



Preschool Family Handbook 2024-2025

**Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Preschool
9400 East Mountain View Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85258**

480-860-0488
shepherdaz.school

Leading People to Follow Jesus

Updated 12/5/2023

Shepherd's Mission

Leading People to Follow Jesus

Shepherd's Philosophy

At Shepherd of the Desert Preschool, we believe a child's first school experience is important because it lays the foundation for all future educational experiences. We believe each child is a unique gift from God. Our teaching approach involves the whole child and recognizes that every child develops at his or her own pace. Therefore, we strive to create classroom environments that are safe, loving, and rich in opportunities for learning and spiritual growth through age-appropriate, hands-on activities that maximize each student's learning potential.

Licensing

Shepherd of the Desert Preschool is licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services (150 N. 18th Ave, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85007, phone: 602-364-2539). All inspection reports are available for review in the preschool office and online at www.azdhs.gov/als/childcare.

Accreditation

Shepherd of the Desert Preschool is accredited by the Early Childhood Accreditation Commission of the Pacific Southwest District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, since September 1996. Accreditation is granted when nationally recognized criteria for high quality programs have been met. Extensive self-study and validation visits are required to complete this process. Shepherd Preschool's most recent accreditation visit took place in April, 2022.

Contact Information

Preschool Direct Line: 480-860-0488

Front Office, extension 10

Preschool Director, extension 11

Church Direct Line: 480-860-1188

Website: www.shepherdaz.school

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 7:30am-5:00pm

Shepherd of the Desert Preschool carries the appropriate liability insurance for our school and can be reviewed on site.

Welcome to Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Preschool!

We are a non-profit, Christian preschool in affiliation with Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church. Our mission is to “Lead People to Follow Jesus” by sharing the gospel with the children of our community and providing a Christ-centered education. At Shepherd, your child will have the opportunity to know and experience the unconditional love of Jesus through Bible stories, prayer, songs, and chapel. Our program enhances cognitive, social, emotional, language, spiritual and physical development through a hands-on, center-based environment. Shepherd of the Desert Preschool serves children ages eighteen months through five years old and offers half-day, lunch, and full day options. Before and After School Care are also available to our families on a regular or drop-in basis.

School Day Schedule Options

Weekly Classroom Schedule Options:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday - Tuesday/Thursday - Monday through Friday

Morning Class - 8:30am-11:30am

Morning with Lunch - 8:30am-12:30pm

All Day Class - 8:30am-2:45pm

Before School Care – 7:30am-8:30am

After School Care – 2:45pm-5:00pm

Teaching Approach

We believe that play and learning go hand-in-hand and that they are not separate activities. Therefore, our classrooms are center-based with a curriculum that supports a balance of student-directed and teacher-directed activities. Our goal is to help students become lifelong learners who are socially, academically, emotionally and spiritually competent.

In all of our classrooms, we use an early-learning, standards-based approach to develop a curriculum which incorporates monthly learning themes. Daily lessons and concepts are augmented with children’s literature, songs, non-fiction books and online resources. Each day, in all of our classrooms, children are engaged in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play and teacher-guided activities.

Our curriculum supports developmentally appropriate practices. Saxon Early Learning Standards, Zoo-phonics, HighReach, and Concordia Publishing One in Christ are used as a guide for the curriculum in our classes. These programs incorporate the eight instructional elements (spiritual, social/emotional, physical (fine/gross motor), social studies, mathematics, language arts, science, and fine arts). They also emphasize activities that cultivate children’s social, personal, academic, emotional and spiritual development.

Christian Growth

At Shepherd of the Desert, daily devotions, prayer, Jesus Time, and weekly chapel are used to encourage Christian growth. Mission projects are planned throughout the year and offerings are collected to help support our neighboring community and others in need. Families are encouraged to participate in these special projects to help their child develop an attitude of stewardship and giving to others.

Eighteen-Month-Olds and Two-Year-Olds

Our eighteen-month-old and two-year-old programs focus on language development, social skills and executive functions and takes into account brain-based research to help support and strengthen development. Our loving and nurturing teachers encourage students to explore and create while cultivating each child's desire for independence and social competency necessary for future school success. Our center-based approach allows children the opportunity to grow at their own pace, supported by strong Christian role models.

