



PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

1 September 2016

305 East Smallwood Drive
Waldorf, MD 20602

301-645-7550 (Voice)
301-843-4884 (Fax)

educationcenter@gsunc.com (E-mail)

www.gsunc.com (Website)

HISTORY

Good Shepherd Kindergarten began operating in September 1968 as an outreach ministry of the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church to young children and their families in the St. Charles area. In 1971 we became the Good Shepherd Preschool and Kindergarten with the addition of a new Preschool class. On July 1, 2000 we became the Good Shepherd Education Center. Today, we enroll over 120 students in 2-, 3-, and 5-day Preschool classes, Pre-Kindergarten, and Childcare. The church feels that the Center is an important community ministry concerned with the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development of young children. Since our inception, we have offered scholarships to culturally and/or economically disadvantaged children.

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is to meet the educational and childcare needs of the community by providing a safe and nurturing Christian environment. We create a “home away from home,” where age appropriate opportunities are offered for each child to grow spiritually, intellectually, aesthetically, physically, and socially.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Good Shepherd Education Center to provide young children a high quality, distinctly Christian early education by:

- Providing a safe and caring environment for young children to learn the value of relating to other children and adults.
- Offering support and encouragement to children and their families as the children make the important transition from toddler to kindergartener.
- Helping children and parents to experience a loving and caring Christian community and see the value of a relationship with Jesus Christ modeled and taught.
- Encouraging children to develop to the fullest the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, physical and social gifts given to them by satisfying their curiosity and channeling their energy, imagination, and creativity into constructive efforts.
- Providing children the opportunity to have their learning needs met by offering every opportunity to excel in academic studies and social growth.
- Nurturing their need for spiritual maturity in proportion with their age and experience.

GOALS

We feel that the beginning of a child's education is an important step in life; therefore, the following are our goals:

- a. To create a warm learning environment where children can learn about God's love.
- b. To provide growth and development (physical, social and emotional) where positive self-images can be built.
- c. To provide skill development (knowledge, creativity, independence).
- d. To provide a high quality early childhood education for all young children.

DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

As stated in our school philosophy, our goal is to establish an age-appropriate learning environment for each child. We encourage open communication between the home and school by building a rapport with our families. This ensures the academic and social success of all students in the GSEC family.

The goal of our staff is to help children function in a group setting without hurting themselves, others or abusing property. When a child is not functioning well in a group setting, one or more of the following procedures are used:

1. Children are verbally asked to stop a certain activity or are redirected to another one.
2. Staff members will model appropriate words or behaviors as a teaching strategy.
3. A staff member will only physically remove a child in the event of danger to the child or another child.
4. A child may be asked to leave the group for a brief period until ready to join group activities again.
5. A staff member may place their arms around a child whose behavior is out of bounds in order to stop the child from injuring self or others.
6. The teaching/learning environment is re-evaluated often in order to make changes that would suggest a more positive behavior.
7. Parents and staff will work together to get new insight and establish common goals.

Corporal punishment is not allowed at GSEC. Spanking, threatening or frightening the student is prohibited. Depriving a student of food or comfort, such as taking away snack or long periods away from the group are not permitted for disciplining at GSEC.

The Director of GSEC reserves the right to request that the parent of a student who becomes a constant source of disruption to the group be asked to seek professional help for the child and/or family or withdraw the child from the program. This situation is rare and every effort is made to avoid it.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Good Shepherd Education Center follows school entrance requirements for the State of Maryland regarding the child's age at date of entry. Exceptions to this rule will be made only with the recommendation (in writing to the Director) from a Medical Doctor, the F.B. Gwynn Center, or the student's previous teacher.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

The Maryland State Department of Education is in the process of implementing a new State regulation for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. All children up to Kindergarten entry age attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs will need to have a developmental screening conducted. Development screening is important to help identify children with developmental concerns so they can be further evaluated by a professional and receive services as needed. Children who receive early intervention services generally do better in the long term than those identified later.

Children aged birth-36 months will be required to have two screenings per year. Children aged 37 months-Kindergarten entry will be required to have one screening per year.

The screening tool our program will use is called Ages and Stages. Our screening process will be conducted upon the enrollment of each child. Upon completion of the screening, we will meet with you to discuss the findings and whether a referral to another agency for further evaluation is necessary. Parents should consider this process as part of the required documentation in order for the child to attend our or any other licensed childcare program in the State.

AGE LEVEL ORGANIZATION

The following terminology and dates will be used regarding age/class placement levels:

- a. **Childcare (CC)** - Must have had the second birthday
- b. **Two-Day Preschool (PS2)** – Two year olds attend 2 days: Tuesday and Thursday.
- c. **Three-Day Preschool (PS3)** – Three & four year olds attend 3 days: Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- d. **Five-Day Preschool (PS5)** – Three & four year olds attend 5 days: Monday through Friday.
- e. **Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K)** – Must be four years old by September 1 of the enrolling year. Attend 5 days: Monday through Friday.

