



Preschool Family Handbook 2020-2021

**Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Preschool
9400 East Mountain View Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85259**

480-860-0488
shepherdaz.school

“Play with a purpose!”

*Shepherd exists to provide a premier Christian educational experience
focused on age-appropriate academics for children
ages two through five years old.*

Our Mission

Leading People to Follow Jesus

Our 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 growth through age-appropriate, hands-on activities that maximize each student's growth and development.

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 school office and online at www.azdhs.gov/als/childcare.

Accreditation

Shepherd of the Desert Preschool has been 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. Shepherd preschool was awarded Exemplary Status by the National Lutheran School Accreditation Organization in February 2013.

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

Contact Information

Preschool Direct Line: 480-860-0488

Monica Weller, Administrative Assistant, extension 10

Debbie Osman, Preschool Director, extension 11

Church Direct Line: 480-860-1188

Website: www.shepherdaz.school

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. 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, and physical development through a hands-on, center-based environment. Shepherd of the Desert Preschool serves children ages two 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 Options

Monday/Wednesday/Friday; Tuesday/Thursday; or Monday through Friday

8:30am-11:30am – Morning Class

8:30am-12:30pm – Morning with Lunch

8:30am-2:45pm – All Day Class

Before School Care – 7:30am-8:30am

After School Care – 2:45pm-4:30pm

Two & Three-Year-Olds

Our two and three-year-old programs focus on social development, classroom skills, and executive functions while inspiring children to develop curiosity for the world around them. Children are encouraged to explore their creative side and develop independence through art, music and dramatic play. 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. In our classrooms, children are both nurtured and challenged as they move towards greater independence and learning 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. This classroom is set up to support all learning styles with a hands-on learning approach used to develop a student’s independence and readiness to enter kindergarten.

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!

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-led activities. Our goal is to help students become life long learners who are competent socially, academically and emotionally.

In all of our classrooms, we use an early-learning, standards-based approach to develop a curriculum which incorporates monthly learning themes as well. 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.

Saxon Early Learning Standards are used as a guide for the curriculum in our four-year-old and K-Prep classrooms. This program incorporates the eight instructional elements and emphasizes activities that cultivate children's social, personal, academic and emotional development. Saxon Early Learning provides instruction that moves children from an understanding of their own personal experiences to an appreciation of the world around them to build strong links between school, the family and the community.

Christian Growth

As the Word of God is applied, the mind and heart begin to view the world from a new perspective. Daily devotions, prayer, Jesus Time, and weekly chapel are used to encourage Christian growth. Offerings are collected throughout the school year which are associated with specific mission projects. Families are encouraged to participate in these special projects to help their child develop an attitude of stewardship and giving to others.

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.

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.

Admissions Policy

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 School.
 2. Each child 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:
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.

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, through the Preschool Director, 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 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 2020-2021 school year have not been fulfilled by May 31, 2021.

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.

Re-Enrollment Procedures

All re-enrollment forms will be posted on our website, www.shepherdaz.school, one month prior to the re-enrollment period. Parents are encouraged to print copies of the forms, fill them out, and bring them to school on their slated re-enrollment date. Families **re-enrolling** must sign up for a specified time to submit paperwork. A Sign-Up Genius link to access these time slots will be sent out by the Preschool Director one week prior to the date to sign up. 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

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, 2020. 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 a NSF fee. If tuition is not paid by the 15th of the month, an additional fee may be applied to your account. Prompt payment is important. If your payment is not received by the end of the month, your child will be unable 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.

If you need assistance or have payment questions, please contact Monica Weller in the preschool office at mweller@sotdaz.org or 480-860-0488, ext. 10.

Class or Schedule Change

Any permanent change to a child's schedule will result in a \$25 change schedule fee. Please notify the preschool office of any changes.

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 Scheduling Information

Snacks will be provided this year through the school while COVID 19 is a threat to our community. We may ask for donations periodically throughout the year. The Preschool Director and your child's teacher will share snack information.

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 outside of 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.

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.

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.

Lastly, three-year-olds and older must be self-sufficient in the bathroom. Please send in an extra set of clothing just in case your child needs a change during the day, as we realize that accidents do occasionally happen. Excessive potty accidents may result in your child needing to take time at home to assure 100% self-sufficiency in the bathroom before returning to school, as this is a health concern for all students in the classroom and a requirement of State Licensing.

Preschool Sign-In and 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.

All students will be signed in at the door outside of their classroom. If your child's classroom does not have outside access, an alternate sign-in spot will be assigned for his or her class only.

- All students will have their temperature checked upon arrival in the presence of their caregiver
- **When a caregiver signs a child in, the caregiver is verifying that the student has taken no fever-reducing medications in the past 24 hours; that the student has displayed none of the COVID-19 symptoms listed on page 15; and that the student has not been in close contact with someone exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms as well.**
- Students will say good-bye to their caregiver at the door and then sanitize hands before entering the classroom.
- They will then proceed directly to the classroom sink to wash their hands with soap and water for 20+ seconds before starting their day.
- At this time, parents will not be entering the facility in an attempt to help limit exposure to other staff and students.
- Please arrive on time, practice social distancing while waiting, and allow a bit of extra time and patience as we adjust to this new protocol.
- A "We Need to Know" form is posted on the classroom information board for you to fill out if someone out of the ordinary is picking up your child. Any new faces will be asked for ID and the Emergency Form will be checked as well for authorization. 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.