Three-Year-Olds

Our three-year-old program focuses on social development, classroom skills, and executive functions and inspires children to develop curiosity for the world around them. Children are encouraged to explore their creative side and fosters independence through art, music and dramatic play. Daily activities include literacy, math, science, social studies, and spiritual growth opportunities. Our center-based approach allows children the opportunity to grow at their own pace, supported by strong Christian role models.

Four-Year-Olds

Our four-year-old program is designed to prepare your child for kindergarten. This class promotes learning through the joy of discovery and play, and the classroom structure incorporates a balance of teacher-directed and student-directed learning opportunities throughout the day. In our classrooms, children are both nurtured and challenged as they participate in literacy, math, science, social studies, art and spiritual growth activities and move towards greater independence as they prepare to transition to Kindergarten.

Kindergarten Prep

This program is an extension of our four-year-old program and is designed for older four and five-year-olds. As in all of our classrooms, there is a balance of teacher-directed and student-directed learning. The classroom is designed to facilitate a student's growth in their knowledge of literacy, math, science, social studies and spiritual concepts and move towards independence as they prepare to enter kindergarten.



Admissions Policies

Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality or ethnic origin, making available to all of its students the rights, privileges, and activities associated with the program. Additionally, Shepherd of the Desert does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, tuition assistance, loan

programs and other school-administered programs.

In order to be eligible for enrollment, parents must acknowledge, accept and uphold the following:

1. Each child will receive training in the teachings of the Bible as taught throughout the curriculum of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Preschool.
2. Each child and family is expected to comply with all rules and regulations of the school for efficient, safe and orderly operations.
3. Each child will be invited to participate in school-related activities throughout the school year including school programs, field trips, and other school/church functions.
4. Each child transferring from another school may be evaluated prior to admission and the former school may be contacted for student records.
5. Children must meet the following age requirements upon entry into school:
18 Month Program – 18 months by September 1st of current school year
2's Program – 2 years old by September 1st of the current school year*
3's Program – 3 years old by September 1st of the current school year*
4's Program – 4 years old by September 1st of the current school year*
K-Prep – 5 years old by December 31st of the current school year*

**Exceptions may be made by administration on a case-by-case basis*

All children entering our 3's and older classes must be self-sufficient in the bathroom and diapers/pull-ups are not allowed in these classrooms as we are not licensed for diapers EXCEPT in our two-year-old rooms.

Admission Priorities

Shepherd of the Desert Preschool exists to share the *Good News* of the Gospel through Christ-Centered education. To that end, we invite all who are interested in such an educational experience to apply for admission. It is always our hope and prayer to have space for all who apply. However, it is recognized that in order to have a quality classroom experience, class sizes, which are determined by licensing regulations and the Preschool Director, need to be limited and a system of admission priorities may need to be invoked. In this case, eligibility for admission shall be based on the initial date of application and the categories listed below.

1. Active members of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church who meet the criteria for enrollment priority.
 2. Students who completed the previous school year at Shepherd.
 3. Siblings of enrolled students who have not previously attended Shepherd.
 4. Families who are not currently enrolled but who have had a student enrolled within the past 10 years.
 5. New Requests taken on a first-come, first-served basis
- All re-enrollees are required to meet the specified re-enrollment deadlines with completed paperwork and paid registration fees in order to keep their priority enrollment status.
 - Priority of re-enrollment is forfeited by any family should the payment of tuition become an issue.

Admission Requirements

All forms must be filled out completely and submitted to the school office for review. The following forms must be included to complete your child's enrollment packet:

1. Application for Admission
2. Tuition Agreement Form
3. Parent Consent and Release Form
4. Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card
5. Immunization Records (exclusion forms are available in the office)
6. Birth Certificate
7. Recent Photograph
8. Non-Refundable Registration Fee (for students who have secured placement)

Shepherd of the Desert Preschool reserves the right to decline admission or continuation of admission for any student for the following reasons:

1. If the previous school records or current records for the child indicate that he/she would have great difficulty obtaining growth within our school.
2. If the child has a disability which would prevent him/her or his/her classmates from learning adequately in the school's environment.
3. If it is determined that the child provides a significant hindrance to the safety and/or academic and/or spiritual nature of the school.
4. If the student has been suspended or expelled from a previous school or has a record of discipline problems.
5. The parent displays violent tendencies or unwillingness to work with/support the school's staff or its policies.
6. If all payments for the previous school year have not been fulfilled by May 31 of that year.

