



The Good Shepherd Preschool

A Regional Catholic Preschool affiliated with St. Clare School

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Parent Handbook

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Welcome to The Good Shepherd Preschool
A Regional Catholic Preschool Affiliated with St. Clare School

It is with enthusiasm and excitement that I welcome you to The Good Shepherd Preschool. As a regional Catholic school, we have the opportunity to bring children and families together as we learn and celebrate our faith.

Our curriculum provides “hands-on” developmentally appropriate academics that include early learning skills in religion, math, language, science, social science, and motor development. Social experiences and dramatic play encourage problem solving, creative thinking, and cooperation among peers. Enrichment programs enhance children’s experience at school by allowing them to explore learning with cooking, art, and music.

We are extremely fortunate to have the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd each week as the foundation of our faith education. It is special to see your child explore and learn about their faith and be able to connect these experiences to what they see at church.

Through the support of our teachers and parents, children will grow spiritually, be able to make appropriate choices, develop independence, and be academically prepared. We appreciate your support and the opportunity to assist your child as they grow academically and in their faith formation.

Sherri L. Hertzler

Preschool Director

MISSION STATEMENT/GOALS

MISSION STATEMENT: The Good Shepherd Preschool provides a foundation for quality Catholic education through prayer, song, and play for our youngest students. We are committed to encouraging spiritual, social, physical, academic and emotional development of each individual child through hands-on learning.

GOALS:

Spiritual: Teach the essentials of our faith utilizing a hands-on approach to religious formation within the classroom and through The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Emotional: Aid each child in the development of a strong sense of self-respect and emotional well-being towards oneself and others.

Cognitive: Encourage hands-on approach to problem solving, and reasoning by providing learning opportunities in religion, reading, mathematics, science, fine arts, and foreign language.

Social: Assist in the development of independence, responsibility, and social awareness.

Physical: Address health and safety needs of all the children through participation in age-appropriate play activities fostering the development of fine and gross motor skills.

HOURS OF OPERATION

PRESCHOOL / PREK HOURS: The preschool entrance door will be unlocked at **8:20am** for arrival and will remain unlocked until **8:35 am**. All parents will drop off the children where they will use hand sanitizer at the door and be greeted by teachers. Parents will exit the building after saying goodbye at this entrance. Parents will follow the path to exit the building after signing in their children when dropping off. Parents who are late (after 8:35 a.m.) will need to ring the bell at our North Entrance of the building.

If you are using our Early Morning Care Program parents are asked to drop off their students at our side entrance (North Entrance) of our building. Please ring the doorbell and teachers will greet and take the child from this location. This program starts promptly at 7:30 a.m. and runs until 8:15 a.m. All parents who show up after 8:15 a.m. will need to wait for our normal time of 8:20 a.m. and enter at the main entrance of the building with all other children. This is due to a transition time needed for students to leave the room and enter their classrooms to start their day.

SECURITY: A security intercom is located outside the side entrance and will allow for visitor access during preschool hours. Only those individuals recognized through the video monitor will be given access. Unknown visitors will be greeted at the door by the director and must show identification.

ENROLLMENT: A priority list has been established for students registering into our school each year:

1. Students already enrolled.
2. Active, participating and supporting parishioners with children in school already.
3. Active, participating and supporting parishioners with first child entering school.
4. Catholics from other parishes with children in school.
5. Catholics from other parishes with their first child entering school.
6. Parishioners who are not active, participating and supporting children in school already.
7. Parishioners who are not active, participating and supporting their first child entering school.
8. Non-Catholic families with children in school already.
9. Non-Catholic families with their first child entering school.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PRESCHOOL FOR 3 & 4 YR. OLDS: Full Day Program (8:30am – 3:30 p.m.) is offered Monday -Friday. A snack is provided in the morning and afternoon with a rest time. Our teacher to student ratio for this program is 16:2.

PRE-K PROGRAM: Our Pre-K program is for those students entering Kindergarten next year. Full Day Program (8:30am – 3:30pm) is offered Monday -Friday. A snack is provided in the morning and afternoon with a rest time. Our teacher to student ratio for this program is 16:2.