REGISTRATION

Good Shepherd Education Center will begin Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten registration for the next school year in January. Registration is conducted year-round. An appointment should be made with the Director in order to register a student. Tuition for currently enrolled students must be paid and up to date before being allowed to register for the next year. Post-dated checks will not be accepted at any time during the year.

Priority in admissions will be granted to members of Good Shepherd United Methodist Church and students enrolled for Childcare, current enrollees, siblings of current enrollees, and children of current GSEC staff. Any remaining slots will be open to the general public. Each age level has an assigned student capacity. A waiting list will be maintained and will consist of applicants for whom there is no vacancy at the time of registration. Vacancies in enrollment will be filled from this waiting list in the chronological and priority order in which the Director has received the applications.

A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration. The registration fee is NOT included in the last month's tuition.

Immunization records and a health inventory are required when a student is being registered for the first time. Whenever immunizations are updated, the office should receive a copy for the child's file.

A two week written notice is required if a family chooses to withdraw their child from the center. Payment is required for this two week period regardless of whether your child attends.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

All parents/guardians will complete a form (included in enrollment packet) concerning any individual needs required by their child while attending our Center. This information must be supplied before the child is admitted. GSEC will try to make special accommodations for children who require such accommodations, provided it is within our budget and professional expectations. Accommodation can be a specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's folder.

Good Shepherd Education Center will not discriminate against children or staff with special needs or communicable diseases such as Hepatitis B Virus, HIV and AIDS infection. The general policy is to disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and safety of others and to ensure appropriate care of the student.

If the Director determines that parents or the staff needs to be alerted to a case of contagious disease, it is Good Shepherd Education Center's policy not to reveal the identity of the infected student or his or her family. Our Center will follow the usual infection control procedures and use proper sanitation. Universal precautions will be used for all students or staff when blood is involved.

COMMUNICATION

Notes and email are our major method of communication with parents. Notes sent home are usually pinned to the student's school bag, or are placed inside the school bag. If there is a form that is to be sent back to the teacher, please do so the next day. A copy of the monthly center newsletter that is sent home is posted on the bulletin board in the foyer.

If your child goes to a caregiver after school, PLEASE make sure they know what is going on at Good Shepherd Education Center and put any notes sent home with the child in a special place until you pick up your child. This has been a problem in the past. Notes, phone calls, etc. from parents should always be directed to the teacher, not the classroom assistant.

Master email lists for each class will be maintained by the Education Center office. These lists will be used for distributing our monthly newsletter and to notify families of center classroom activities and special events.

PHONE CALLS

Please note that the phone number for the Center is 301-645-7550. Our Fax number is 301-843-4884. Any necessary phone calls should be made only on school days during the hours of 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM for Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten, 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM for Childcare. Teachers are not available before or after that time, weekends or holidays. Whenever possible, it is best to send a note to your child's teacher in lieu of a phone call. The 301-843-6797 phone number is for Good Shepherd United Methodist Church business.

UPDATES OF PHONE NUMBERS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

Please notify the Center immediately, in writing, to the Director's office of any changes of phone numbers, emergency phone numbers, email accounts, or addresses. Emergency numbers must be local and someone who can pick up your child if you are not at home.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT OUR RECORDS ARE CORRECT!

SCHOOL BAGS

Each student will be given a Good Shepherd Education Center school bag on Open House Day (see date on Center Calendar). Students should be encouraged to carry this bag each day with their juice box, snack, Show & Tell, etc. placed inside. Backpacks and other book bags with zippers, numerous compartments, etc., do not fit in our cubbies and cannot be manipulated easily by our students. Replacement bags are available at a minimal cost.

TRANSITIONS

Good Shepherd Education Center (GSEC) holds an Open House prior to the start of the year which provides an opportunity for parents and children to visit the classrooms, explore materials, and participate in activities together. This is also a wonderful opportunity for your child to become acquainted with his/her teacher with their parent(s) present.

Staff will work with children to make transitions throughout the day as smooth as possible. A daily schedule is posted in each classroom which helps to maintain routine activities so children will know what to expect.

Throughout the year activities are coordinated with other classrooms so children can become familiar with GSEC staff and children. Some of these activities focus around Halloween, Thanksgiving, and the Circus.

At the end of the school year, Pre-Kindergarten children visit a local elementary school to tour the school and Kindergarten classrooms. They experience some of the Kindergarten routines such as circle time and playground time. Preschool children that re-enroll for the following school year will visit their respective classrooms. Current and future teachers meet and discuss specific needs of the returning children. Children's portfolios are passed to the next teacher.

PAYMENT PROCEDURE

Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten tuition and Childcare payments are paid monthly or weekly in advance and are due on the first of the month/week. Payment in full is due for days/weeks when the Education Center may be closed due to snow, holidays, spring break, etc.

Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten and Childcare tuition paid in advance may be refunded only if: (1) the child is removed for medical reasons, with a doctor's written excuse, or if the family moves from the area (proof of the move, i.e., change-of-station orders or bill of

sale, will be required); (2) two weeks' notice is given in writing to the Director; and (3) provided the child's place can be filled from waiting list applicants. All three conditions must be met before we will refund prepaid tuition.