Enrollment Procedures

All enrollment forms will be posted on our website, www.shepherdaz.school, one month prior to the enrollment period. Parents are encouraged to print copies of the forms, fill them out, and bring them to school on their slated enrollment date. Packets are also available in the preschool office. New enrollees must wait until the specified date to bring in paperwork, and all spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please Note:

- Re-enrollment deadlines are included in the re-enrollment information. These dates must be adhered to in order to maintain priority placement status.
- All paperwork must be completed and submitted and registration fees must be paid at the time of re-enrollment/enrollment in order to secure classroom placement.
- All registration fees are non-refundable.

Tuition Rates

Tuition is to be paid in ten monthly payments. All payments will be processed through our FACTS Tuition Management Program. Parents must set up their account by July 10, 2024. Tuition payments will be automatically debited from the authorized account on the first day of each month August through May. If funds are unavailable on the first of the month, FACTS will charge an NSF fee. If tuition is not paid by the 15th of the month, an additional fee may be applied to your account. If your payment is not received by the end of the month, your child will not be able to attend school until payment arrangements have been made with the preschool office. Enrollment for the following year is dependent on full payment of the prior year's tuition and fees.

TTH Classes		2 day costs	MWF Classes		3 day costs	Monday-Friday	5 day costs
TTh am - 8:30-11:30		\$355	MWF am - 8:30-11:30		\$465	M-F am - 8:30-11:30	\$725
TTh lunch - 8:30-12:30		\$450	MWF lunch - 8:30-12:30		\$610	M-F lunch - 8:30-12:30	\$945
TTh all day - 8:30-2:45		\$580	MWF all day - 8:30-2:45		\$810	M-F all day - 8:30-2:45	\$1185
Before School Care (7:30-8:30)				Before and After School Care (2:45-5:00)			
Plan	Days Per Week – Monthly Fee			Plan	Days Per Week – Monthly Fee		
A	2 Days/week - \$90			D	2 Days/week - \$160		
B	3 Days/week - \$110			E	3 Days/week - \$195		
C	5 Days/week - \$140			F	5 Days/week - \$240		
Drop-In Rate \$15/hour							

Schedule Change

Any permanent change to a child's schedule will result in a \$25 change fee as adjustments take time to implement in our FACTS Tuition Management System. Please notify the preschool office of any changes. Changes to your child's schedule can be made after September 15th.

Vacations or Missed Days Due to Sickness

There are no credits or make-up days issued to families who choose to take vacations during scheduled class time or for days missed due to illness. Tuition payments will not be adjusted as your payment ensures that your child's spot will be held until your return.

Withdrawal from Enrollment

A 30-day, written notice to the Preschool Director is required for withdrawal. A withdrawal fee equal to one month's tuition is assessed on withdrawals made without a 30-day notice.

Other Important Preschool Information

Accident and Emergency Procedures

When an accident occurs at school, your child will be given lots of love and appropriate first aid care for the injury. 911 will be called immediately if necessary. An accident report will be filled out and will be required to have a parent signature. It is our policy to call and inform a parent whenever there is a head injury. In the case of an emergency involving the entire school, appropriate safety procedures will be followed and all families will be contacted by phone and email message.

Emergency Planning / Lock Down

Located in each classroom is a red binder outlining our Safety and Emergency Plan.

While emergencies can vary considerably, the following preparations have been made:

1. **Emergency Alerts:** We will follow directions provided by emergency broadcasts. To hear alerts (during orange or higher alert) a radio will be kept playing in the school and church offices). Preparations are made to keep students at school short-term, for the day or possibly one night.
2. **Lock Down:** During a lock down, students and teachers remain in classroom with doors locked. School staff will release students only to authorized representatives after the lock down has ended.
3. **Emergency Supplies:** water, snacks, flashlights, and batteries are stored in each classroom.
4. **Notification:** Parents or emergency contacts will be notified to pick up students. Please notify the preschool office of any changes to your child's emergency contact information. All students must be signed out before leaving.

Evacuation Plan

A copy of our Evacuation Plan is available in the preschool office and posted in each of the classrooms. In an emergency, legal guardians will be contacted directly by email and/or phone with directions and information.