- **Parents need to be sure to provide a copy of the student (s) baptismal certificate (if applicable) and a certified copy of birth certificate at time of registration.**

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM: Early Morning Care – 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m.
 After School Care – 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.
 Total per day - \$8.00
 Total per week - \$40.00

- **Parents must register for ECP at time of Registration and designate which days are needed. NOTE: The cost (\$8.00 per day/\$40.00 per week) includes both morning and afternoon care. This is a one-time fee and will not be adjusted should you choose one option (morning/afternoon care) over the other. Parents will be billed monthly for this program in FACTS.**
- **Parents who are late to pick up their child will be billed an extra \$8.00. This late fee will show up in your monthly bill in FACTS. Staff keep track of signing your child out each day at ECP.**

TUITION AND FEES: Payments are due the 20th of each month. Please be sure you have completed the FACTS financial section of set up for payment.

Total tuition for the year is \$5,900.00
 Ten Monthly Payments (August-May): \$590.00

\$100.00 (non-refundable registration fee)

\$25.00 (one-time fee for the year) *This fee covers our Cooking Enrichment Program

Total = \$125.00 (this total is due at time of registration)

REGISTRATION FEES: A registration fee of \$100 (non-refundable) and \$25 cooking fee is required for each child for the Preschool and Pre-K program. Your child is not fully registered until this fee is paid. This fee includes snacks.

RETURNED CHECKS: There is a \$25.00 fee charged when checks are returned from the bank.

LATE PICK UP POLICY: If you are more than five minutes late for pick-up, a late charge of \$8 will be added to your tuition for every additional five minutes you are late. If you are running late, call an authorized person to pick up your child. Also, please call the Preschool Office to let us know of your plan.

NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL: Two weeks written notice to the preschool director is required for withdrawal of all programs.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE: Although attendance is not required, it is most beneficial to your child to establish a routine of regular attendance. This will allow the student to participate fully in all activities and create a basis from which the student may continue to grow and learn. Please contact the school if your child will not be in attendance.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE: All children must be signed in at the time of each arrival at preschool. Teachers will sign your student out when you come to pick up your child (ren). No child will be released without authorization by the parent or guardian. Any changes in authorization must also be in writing. Persons will be asked for the proper identification. Parents are required to make contact with the teacher when arriving or leaving with their child. Parents are required to ring the doorbell with late arrival and early dismissal which may occur due to doctor visits or any other situations.

COMMUNICATIONS: Teachers will email a monthly newsletter to update parents on class news. Students will bring home their class work along with any teacher notes for the week. Conferences will be held twice throughout the year. Parents or teachers may request additional conferences throughout the year.

PERMANENT INFORMATION: Please inform the office immediately, in writing, of changes in address, phone numbers, and authorization for picking up your child. This information is vital for contacting parents when children become sick at school and in keeping our emergency information up-to-date.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE: The Good Shepherd Preschool does not have a uniform. However, we ask the children to wear closed toed shoes. Please do not encourage your children to wear boots, rain boots, crocks, etc. to school. This is due to gross motor activity and safety. Please keep in mind that children will be highly active during the day, including playing outside when possible and using paints and other “messy” materials. Children must be dressed in appropriate

clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (hats, gloves, coats, etc.) to ensure proper health and safety of the children.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: A list of needed school supplies is provided by email at the beginning of the school year. Parents are required to supply a backpack (no wheels please), a change of clothes to be kept in the backpack, lunchboxes, and nap time items. Label these supplies with first and last name please.

LUNCH: Nutritious lunches are provided by the parents. Please note that we ask the lunches provided to be of nutritious value to our students. Teachers will provide handouts in the beginning of the school year to promote good eating habits. Since a number of our students have severe food allergies, we maintain a “nut free” environment where students each our school. **This includes all nuts.** Please pack items free of all NUTS.

CAUTION: Carrots and grapes are dangerous for children under the age of five. Please cut up these food items if you plan to pack them in your child’s lunch.

As part of their development, we encourage all students to learn how to eat and feed themselves independently. Please be mindful of items that you pack in their lunches. Items should be easy to open, cut up when large in size, appropriate scale wise and nutritious.

TOILETING REQUIREMENT: All children attending The Good Shepherd Preschool must be toilet trained by the time the school year begins.