All payments must either be made by mail or put in the mailbox on the wall that is opposite the Administrative Office door in the foyer. NO TEACHER OR ASSISTANT is authorized to receive payments.

All checks or money orders should be made payable to GSEC (Good Shepherd Education Center), 305 East Smallwood Drive, Waldorf, MD 20602. Please **print your child's name and the month/week you are paying** in the lower left-hand corner of the check to ensure proper credit. No refunds will be made for vacations, snow closures, holidays or missed days.

LATE TUITION PAYMENT

A late payment fee of \$25.00 will be charged for overdue monthly tuition payments if not received by the 10th of the month. When a payment has not been received by the first of the following month, the student will be dismissed until the account is current.

Weekly tuition payments are due on Monday by 2:00PM. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for any payments received later. If payment is not received within two weeks the student will be dismissed until the account is current.

Families that do leave the Center with a tuition balance are expected to continue payments until the balance is paid in full. Failure to complete this obligation will result in legal action by the Center.

Understanding that financial hardships occur, families are asked to make an appointment to see the Director and discuss the situation to make an alternative plan for tuition payment. The GSEC Board and Director try not to forget our Christian ministry in the midst of financial difficulties.

LATE PICK UP FEE

For Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten students, a \$10 late pick-up fee will be charged when a student is not picked up within ten minutes after dismissal time (11:30 AM or 12:30 PM). An additional \$10.00 will be charged for each 15 minutes thereafter until the child is picked up from the Center. The official time will be by the classroom clock. The teacher will issue a late fee form to the parent and the Director when the student is picked up. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Cash payment is due to the staff the next school day.

For children in Childcare, a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for each 15 minutes or part thereof that parents are late for picking up their child after the facility closes at 6:00PM. The teacher will issue a late fee form to the parent and the Director when the child is picked up. The official time will be by the classroom clock. Cash payment should be made the next day to the staff member(s) that remained with the student.

RETURNED CHECK FEE

There is a returned check fee of \$25.00. If a check is returned for a second time, payment must be by cashier's check or money order.

LESSON PLANNING PROCESS

In planning classroom activities and materials for children, classroom teachers will use several components for lesson planning. The following components will help to design classroom activities for children enrolled at Good Shepherd Education Center that are age-appropriate, domain-based and reflective of children's interests, skills and culture diversity.

- MSDE approved curriculum, *Investigator Club* for Preschool classes and *Frog Street* for Pre-Kindergarten classes
- "All About My Child" form completed by parents for each child which provides information regarding interests, strengths, weaknesses, IFSP/IEP information, and primary language spoken at home
- Formal and informal assessments of each child
- Classroom/playground observations of each child
- Maryland Model for School Readiness and Healthy Beginnings training
- Classroom staff will discuss and collaborate the lesson planning process for each child during the daily planning time

CURRICULUM/ASSESSMENTS

Materials used in the classroom reflect and support the interests, culture, language and abilities of the children based on teacher observations, information received from the "All About My Child" form and parent/teacher discussions. The curriculum helps the classroom teacher to determine age-appropriate materials and multiple modes of exploration and learning for each unit of study. Materials are easily accessible ("child friendly" shelves and tables) for all children and are rotated with each unit. Classroom teachers take opportunities to attend professional workshops, courses and conferences to keep up to date with current teaching trends.

All of our staff share an appreciation and love for young children and can plan appropriate experiences for children at various developmental stages. We do have a specific curriculum, *Investigator Club*, for each level of Preschool Childcare (PS/CC), and Preschool (PS). Pre-Kindergarten Childcare (Pre-K/CC) and Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K AM) use *Frog Street* curriculum. It is our hope that your child will be enrolled at our Center for all levels.

The philosophy that children learn best through their play and that children learn by doing permeates our programs. The staff creates an atmosphere in which children have an opportunity to play with others and materials in cooperative and self-directed matters.

The children will have a variety of experiences in all the creative arts: creative movement, songs, finger plays, construction with blocks, storytelling, poetry, as well as a myriad of graphic media. The units that teachers plan for the children include activities

that enhance the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth in each individual's development. The teachers plan experiences to enhance the MSDE approved curriculum.

Individual assessments of each child are to be made throughout the school year. These assessments are made through teacher observations and curriculum based assessments. Parent-Teacher conferences are planned twice a year – Fall and Spring as indicated on the Center calendar. Classroom teachers will discuss the assessments at these conferences. Conferences may be conducted at different times if parents or classroom teachers determine a need.

a. JUST FOR TWOS

A program used to develop each child's language, gross motor and small motor skills. Self-discipline, cooperation, and creative expression are fostered through play activities. Exploration of manipulative toys, books, indoor and outdoor play, equipment and materials help develop the child's curiosity, creativity, and independence. Art and music experiences with a variety of materials are an integral part of the program.