Fire Drills

Fire Drills are held twice monthly to ensure that all students are present to practice at least once per month. Students exit according to the school's fire evacuation plan posted in each classroom.

Before and After School Care

Before and After School Care is available to students in our all-day classrooms. There is no option for those students released at 11:30am or 12:30pm. This is a school-sponsored program that follows the policies and guidelines of Shepherd of the Desert Preschool.

Families have the option of using this service on a regular or drop-in basis. Drop-in rates are \$15/hour and all fees will be charged through FACTS at the end of each month.

- You must have a completed form on file in order to use this service. Forms are available in the preschool office or online at shepherdaz.school

- Parents picking up after 5:00 will be charged a late fee of \$1/minute for every minute that they are late.
- This service is a benefit offered to our families. Late tuition or fee payments may result in the loss of use of this program.

Birthdays

Birthdays are indeed special events! Student birthdays are celebrated with a special snack, song, sharing time, etc. Check with your child's teacher to schedule a day to bring in a special treat to celebrate with the class. Summer birthdays will be scheduled to be celebrated by teachers at a time of their choosing. Please remember that we do not allow any nut products at school!

Feelings are easily hurt (at any age) when it comes to parties. Private party invitations may only be distributed at school if every child in the class is invited.

Child Abuse

In accordance with Arizona Law, the school staff is obligated to report reasonable suspicion of physical and/or emotional abuse, emotional deprivation, physical neglect, inadequate supervision and/or sexual abuse and exploitation. This clear requirement of the law mandates that any suspicion of abuse be reported. The school will not contact parents when making a report to legal authorities.

Communication

Teachers and staff members communicate daily with families during student drop-off and pick-up. Email is our primary source of communication, and each teacher sends a daily and/or weekly email to keep parents informed as to what is happening in their classroom and around our two campuses.

Shepherd of the Desert Church and Preschool also use a variety of communication methods to keep families informed of events, activities and important information throughout the school year, which include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- School Website: www.shepherdaz.school
- Emails sent through FACTS SIS System
- Church Newsletters sent through MailChimp
- Phone calls
- Facebook
- Parent/Teacher Conferences held twice/year

Conflict Resolution

If you have a question, issue, or grievance, please discuss it first with your student's teacher or the person most closely involved. If you are not comfortable discussing this with the stated individual, or if the issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction after doing so, please bring it to the attention of the Preschool Director. If the Preschool Director does not resolve the situation to your satisfaction, you may then bring the situation to the attention of Shepherd of the Desert's Senior Pastor.

Diapering and Toileting

If your child is enrolled in a two-year-old classroom, please send in extra clothes and a supply of diapers and wipes (if needed) that he/she may need throughout the day. Extra supplies should be labeled with your child's first and last name and will be stored in the classroom for easy access. If supplies get low, the teacher will send home a note to let you know what is needed.

Children entering our threes, fours and k-prep classes must be toilet trained before attending school.

Children must be wearing underwear. A child in pull-ups is not considered toilet trained nor is child having frequent accidents. We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents, and, by definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

Why do children have to be toilet trained before they begin preschool?

- There are strict licensing regulations for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups and these older classrooms are not licensed to do so
- Our older classrooms are larger and more children are present. When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it takes away from all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe him/herself after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3-year-olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by him/herself
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day and before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue which protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Preschool staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. **Please have your child dressed in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently.** Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents, and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified at pick-up if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

A child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.

After the first 4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected.
- If accidents are occurring more than or equal to 50% of the days that a student attends in a one-week period, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day and the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in the preschool setting is time consuming, and the time that teachers spend attending to and cleaning accidents is time that they are not spending interacting with children and facilitating the curriculum in a safe manner. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and happiness of children and staff at Shepherd of the Desert Preschool.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding!

Discipline - “Do all to the glory of God!”

A child needs lots of unconditional love, sufficient freedom to become a person in their own right, and loving and consistent discipline. At Shepherd of the Desert Preschool, we use discipline through communication and view it as an important aspect of teaching and learning.

Classrooms are a place where students can learn and teachers can teach; a place where students, teachers and others live and work together in harmony. It is the policy of the school that corporal punishment (spanking) will not be administered by school personnel.