REST TIME: We will rest every day. All children will need a mat. GSP will purchase the mat and bill \$12.00 in FACTS. Parents will receive a nap mat bag at Parent Teacher Conferences before school starts. Please provide in the bag the following items: **1 blanket and 1 pillow**. Be sure to send a small pillow, no bigger than 12”X16” and a blanket, no bigger than 40”X50”. Children may bring a **1 small stuff animal**, no bigger than 12” to snuggle with. Items in the nap bags will be put away by the children each day and full-size items are difficult for them to handle.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: The entire school will periodically participate in tornado, earthquake, and fire drills. “Lockdown” drills are also conducted several times throughout the year.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: If St. Clare Catholic School is closed for inclement weather, The Good Shepherd Preschool will also be closed. An automated phone message and text message will go out to the provided information from registration online. In addition an email will also be sent out to the provided emails. Announcements for school closings will be aired by 7:15am on these days over television stations KSDK-TV (Channel 5), KMOV-TV (Channel 4), and KTVI-TV (Channel 2). Announcements for school closings will be stated as follows: “No school today for St. Clare Catholic School, O’Fallon, Illinois.” Don’t be confused with other St. Clare Schools. **“St. Clare School, St. Clair” is NOT our school.** In addition, we will broadcast school closing information directly to each home using an automated call system

BIRTHDAYS: If parents would like to celebrate their child’s birthday with a special snack, arrangements can be coordinated with the classroom teacher. **All food brought into the**

preschool to share MUST be commercially made & MUST BE NUT FREE. A clear description of ingredients must be visible to review. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND GIFTS OR PARTY FAVORS.** Unless every child in the classroom is invited to a party/playdate, invitations should be mailed to the home. Please avoid using bakeries unless they are able to provide a label with all ingredients and states that it is peanut/nut free.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS: All volunteers must complete the Diocesan application for volunteer service and have initial Child Protection Training and refresher courses each year on file with the Diocese and the preschool office. All volunteers in a position of leadership must complete the Illinois State background check every 5 years.

These types of programs will be communicated by each individual classroom and teacher when applicable.

DISCIPLINE: It is important to remember that aggressive feelings in preschoolers are a normal part of growing up. Most children's aggressive tendencies at preschool can be controlled by various techniques. Teachers are trained to be alert to potential areas of frustration both in the room and outside. When possible, they redirect or intervene before a physical disruption takes place. The staff also provides a diversified curriculum so that each child can find an area in which to participate successfully.

Parents and teachers working together eliminate most of the undesired behavior at school. Good communication, consistency at home and at school, and active participation in conferences will greatly reduce most aggressive tendencies.

If aggressive behavior does not improve when using the above techniques and communication deliveries a one on one meeting will be scheduled with the parent(s). A behavior plan will be set in place. Communication will continue and if the behavior continues with little to no improvement another option will need to be recommended. Meaning additional services may need to be an option other than The Good Shepherd Preschool. Parents will receive this information directly from Administrative Staff.

SCHOOL HEALTH POLICIES

ILLNESS: All reported illnesses must be called in to the Director, Sherri Hertzler at (618)726-6532. Other information can be emailed to sherri.hertzler@saintclareschool.org. Please do not make contact with your child's teacher by email, texting, or social media. Please do not contact your child's teacher through Class Dojo or Social Media to report an absence.

Your child's health is of major importance to us. In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and keep children safe from food allergies, all children will be required to wash their hands when entering the classroom and before/ after meals. Please keep your child at home if any of the following are present: rash (a doctor's note required to return to class), coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye, sore throat, or a fever of 99 or higher. In the case of illness, children should not attend school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without medication.

If your child becomes sick or injured during school hours, parents will be contacted immediately, and the child will be kept comfortable until a parent or authorized adult can pick the child up. If an injury occurs, we will use soap and water and inform the parent if the child

needs further treatment. An injury report will be filed in the event of an accident during school hours.

When a child has been placed on medical/physical restrictions by his/her physician, the school should be notified in writing. Until the school receives information from the physician that the restrictions have been lifted, they will stay in place.

All students must have a physical exam prior to the new school year. All students are required to have up-to-date immunizations. Completed medical forms should be received in the school office by September 15. School health forms not on file by September 30th. If not it will result in removal of said child until health forms are on file.