This program is for two year old children who need full-time childcare. The "Ounce Scale" is the curriculum used for planning and meeting the developmental milestones of two-year-olds.

b. PS 2, 3, and 5 day, PS/CC

Investigator Club curriculum, published by Robert-Leslie Publishing, is recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education as a comprehensive, fully integrated curriculum created to prepare three year old children for kindergarten in all developmental areas.

Children investigate their world through stories, music and movement, hands-on activities, multisensory experiences, and discovery. Each investigation taps into children's natural curiosity about the world and their place in it and challenges them to use their senses, ask questions, and find the answers in a supportive environment.

Content area skills, including those in literacy, math, social studies, science, creative arts, and the social and emotional realm are explicitly taught and seamlessly woven into each investigation. The Investigator Club creates a community of curious children, dedicated teachers, and devoted parents who will explore, discover, and learn together.

c. Pre-K AM and Pre-K/CC

Frog Street curriculum, published by Frog Street Press, Inc., is recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education as a comprehensive, fully integrated curriculum created to prepare four year old children for the academic and social demands of kindergarten.

It is about building a community of learners with...

Comprehensive Curriculum	Differentiated Instruction	Joyful Learning
Child-Centered	English Language Learners	High Interest Materials/Activities
Intentional & Integrated Math, Science, Music, Art	Adaptations for Young Learners	Songs, Stories, Rhymes, Fingerplays and Games
English and Spanish	Special Needs Adaptations	Opportunities to Laugh and Play
Focus on Social-Emotional Development featuring Dr. Becky Bailey's "Conscious Discipline"	Scaffolding & Challenge Opportunities	

MEDIA POLICY

Screen time will be confined to times that are directly related to learning experiences in the 3 & 4 year old programs. There is no screen time in the 2 year old programs.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

For children attending Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten AM, adults must accompany and wait in the foyer with the students until the double doors are opened at 8:20 AM. Students will have 10 minutes to hang up their wraps and get ready to start each day beginning promptly at 8:30 AM. It is disturbing and upsetting for a student to continually miss turns during opening exercises. Late arrivals are very distracting to the rest of the class.

Parents are required to sign their child/children in/out on the attendance form located in the classroom, in accordance with regulations.

DRESS/PHYSICAL FITNESS

Helping children to develop physically is an important component of early childhood development. Children need to have the opportunity for gross motor skill development each day. It is an integral part of our curriculum and part of each child's day. Gross motor skills include running, jumping, climbing, skipping, hopping, etc. Whenever the weather is inclement and children cannot go outside for these activities, the Fellowship Hall or the individual classroom will be used to provide them.

Since children go outside daily, in accordance with regulations, each child needs to be provided with appropriate clothing including boots, mittens and hats in season. Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is appropriate for the season. Belts, coveralls and jumpsuits sometimes create problems. We will go outside each day unless prohibited by the weather. Sneakers or sturdy shoes with rubber soles are the

preferred footwear for all students. If dress shoes, jelly shoes, flip-flops or sandals are worn to the Center, please pack appropriate sneakers for outdoor play.

All articles of clothing etc. that will be removed must be labeled (last name only). A Lost and Found Box is kept in the Director's office and unclaimed articles are taken to Children's Aid periodically.

Children attending Childcare must have an extra set of clothes in Childcare at all times. Children grow quickly, so please check periodically to be sure the "spare clothes" still fit and are appropriate for the current season.

LUNCHES & SNACK TIME

While the predisposition for obesity may begin before birth, the roots of obesity are often established between the ages of two and five years. Good Shepherd Education Center will strive to plan and serve nutritious snacks and encourage parents to pack healthy snacks (when applicable) and lunches. The Center will provide information and opportunities for nutrition education through various workshop opportunities, nutrition related articles and as part of our classroom curriculum.

a. PRESCHOOL 2, 3, 5 DAY (8:30-11:30)

There will be one snack period daily per class. Each student must bring a single snack item and beverage daily. The snack item should be contained in a re-sealable plastic bag labeled with the child's first and last name. This snack should be nutritious and ready to eat in small, child-size portions without additional preparations. Some suggestions for snacks are fresh fruit, raw vegetables, crackers with cheese, small sandwiches, muffins, cookies. Suggestions for beverages are fruit juices or water. Snacks that are purchased in the dairy or meat section at the grocery store are considered potentially hazardous since they are required to be continuously stored at or below 45° F and **are not acceptable** snacks. Snack time will be discussed in each classroom at the Parent/Teacher Orientation meeting.

b. PRE-KINDERGARTEN AM (8:30-12:30)

Children in **PRE-K AM (8:30-12:30)** must bring a lunch daily. It should be contained in a thermal lunch bag labeled (**on the outside**) with the child's first and last name. This lunch should be nutritious and ready to eat in small, child-size portions. **Due to time restraints, staff will not be able to heat items.** Per regulation, the Center is required to serve pasteurized, Grade A milk to each child with their lunch. If your child requires a modified diet for medical reasons, a note from the physician is required. If there are dietary restrictions, a note from parents is required for the child's file. For both instances, parents are asked to pack the modified diet in the child's lunch box each day. A snack for Pre-K AM will be supplied and posted by the Center, per regulations.

c. THE TWOS, PRESCHOOL & PRE-K CHILDCARE

The Center will provide two snacks daily, one in the morning and the other in mid-afternoon. A monthly snack menu will be posted on the Childcare bulletin board in the foyer. The Center will serve each child milk or water with the snack.