When at all possible, teachers use observation skills to intervene and either redirect before a problem arises and assist the child with building problem-solving skills. School activities and classrooms are designed to be child-centered to limit behavioral problems.

In a situation when a child disrupts others by taking toys, hitting, biting, or creating a dangerous situation, the following disciplinary actions are taken:

- Teachers will talk to the child at their level and explain why a particular behavior is not allowed, suggest an alternative, and then assist the child by modeling language and behavior.
- Teachers may also use a “sit and watch” method that consists of the child being asked to sit at the edge of the other children's play area and watch for a short period of time. The caregiver will explain the proper behavior and then invite the child to rejoin the play. Good behavior will be reinforced.
- When behavior must be stopped immediately because of potential danger to the child or another child, a teacher may physically hold the child until they regain composure.
- Parents will be kept apprised of any behavior problems so that teachers and parents can work together to solve problems.

Toddler Discipline

Toddlers love to explore and express their curiosity about the world around them. When a toddler is uncooperative, even defiant, they need adults who are gentle and firm to enforce reasonable limits, but also understand the difficulty that toddlers are having. The following are characteristics of a toddler:

- They are egocentric—They believe they are the center of the world. They have a lack of understanding and a lack of self-control. Toddlers often have good intentions, but bad implementation. It is important for us to show encouragement and appreciation of their good intentions.
- Discipline with toddlers is a matter of planning, setting clear limits and expectations, redirection and logical consequences done in a loving, caring and consistent manner.

Biting Policy

Biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected behavior for preschoolers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both of these truths in mind.

At Shepherd, we understand that toddlers have strong emotions that they are just learning to manage. Toddlers may bite to express anger or frustration or because they lack the language skills needed to express their feelings or needs. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten.

When Biting Occurs:

Shepherd Preschool strongly disapproves of biting. The job of our staff is to ensure the safety of all children and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children.

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified. The name of the biter is not disclosed.
3. An "Incident Report" is filled out documenting the occurrence.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "NO! We do not bite. This hurts our friends."
2. The child will be placed in time out for no longer than the child's age (one year old, one minute) and the caregiver will talk to them on their level and use appropriate guidance strategies to help the child understand and develop self-control.
3. The parents are notified. The name of the bitten is not disclosed.
4. An "Incident Report" is filled out documenting the occurrence.

When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child to supervise and help to determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When Biting Becomes Excessive:

1. If a child inflicts a number of bites in a one-week period greater than 50% of the days he/she attends school in this period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts a number of bites in a one-week period greater than 50% of the days he/she attends school in this period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for one week to break the pattern in the classroom.
3. If a child once again inflicts a number of bites in a one-week period greater than 50% of the days he/she attends school in this period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other preschool arrangements.

If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

If any child bites twice in one classroom session, the child will be required to be picked up from school for the remainder of the day.

Bullying

Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School supports a safe school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and free from threat, harassment or any type of bullying behavior. Bullying is defined as "any written or verbal expression, or physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students." Students or parents who engage in any aspect of bullying are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. This may include suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying cases will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Dress Code

Please dress your child appropriately for active play!

1. Getting messy is part of our curriculum. Do not send your child to school in clothing that you do not want to get messy or possibly stained.
2. Children love to run and climb when outdoors. Shoes should be appropriate for active participation. Tennis shoes or closed-toed shoes prevent injury to feet and are HIGHLY recommended for safe outdoor play!
3. Shorts under dresses are encouraged.
4. Please dress your child in outfits that are easy for them to manipulate when using the bathroom. Shorts with elastic waists, no rompers, etc., will help your child be most successful and develop confidence and independence.

Drop-Off / Pick-Up Information

Sign-In / Sign- Out

It is an Arizona Department of Health requirement that each child be signed in and out daily. R9-5-306 states: A licensee shall ensure that the attendance form is signed with at least the first initial and last name by each child's parent or individual designated in writing each time the child is admitted or released.