Late Arrivals

We ask that all parents plan to arrive as close to our 8:30 start time as possible. If you are running late and the outside door to your child's classroom is closed, please proceed to the south side of the building and enter in through the lobby doors. These doors are locked throughout the day so we will need to buzz you in once you arrive. We will follow the above protocol for signing in and then escort your child to his or her classroom.

Pick-Up

- Pick-up will take place at the same location as drop-off.
- Students will use sanitizer on their hands as they exit the facility before greeting care-givers.
- Outside our facility, families are asked to respect the six-foot rule with others and not congregate in the patio area or on school grounds until the threat of the COVID 19 is diminished.
- 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.

***We understand that emergencies do arise.
Please call us if you are running late.***

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 \$12/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.

Other Important Information

- There will be no Before School Care (7:30-8:30) until mid-September or until morning temperatures are permissive to allow it to be held on the playground or the threat of COVID-19 is diminished
- After-School Care will remain until 4:30pm and will take place in each child's classroom, staffing permitting.
- Mixing of groups will be minimal, if at all.
- Child pick-up will be at the front doors of the school or on the playground
- Parents picking up after 4:30 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.

Visitors

At this time, we will not be having parents, visitors or outside groups inside our facility during normal school hours due to the threat of COVID 19. For the safety of our students and staff, we have also suspended in-person "Specials" classes to reduce the amount of exposure to others.

School 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.

Preschool Discipline

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, we use discipline through communication. Our teachers view discipline as an important aspect of teaching

and learning.

“Do all to the glory of God!”

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 or volunteers.

When at all possible, teachers use observation skills to intervene and either redirect before a problem arises or assist the child in 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 minute. 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.
- Teachers and parents will respect each other and 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.

Bullying Policy

Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School supports a secure school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning; an environment free from threat, harassment and 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, which 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.

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. 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 will 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.**

****At this time, congregating on the patio for after school play is discouraged due to COVID 19. Children and adults will not be allowed to enter the facility after being released from school.**

Snacks/Lunch

Shepherd of the Desert will be providing all snacks this fall due to the threat of COVID 19. Parents will be asked periodically to donate snack items, and a list of suggestions will be provided. 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.

Students staying for lunch need to bring their lunch and drinks to school. All lunch boxes must be **labeled with your child's first and last name**. Please do not pack meals that require refrigeration or heating. We highly recommend that your child bring a water bottle to school **labeled with their first and last name** as well each day.

Communication

The staff at Shepherd of the Desert uses 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 RenWeb/FACTS
- Newsletters sent through MailChimp
- Daily teacher emails
- Phone calls
- Facebook
- Parent/Teacher Conferences twice/year

Absences and Tardiness

Regular attendance is considered vital to a student's educational progress. It is expected that all students attend regularly and arrive at school on time each day. Parents are encouraged to limit vacations, medical/dental appointments, and any other unnecessary absences that impact regular school attendance. If absences are planned, please contact the preschool office.

In addition, please call the preschool office at 480-860-0488 to report your child's unscheduled absence. If leaving a message, make sure to include your child's name, classroom teacher and the reason for the absence.

Students arriving after the school day has begun and the classroom door has closed must be signed in at the preschool office by the child's caregiver. Screening will occur just as it would at the classroom before entering, and the office staff will escort your child to their classroom.

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—it may be a half birthday or at the end of the year before summer break, etc. 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.

When to Keep Your Child at Home

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 or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**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.

If your child is absent, we ask that you please continue to call and notify the office as to the reason for the absence as we do monitor all absences to ensure that there are no patterns or cause for concern. Children can return to school when they are symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of any medication.

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.

Child Abuse Obligations

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 and the school will not contact parents when making a report to legal authorities.

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 following precautions are taken:

- maximum time spent outside at once, other than on a preschool “water fun” day, is limited to 20 minutes
- cool drinking water is made available on the playground
- snacks and lunch are served indoors

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.

Low Air Quality Precautions

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
- the school bases decisions on data (for example, the local, current County Air Quality Report) and not forecasts or warnings

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

Field Trips

- Preschool classes do not take field trips that require vehicle transportation.
- Special events and visitors will be, once again, planned during the year to enrich classroom experiences once the threat of COVID 19 is diminished.
- 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.

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.

Screen Time

Screen time in preschool classrooms is sometimes used to reinforce what is being taught. Due to the fact that we are limiting visitors and contact between classrooms, our chapel time with the pastors will be virtual until the threat of COVID 19 has diminished. Occasionally, a movie video may be shown in the classroom and parents will be made aware beforehand.

Church And School Faith Statement

We believe and teach...

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 below and return it to school.

Handbook Agreement

I have read the Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School Handbook in its entirety and understand all that has been explained within.

I agree to follow and promote 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