Children who will be in Childcare for lunchtime (11:15 AM) must bring a lunch daily. It should be contained in a thermal lunch bag labeled **(on the outside)** with the child's first and last name. This lunch should be nutritious and ready to eat in small, child-size portions. Staff will heat items in a microwave, if needed; however, please keep warming time to a minimum. Per regulation, the Center is required to serve pasteurized, Grade A milk to each child with their lunch. If your child requires a modified diet for medical reasons, **a note from the physician is required**. If there are dietary restrictions, a note from parents is required for the child's file. For both instances, parents are asked to pack the modified diet in the child's lunch box each day.

All children attending Childcare on a full day schedule will lie down on cots and sheets provided by the Center. A child may bring a special blanket, small pillow and/or washable soft toy for resting.

d. ALL

We have limited refrigerator space for storage of milk and lunches. Carbonated beverages, cans, bottles, glass containers or pouch type drinks will not be allowed. Napkins will be provided by the Center. Group snacks will be allowed for special occasions at the discretion of the teacher.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays will be observed in all the classrooms. Each teacher will explain how she will handle birthdays in her classroom at the Parent/Teacher Orientation meeting. Favors, goodie bags, balloons, candy, etc., will not be part of the class celebration. No party invitations can be handed out at the Center unless the entire class is invited. This policy is to protect the feelings of every student. You may provide a simple snack and napkins. We request cookies, donut holes, or individual ice cream treats be sent in for celebration rather than cake or cupcakes (most children tend to eat only the frosting). Due to food allergies for many children, only commercially prepared foods may be served at parties and celebrations with the class. This will enable staff to read labels and not serve foods that may cause allergic reactions for children in our care. "No label, we can't serve." At no time may candles be used. No party favors or hats, please.

NUT SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The number of children who suffer from severe nut allergies is increasing each year. Also, children may develop an allergy at **any** time. In order to provide a safe environment for all children, the Center is promoting a nut-sensitive environment.

In order to protect children with allergies to peanuts or similar nut products, GSEC will have a policy that no food (snacks/lunch) containing nuts should be brought to the Center. The Center will not purchase any nut products and nut products are not to be used by the staff (ex. cooking projects).

It is recommended that labels of products be read to determine if there are nuts as part of the ingredients. This policy includes products that are manufactured in facilities, as stated on the label; that process peanuts. Products that many contain (but are not limited to) nuts include peanut butter, Nutella, fruit and nut bars, and chocolate.

While it may not be possible to guarantee that nut products will not be in the Center, it is requested that parents and staff make every effort to support this policy to ensure the safety and well-being of **all** children.

ABSENCES FROM GOOD SHEPHERD EDUCATION CENTER

For children attending Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten or Childcare, please send a note to the teacher on the day the student returns for all absences from the center explaining why the student was absent (be specific concerning illness). It must be dated and signed. This note is required by regulations and is filed in the student's folder.

ILLNESSES OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AT THE CENTER

Please keep your child at home when he/she has a contagious condition or is not well enough to participate in normal daily activities. Outdoor activities play an integral part of a child's motor development at GSEC. If your child is not well enough to go outdoors, please keep him/her at home. Children may not attend if they have, but not limited to, any of the following conditions:

1. Fever greater than 101° F
2. Contagious condition (ex: pinkeye, head lice, etc.)
3. Symptoms and signs of illness: excessive coughing, wheezing, lethargy, irritability
4. Cough or cold persisting more than 3 days or of a serious nature
5. Vomiting in the preceding 24 hours
6. Strep throat
7. Mouth sores
8. Chicken pox
9. Skin rash
10. Persistent diarrhea

If a child appears to be ill, it will be the Director's discretion to send the child home. If you are notified to pick up your sick child, please do so promptly. GSEC is not staffed to provide extended care for ill children. Please notify the Center if your child has a contagious illness. If your child is absent please send a note including the date and reason for absence upon his/her return. Before being readmitted to the Center, any child that has been absent for 3 (three) or more days must have a written statement from the parent or physician, indicating that he/she may return to regular activity.

The Center should be called immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, etc. Please keep your child home if there is any doubt concerning illness (fever, rash, sore throat, etc.) and contact your physician in order to stop the spread to other classmates. The child must remain home for the time period specified by the physician. No student may attend the

Center while results of any medical cultures are pending. It is not necessary to call the Center every time your child is absent.

In case of simple injury (e.g. abrasions, skinned knees, splinters), the staff will perform routine hygienic measures of washing with soap and water and applying adhesive strips. Ice will be applied to bumps. No topical medication, ointments, etc. may be used.