Head Lice If there is a suspected or confirmed case of head lice, we will check the student for lice or nits. The student will be sent home for the parents to seek treatment. The student's siblings and classmates will also be checked. Infected students may return to school the day after the first shampoo, lotion or cream rinse pediculicide has been properly applied. Students should be encouraged not to share combs, brushes, hats, and coats.

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS: Upon enrollment, state licensing requires the submission of a health form signed by the child's physician. Additional regulations state that the child is to have standard immunizations. Completed medical forms should be received by the director no later than September 15.

FOOD ALLERGIES: Due to food allergies, *all* food items that are distributed throughout the school to students for birthdays, room and holiday parties, class "treats", etc., must be packaged and have a clear, complete ingredients label. Food labels stating "processed in a peanut facility" *may not* be brought into the school for students. No home-made baked goods or other non-approved foods may be served to students. All students are asked not to share food during lunch or snack time.

MEDICATIONS: If a child requires medication, the proper "Medication Request Form" must be completed. Our office staff may dispense **ONLY MEDICATION PRESCRIBED BY A PHYSICIAN**. A physician must also prescribe over-the-counter medications. All medication must be in the original container with full instructions on the label and bear the child's name.

If your child has severe allergic reactions and requires an Epi-Pen, two (2) up-to-date Pens are required to be kept at preschool. One will be kept in the office and one in the classroom emergency pack. All instances of Epi-Pen use will be followed by a call to 911, as well as the parent

Inhaled Medications: Written Parent and physician authorization is required for staff to administer inhaled medication to children. Training for the teacher must be provided by the parent along with written instructions from the physician.

OUR PRESCHOOL AND PREK PROGRAMS:

CURRICULUM: Our classroom religion instruction and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd provide the foundation for Catholic growth and spirituality through prayer, song, play and storytelling. Our curriculum is a discovery-based learning experience. It is aligned with The Illinois Early Childhood Learning Standards, which include language arts, mathematics, science, social science, and physical development, including fine and gross motor skills and health.

Children are given the opportunity for independent play, participation in small group activities and movement through learning areas. We strive to create learning experiences to nurture the unique potential of each child.

THE CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD/THE ATRIUM: Children will participate in a session in St. Nicholas' Atrium for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd each week.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a hands-on approach to religious formation in which a special room called the atrium has been prepared for the children. Many of the materials, which are specially designed to help the children "fall in love with God" as they explore the essentials of our faith, have been crafted by members of our parish. Working quietly with these materials slowly helps the child to connect with what s/he sees at church. During sessions, they sing, pray together, and listen to short stories about Jesus and some of his parables. Additionally, the children can set a model altar table, arrange a prayer table for the appropriate liturgical season, and work with dioramas and small figures that accompany Biblical readings. They look at simple maps of the Holy Land, draw pictures, and even arrange flowers to help make the Atrium more beautiful.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a faith formation program that is worldwide. Begun over fifty years ago in Italy by Sofia Cavalletti, a Scripture scholar, and Gianni Gobbi, a Montessori teacher, it is estimated that there are over 20,000 children currently in atria in our country.

In the early church, the atrium was a place where the catechumens prepared to enter the church. For our children, it is a place to aid the child's fuller participation in our church's life.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS: Enrichment programs supplement our academic curriculum with special projects and class activities.

- Foreign Language introduces students to other cultures
- Music offers the opportunity for creative movement and expression through song and dance.
- Cooking activities allow students the opportunity to utilize mathematical skills and encourage healthy eating habits.
- Art projects allow for self expression and improve fine motor skills.

OUTDOOR PLAY/PHYSICAL GROWTH: Students will participate in outdoor play every day on our school playground. If temperatures fall below 35 F or if the heat index approaches 100 F, children will not go outside. During these situations the children will remain indoors. The Gym Area will be used with age-appropriate gross motor activities.

All students need to be prepared for the weather. The constant change of weather is often unpredictable. Please provide the necessary items during the different seasons of the year: coats, jackets, winter coats, raincoats, gloves, mittens, hats, etc. Students have a morning recess and an afternoon recess planned every day. Often temperatures are cooler in the morning. Therefore, always placing a jacket in their bag or sweatshirt will help to ensure they are prepared.

