts and peanuts, and water or 100% juice will be available. Snacks will meet the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services nutritional requirements.

**Home & School Connection**

Parents and/or guardians of our students are always welcome to visit our classrooms at any time. Prior notice is appreciated for security purposes. Conferences may be requested at any time by a parent and/or guardian or teacher if there are specific concerns. Parents will have opportunities to visit the classroom as mystery readers, holiday party organizers, additional hand-holders on walking field trips, and as guest “teachers” on select topics. Studies show that children enjoy greater academic success when parents are involved at their school.

**Religion**

Little Shepherd Preschool is a ministry of Church of the Good Shepherd, so biblical stories and verses, Pastor Time, and Christian songs will be included as part of our curriculum. Prayers will be said by children daily prior to snack and dismissal.

**Birthdays**

Birthdays are special for the children. If your child would like to hand out trinket bags, this will be done at dismissal time. Please do not send food items. Please keep in mind that birthday party invitations should not be brought to school and will not be passed out.

**Photographs/Video Recordings**

Photographs/video recordings are sometimes taken in the classroom and on field trips as part of our activities. The school may also use them for publicity purposes. Please notify the school office in writing prior to the start of the school year if you do not want your child’s photos used for publicity purposes. Children’s names will not accompany their photos.

**Confidential Records**

All student records are considered confidential information. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis or to meet licensing requirements. No information will be released to any outside person or agency (except for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for licensing purposes) without written permission of the parent/guardian.

**Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

The state of Illinois requires that all staff members of the childcare and/or school facility report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

**Health & Safety**

The children in our preschool are under constant supervision while in our care. However, should an emergency arise, we are equipped to handle minor injuries and accidents. All preschool staff members are required to be trained in first aid and Infant/Child CPR. First aid kits are available in each classroom.

In order to be prepared for any emergency situation should one arise, we require that the following information be kept on file for each child enrolled in our program:

1. Home address and phone number
2. Mother’s work address, phone number and hours of employment
3. Father’s work address, phone number and hours of employment
4. Doctor’s name, address and phone number
5. The addresses and phone numbers of at least two different persons authorized to handle emergency care.

In case of an extreme emergency such as fire, tornado or severe trauma, the following steps will be taken:

1. Ensure the safety of the children in the program and alert appropriate emergency personnel (i.e. police, fire, etc.) by calling 911
2. If appropriate, administer first aid to injured students while awaiting the arrival of emergency personnel.
3. Alert the director, who will then notify parents/guardians of students.
4. Fill out accident form completely. The director is responsible for notifying the Department of Children and Family Services.
5. The director will call parents/ guardians and meet to discuss the effects of the crisis on their child.
6. The director and teacher involved will meet with all the children to address concerns and/or answer any questions.
7. The church’s pastor and/or director will be available to counsel and assist as needed.