If circumstances require, emergency medical services will be called. The school staff will respond as necessary until rescue arrives. There is a first aid trained staff member on site at all times. In the event that hospitalization (Emergency Room Services) is required, the child will be taken to the closest hospital unless the child's emergency card indicates otherwise. Parents will assume financial responsibility for such services. It is imperative that all listed Emergency Phone Numbers be accessible during Center hours.

READMISSION AFTER ILLNESS

Absence of 3 days or more from the Center due to illness shall require a parent's written statement or a physician's certificate of freedom from illness before the student can return to the Center. This note must be sent with the student **on the day the student returns** to the Center.

MEDICATIONS

- a. All medications and required paperwork brought to the center must be given by a parent or guardian to the child's teacher or the Director.
- b. All medication whether prescription or non-prescription will be administered only if there is written authorization from a licensed physician.
- c. All medications to be administered, prescription and non-prescription, must be listed on a Medication Order Form which is available from the Director or a staff member.
- d. A separate Medication Order Form must be filled out for each medication the child is to receive.
- e. Authorization to administer medication over the phone will not be permitted. All medications, including non-prescription, must be in the original container. Prescription medications must be in a container labeled by the pharmacy or physician with the child's name, date of the prescription, name of the medication, administration schedule, special instructions, duration of prescription, and expiration date. Expired medications will not be administered to a child.
- f. At least one dose of all prescription medications must be administered to the child at home.
- g. Siblings may not share medications.
- h. Due to their potential choking hazard, no child will be permitted to use cough drops or throat lozenges.
- i. Diaper rash products, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner, however, a Medication Order Form must be completed. The topical medication must also be labeled with the child's name.

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN

In accordance with MSDE Regulations, Pediatrician Dr. Aziza Alam has consented to be on a consulting basis for our Center. Her office is located in the Luan Professional Building (Suite #102) at 6 Post Office Rd., St. Charles.

PRESCHOOL & PRE-KINDERGARTEN DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

It is very important for you to be on time to pick up your child after classes. The following method will be used for dismissal of our students. Please read it carefully and give us your cooperation. Please make sure spouses, sitters and others who pick up are aware of this plan. No student will be allowed to leave the building unaccompanied. Under no circumstances will any student be released to anyone without WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION, as stated on the student's Emergency Form which is on file.

A note must be sent to your child's teacher if your child will be going home with someone other than you or the usual carpool as specified on your Emergency Form. The note must specify the name, phone number and relationship of the person picking up your child. Also, if you must pick up your child early, send a note with your child to the teacher specifying the time. Your child will NOT be sent to the foyer to wait for you.

Phone calls made (in case of an emergency situation only) must include the name of the person calling and their phone number for verification PLUS the name and phone number of the person picking up the student. Before leaving the classroom, each child's attendance must be verified by the adult picking up the child.

A. Driver's Responsibilities:

- 1) Will arrive before 11:25 AM or 12:25 PM and be ready to leave when students are dismissed.
- 2) Will park in the parking space for persons with disabilities only if special tag or permit is displayed.
- 3) Will wait in the foyer until the Administrative Assistant has opened the doors before going to the Educational Wing.
- 4) Will make sure that students and younger children in their care do not stop to play in classrooms or disturb materials, etc. as they pass through while picking up at dismissal.
- 5) Will wait until all students have been picked up and the teacher is free if they desire to discuss any immediate concerns that cannot be taken care of with a note or phone call.
- 6) Will leave the Education Wing by the door at the far end of that building. Please note - this door is for EXIT ONLY and will not be allowed for use to enter building at any time. **Please alert the Director if you notice anyone using this door to gain entrance to the Center.**
- 7) Will buckle all passengers into safety seats or use seat belts.
- 8) Will drive slowly, with caution, in the parking lot.

B. Teacher's Responsibilities:

- 1) Will have students ready for dismissal by 11:25 AM or 12:25 PM.
- 2) Will require students to sit in their classrooms until person picking them up enters the room and calls out student's name.

- 3) Will remain in the classroom with the students and be responsible for them until picked up.
- 4) Will fill out a form when a late pick up fee is incurred.

C. Student's Responsibilities:

- 1) Will remain in seat in classroom until parent or carpool driver calls out their name.
- 2) Will not stop to play or disturb classrooms as they pass through on their way to the exit door.
- 3) Will stay with responsible adult until reaching vehicle in the parking lot.
- 4) Will buckle-up as required!

RELEASE FROM CHILDCARE

Please pick your child up from the Childcare room. Parents are required to sign out their child/children on the attendance form in the classroom, in accordance with regulations.

Each child will only be released to persons for whom previous written permission has been obtained from the parent or guardian. Persons, other than the parent/guardian, must show identification and sign for the child on the attendance sheet and must be at least 16 years old. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.**

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL/RELIGION

Good Shepherd Education Center will conduct a weekly service in the sanctuary for all Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Childcare students. The pastor will conduct this ecumenical service which will coordinate with the Center's planned units of study. This service will be held on Tuesday or Wednesday at 8:45 AM to allow our PS2/3 day students to attend (see dates on Center Calendar).