- Children must be signed in on their classroom roster in the preschool lobby.
- An adult must escort their student to the appropriate classroom and remain with the child until he/she is greeted by the teacher and welcomed in to the classroom.
- Classroom doors open promptly at 8:25am. Please be punctual as late arrivals interrupt the daily routine.
- A "We Need to Know" form is posted on the classroom information board to let teachers and staff know if someone different than usual will be picking up your child. Please fill this out if someone out of the ordinary will be picking up your student on a given day. Any new faces will be asked for ID and the Emergency Form will be checked as well for authorization.
- An emergency form is part of the enrollment packet and should list all of the names of persons who are authorized to pick up your child. Please make sure to update your child's emergency form on file if you need to add/remove authorized people to pick up your child as students will not be released to any individual without written parental consent.
- We do allow telephone authorization for pick-up in case of an emergency. The authorized adult must be listed on your child's emergency form and must show proof of identification before the child will be released to the individual.
- All students must be signed out on the roster at their classroom when picked up.

Late Arrivals

We ask that all parents arrive as close to our 8:30 start time as possible. All doors will be locked at 8:45. If you are running late in the morning and the doors are locked, you will need to come to the lobby doors. We will buzz you in once you arrive and you may escort your student to their classroom.

Pick-Up

- Student pick-up takes place at the appropriate times (11:30, 12:30 or 2:45) at the classroom door.
- At the end of the day, teachers will release students to parents one at a time. Caregivers are asked to wait in the hallway until the teacher opens the door and releases their student to them.
- Please make sure to sign your student out on the classroom roster when picking up.
- Parents picking up more than 10 minutes after the specified dismissal time will be assessed a late fee of \$1/minute. Students waiting for late pick-up will be taken to After School Care or the Preschool Office.

Children become anxious when parents are late. Remember that this is a time when children are learning to trust. Be matter-of-fact about leaving and assure your child that you will be prompt when picking them up—and we will do the same!

***We understand that emergencies do arise. Please call us if you are running late.
480-860-0488 –Please program this number into your cell phone!***

Environmental Considerations

High Temperature Precautions

- drinking water is available to children at all times
- strenuous activities are discouraged on hot days
- recess may be scheduled to take place indoors during hot or inclement weather

If the outdoor temperature is 95° or above at the time of outdoor activity, the maximum time spent outside at once, other than on a preschool “water fun” day, is limited to 20 minutes and snacks and lunches will be served indoors.

Sunscreen

- UV protection is the responsibility of parents
- Apply sunscreen daily to your child before coming to school
- School staff may reapply sunscreen during the school day with parental permission. If you would like us to do so, you must send in a tube of sunscreen labeled with your child’s first and last name that will be kept in the classroom medicine cabinet.

Low Air Quality

According to the American Lung Association, people react differently to changes in air quality and ozone levels. People with respiratory disorders such as allergies and asthma may have greater difficulty breathing on some days. If properly treated, all children can lead active lives.

- parents should notify teachers whenever their child has a health condition requiring any restrictions
- all children remain indoors if the County Air Quality Report exceeds 95

Decisions and actions are not limited to those identified above. Staff members take additional precautions as required by circumstances and the needs of individuals. The school bases decisions on data (for example the current temperature at Shepherd of the Desert) and not forecasts or warnings.

Field Trips

Shepherd of the Desert does NOT transport children.

- Preschool classes do not take field trips that require vehicle transportation.
- Special events and visitors are planned throughout the school year which include, but are not limited to: fire department, police services, Mother Goose, dentist visit.
- Walking field trips to nearby businesses may be scheduled throughout the year for our four-year-olds. Parents will be notified beforehand and asked to fill out an authorization form for their child.
- Staff members are not allowed to transport children by vehicle.
- All parents are required to sign a field trip permission form for their children to participate in chapel and movement classes which take place in our sanctuary per licensing regulations. This form will be kept on file throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

Health Screenings

Preschool students will have the option of getting a vision and hearing screening during the school year. Students can also pay for a speech/language screening as well. Please contact the school office for more information.

Illness

Home is the first point in screening. Staff is asked to stay home and parents are asked to NOT bring their child to school if he/she **or any other family member** has the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting or stomach pain
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- If eyes show signs of infection
- During the first days of a cold

**Any student who becomes ill or exhibits any of the above symptoms during the school day will be promptly separated from their class, and parents will be called to come and pick up their child immediately.

Children can return to school when they are symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of any medication.

Please call the preschool office at 480-860-0488 to report your child's unscheduled absence as we do monitor all absences to ensure that there are no patterns or cause for concern. If leaving a message, make sure to include your child's name, classroom teacher and the reason for the absence.