Parents, siblings and other guests are invited to all Children's Chapel services and are encouraged to attend when possible. Parents and siblings should sit quietly in the back pews of the sanctuary. There is an assigned area for each Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Childcare class for Children's Chapel.

FIELD TRIPS

Childcare, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten classes will not take any field trips off church property during the school year.

OBSERVING CENTER ACTIVITIES

From time to time we receive requests from parents of prospective students to observe our Center activities while classes are in session. Any adult wishing to observe should call ahead and check in at the Director's office before going to observe a classroom. A letter of introduction will be needed if you are not the parent of a current or prospective student.

VOLUNTEERS

For reasons of continuity of care for our students, volunteers are not regularly used in the classrooms. We may occasionally request additional parental help for special events.

PICTURES

On occasion we will photograph or videotape our classes. These pictures are used for classroom and hallway bulletin boards to share school events with our families. Video recordings may be shared with families during social events (Open House). A professional photographer will take Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten individual pictures in the Fall. A class picture will be taken in the Spring and given to each child.

SHOW & TELL – PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES

Students will be assigned a time for Show & Tell, which will be included in the daily lesson plan. Your child will bring a note home specifying the day of the week assigned for his/her Show & Tell. Show & Tell is great for building self-confidence. It is best to let the child bring what he/she wants. Suggestions are bits of nature, books or tapes that are seasonal to go along with your child's study unit for the week. If the Center is closed or your child is absent on his/her day, it is best to wait until the next week for his/her Show & Tell time. Show & Tell items should be brought in a bag with the child's name printed on it. Due to allergies, pets may not be brought for Show and Tell.

ADULT MISCONDUCT

No abusive language or behavior will be tolerated from parents toward other parents or toward any Good Shepherd staff member on any property of the church. The staff of Good Shepherd Education Center extends courtesy to all parents, grandparents, and caregivers and the Director expects the same courtesy to be extended by adults entering the Center.

Any misconduct by a parent, grandparent, guardian, caregiver or other adult will result in an interview with the Director. This interview will serve as a warning. Any further misconduct will be handled at the discretion of the Director and the Good Shepherd Education Center Board of Directors. This may result in expulsion of both student and adult for the remainder of the school year and/or prevent any future attendance at Good Shepherd Education Center.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

GSEC is required to have a plan to ensure that we are well prepared for emergencies. Emergency Preparedness drills are practiced twice a year. A Fire Drill is performed every month. If a need were to arise that required evacuation of the building, students and staff would go to Arthur Middleton Elementary School located at 1109 Copley Avenue in St. Charles. GSEC would follow instructions from local civil authorities regarding the need to evacuate or to keep the building secured.

PARENT/CENTER RELATIONSHIPS

Good Shepherd Education Center always strives to keep the doors of communication open between home and school. We maintain an open door policy for our families. Parents are encouraged to participate in various activities throughout the school year. These activities include in-house field trips, Scholastic Book Fair, birthday and holiday parties, and parent/teacher conferences. A Parent Volunteer Survey will be sent home in the Fall of each year with a variety of ways to volunteer.

Teachers will try to be as available as their schedule allows. Teachers are busy with class preparation before and after classes. If you wish to talk with the teacher, the best time would be after class when all the students have been picked up. Staff Members should not be approached outside of school to discuss a student's progress.

The Center receives lots of information from state and local agencies regarding resources for children and families. These resources may include workshops, meetings, and agency descriptions and may be helpful for our families. This information is posted on the bulletin board in the church foyer. If parents/family members have questions or need guidance regarding a particular concern, such as referral resources for children with special needs or health care needs, please do not hesitate to inquire with the staff or the Director.

Each Spring parents will receive a program evaluation to complete regarding many aspects of the GSEC programs. We ask parents to give us this necessary feedback to help with planning and improving programs for the following year. Throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact the Director if you have any suggestions, criticisms or concerns about Center operations or the Staff.

BABYSITTING/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Based on research and discussions with legal counsel, it has been determined that a conflict of interest does exist, actual or potential, when GSEC staff babysit for GSEC families. GSEC staff owe their primary commitment to GSEC, its parents and children. Entering into other employment relationships with GSEC parents creates at least the perception that the commitment of the staff to that parent and his/her child is somehow greater than that of the staff to other parents or children. Further, if there is a dispute between the parent and the staff, there may be a perception on the part of the parent that the staff's commitment to or treatment of their child while at GSEC is, or will be, adversely impacted. Either of these situations could interfere with the proper operation of GSEC and ultimately hurt the reputation of GSEC and its employees. **Therefore, GSEC expressly prohibits its staff from babysitting for currently enrolled GSEC families.**

PARKING

Only those with special tags or permits for persons with disabilities are allowed to use the parking spaces designated for that purpose in our parking lot. We suggest that you park in the lower end of the lot nearest the Education Wing since you will be exiting from the door at the end of that building each day after picking up students. **YOUNGER**

CHILDREN OR BABIES SHOULD NEVER BE LEFT UNATTENDED IN YOUR VEHICLES. Please observe and use the ONE-WAY signs and arrows (painted on the road) in our parking lot.

SEAT BELT LAW

As of June 30, 2008, the Maryland Child Passenger Safety Law requires that every child under 8 years old must ride in a booster seat or other appropriate child safety seat unless the child is 4'9" or taller, or weighs more than 65 pounds. Every child from 8 to 16 years old who is not secured in a car seat must be secured in the vehicle's seat belt. Child safety seats include infant seats, convertible seats, forward-facing seats, booster seats, or other federally approved safety devices.

SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

As required by regulations, smoking of cigarettes, cigars or pipes and the consumption of alcohol or controlled dangerous substances will not be allowed in the Center, outdoor play areas or during field trips. Please note that Good Shepherd is a Tobacco and Drug Free Zone.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

PS2, 3, & 5, PRE-KINDERGARTEN AM

- a. If the Charles County Public Schools are closed, PS and Pre-K AM will be closed.
- b. If the Charles County Public Schools delay opening **one** hour, PS and Pre-K AM will open one hour late, as well.
- c. If the Charles County Public Schools delay opening **two** hours or more, PS sessions will be canceled. Pre-K AM will open at 10:30AM.
- d. We will take up to four snow days if needed. PS and Pre-K AM will make up only full days missed, not half days.

PRESCHOOL & PRE-KINDERGARTEN CHILDCARE

- a. We will have our office answering machine (301-645-7550) recorded with a message by 5:30AM on inclement weather days.
- b. If the Federal Government is closed, Childcare will be closed.
- c. If the Federal Government is on liberal leave, every attempt will be made to open Childcare. There may be a delay if icy conditions exist.
- d. If the Federal Government closes early, Childcare will follow their plan by closing early. Please be alert to news broadcasts when the weather might indicate hazardous road conditions.
- e. If the Charles County Public Schools delay opening one or two hour(s), Childcare will attempt to open at the regular time. There may be a delay if icy conditions exist.
- f. If the Charles County Public Schools are closed, please listen to the recorded message regarding the Center's status.

INDEX

ABSENCES FROM GOOD SHEPHERD EDUCATION CENTER.....	12
ADULT MISCONDUCT.....	16
AGE LEVEL ORGANIZATION.....	3
ARRIVAL PROCEDURE.....	9
BABYSITTING/CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	17
BIRTHDAYS.....	11
CHILDREN'S CHAPEL/RELIGION.....	15
COMMUNICATION.....	4
CONSULTING PHYSICIAN.....	14
CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	16
CURRICULUM/ASSESSMENTS.....	7
DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING.....	2
DISCIPLINE STATEMENT.....	2
DISMISSAL PROCEDURE - PS, PRE-K.....	14
DRESS/PHYSICAL FITNESS.....	9
FIELD TRIPS.....	15
GOALS/HISTORY.....	1
ILLNESSES OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AT THE CENTER.....	12
INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY.....	19
INDIVIDUAL NEEDS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.....	4
LATE PAYMENTS.....	6
LESSON PLANNING PROCESS.....	7
LUNCHESES & SNACK TIME.....	10
MEDICATIONS.....	13
MEDIA POLICY.....	9
MISSION STATEMENT.....	1
NUT-SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT POLICY.....	11
OBSERVING CENTER ACTIVITIES.....	15
PARENT/CENTER RELATIONSHIPS.....	17
PARKING.....	17
PAYMENT PROCEDURE.....	5
PHILOSOPHY.....	1
PHONE CALLS.....	4
PICTURES.....	16
READMISSION AFTER ILLNESS.....	13
REGISTRATION.....	3
RELEASE FROM CHILDCARE.....	15
RETURNED CHECK FEE.....	7
SCHOOL BAGS.....	5
SEAT BELT LAW.....	17
SHOW & TELL.....	16
SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.....	18
VOLUNTEERS.....	16



PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT

305 East Smallwood Drive
Waldorf, MD 20602
(301) 645-7550

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Please read and sign this agreement and **return it on Parent/Teacher Orientation Evening.**

- I have received the Parent/Guardian Handbook for school year 2016-2017 which contains the Center's Philosophy/Mission Statement, Discipline Policy, History and other pertinent information.
- I hereby agree to comply with the rules and regulations of Good Shepherd Education Center regarding fees, attendance, health, parking, clothes, and other items specified in the Parent/Guardian Handbook issued by the Center for this school year.
- I am aware of the holidays, as scheduled on the Center Calendar.
- I hereby agree to comply with the requirements as outlined in the handbook regarding withdrawal from Childcare, Preschool or Pre-Kindergarten .
- I understand the Inclement Weather Policy and am aware that the Center may be closed occasionally.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Parent or legal guardian)

CHILD'S NAME _____
(Please Print)