Medication

Medication will not be given to a child in the preschool program unless it is for a life-threatening condition. Please schedule your child's medication before or after school hours. More medication than this usually indicates that your child needs to be at home.

Children with extreme allergic reactions or life-threatening conditions may be treated with parental consent. All required paperwork and licensing forms must be completed and up to date, and medications will be stored in a locked first aid cabinet in the child's classroom with accompanying paperwork. All medications must be in original packaging and accompanied by a doctor's prescription.

Nap Time

The children in our two and three-year-old classrooms have rest time in the afternoon. Therefore, if your child is scheduled to stay until 2:45 or later, please make sure to send in a crib sheet, blanket and small pillow. Cots are provided for each student during naptime.

Open Door Policy

We have an “Open Door” policy, which allows parents of an enrolled child to have access to our facility any time during hours of operation. We encourage you to come to us with any ideas, concerns, or questions you may have. We believe that communication is key to any happy and strong relationship!

Outdoor Play

Recess is held outdoors, weather permitting. On rainy or especially hot days, recess may be moved to the lobby or sanctuary area. There is a separate playground for the two-year-olds that is equipped with age-appropriate toys and materials. Standards of appropriate, safe, and respectful behavior are maintained. Teachers plan daily structured outdoor activities to promote large motor growth and to encourage social interaction.

Outdoor Playground Expectations

1. Respect others.
2. Use playground equipment as designed: Do not stand on top of playground equipment that is not designed to be stood upon; face forward when going down the slides-one person at a time; pushing and pulling other children will not be tolerated.
3. Rocks and wood chips are to remain on the ground.
4. Keep playground clean of trash.
5. Adults are to retrieve all balls and equipment that fall outside fencing.

*****No potentially dangerous items are permitted on campus.***

After School Play on Front Patio

Supervision of children who have been signed out after school and released from Shepherd’s care is the sole responsibility of the caregiver who signed out the student. The same rules that apply during school hours must be reinforced. Aggressive or dangerous behavior is not tolerated during school hours, nor should it be afterwards. Please watch your child(ren) and remove them from play if negative behavior occurs. All students re-entering the facility to use the bathrooms must be accompanied by an adult.

Pesticide Notice

A notice will be posted at least 48 hours before any pesticide treatment/application in the entrance to the preschool stating the date and time of the pesticide application. Written pesticide information is also available from the licensee upon request.

Pets

Children and adults can be allergic to various animals. In addition, children are often frightened by animals. Therefore, out of concern for others, please keep pets safely in your car or at home unless they are part of a class project or presentation scheduled with your child’s teacher.

Roster System

Each classroom is equipped with a roster system, which ensures that each staff member maintains daily documentation of the presence of an enrolled child in an activity area. If a child temporarily leaves the classroom, the teacher will document the departure and arrival of each student to ensure accurate student numbers accounting at all times.

Screen Time

Screen time in preschool classrooms is sometimes used to reinforce what is being taught. Occasionally, a movie/video may be shown in the classroom and parents will be made aware beforehand. All screen time will be documented on classroom lesson plans.

Snacks and Lunches

Each classroom has a scheduled snack time every morning. We ask that parents sign up to provide this healthy snack periodically throughout the school year. Your child's teacher will post a snack sign-up at the beginning of each month for parents to choose a day to bring in snack. Snacks offered will include items from two of the main food groups and drinks will be only 1% milk, 100% juice (4oz serving) or water. We do not allow any snacks with nuts to be served for snack or at lunchtime.

If your child is scheduled to stay until 12:30 or later, please pack a lunch for your child to enjoy. Lunches will be stored in the air-conditioned hallway or inside the classroom. Refrigerator space is not available and we are unable to heat lunches. Please send an ice pack in your child's lunch to make sure that food stays fresh. We also highly recommend that your child bring a water bottle to school each day labeled with their first and last name. Please do not pack any items containing nuts in your child's lunch.

Visitors & Volunteers

All visitors and volunteers on campus must check in at the front desk.

Church and School Faith Statement

We believe...

The GOSPEL – Our church and school are focused first and foremost on the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel declares to us that God is not angry, wrathful or disassociated from His people. Rather God, through his son Jesus Christ, is shown to be merciful, forgiving, loving and deeply committed to mankind in a personal manner.

The BIBLE – the focus of our teaching is from the Holy Bible, which we confess is the inspired Word of God. We believe that the Bible dictates all of our teaching and practice. We believe that the Bible's main purpose is to show us Jesus and that through Jesus we have eternal life (John 20:21-22). Our sermons and studies are filled with the Good News of God's love and are rooted in the Bible.

The TRINITY – Our church and school teach and respond to the love of the Triune God: the Father, creator of all that exists; Jesus Christ, the Son, who became human to suffer and die for the sins of all human beings and to rise to life again in the ultimate victory over death and Satan; and the Holy Spirit, who creates faith and action through God's Word and Sacraments. The three persons of the trinity are coequal and coeternal, one God.

The Apostles' Creed, in addition to the Nicene and Athanasian Creed, has served as a summary of scriptural beliefs on the nature of our Triune God since the earliest days of Christianity. They summarize what Christians have always confessed when gathered around the Word of God in the name of God's Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit. They are the truths that we believe, teach, and confess at SOTD. As Lutherans and as part of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, we accept and teach the Bible-based writings of Martin Luther that inspired the reformation of the Christian Church in the 16th century and we subscribe to all of the symbolical books contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580.

The teaching of Luther and the reformers can be summarized in three short phrases:

Grace Alone – Salvation is God’s free gift, which is offered at the initiative of His love, not something that we can earn. Through His suffering and death on the cross, as a substitute for all people of all time and through his resurrection, Jesus purchased and won forgiveness and eternal life for all. God loves the people of the world, even though they are sinful, rebel against Him and do not deserve His love. He sent Jesus, His Son, to love the unlovable and save the ungodly.

Faith Alone – The gift of salvation is offered to all who, by God’s grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, repent of their sin and receive Jesus in faith as Savior and Lord.

Scripture Alone – The Bible is God’s inerrant and infallible Word, in which He reveals His Law and His Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the sole rule and norm for Christian doctrine and life.

On Holy Baptism, we believe that Baptism is one very special way that God delivers to us the blessings Jesus Christ won for us. Baptism is not something we do, but something that God does. It is a sacred act in which God Himself is at work forgiving sins, giving new life in Christ and bestowing on us the Holy Spirit with all of His gifts (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Rom 6:3-6).

On the Lord’s Supper, we believe that in this Sacrament of the Altar our Lord and Savior is continually distributing to us the body and blood of the sacrifice that He made for us, the sacrifice by which He paid for the sins of the entire world. Thus, receiving His body and blood, we receive forgiveness, life and salvation. We do not try and explain how Jesus is present under the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. Rather, we believe, teach, confess and rejoice that He is present (1 Cor 11:17-31).

On the sanctity of human life, we believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged the physically or mentally challenged and every other state or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps 51:5; Ps 139:13-16).

On marriage, gender and sexuality, because in all matters we look to the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God and believe that it clearly communicates God’s design and plan for life and behavior, we believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, that these two distinct complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God and that rejection of one’s biological sex is in opposition of the plan God sets forth in His Word. We believe that marriage has only one meaning and that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man, naturally born as a male, and one woman, naturally born as a female in a single, exclusive union expressed in love, commitment and shared fidelity for life, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union. We believe that any form of sexually immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, incest, use of pornography and bestiality) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10). We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9 -10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that love and respect are due, and to be offered, to all people, as we are all created in the image of God. However, when the Scriptures speak against other philosophies, belief systems, and behaviors, we will be true to the Scriptures and will speak the truth, but will do so in love.

This statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct

of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church and Preschool, our Director of Ministries with the advice and consent of the Board of Elders and Board of Directors, is our final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Thank you for choosing Shepherd of the Desert Preschool!

Please make sure to sign the Handbook Agreement form on the bottom of this page and return it to school.



Preschool Family Handbook Agreement

I have read the 2024-2025 Shepherd of the Desert Preschool Family Handbook in its entirety and understand all that has been explained within.

I agree to follow the rules and policies of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School.

I understand what is expected and required of me as a parent of a Shepherd of the Desert student.

Parent 1 Signature

Date

Parent 2 Signature

Date

Child's Name