



Good Shepherd Christian Academy
Preschool and Child Care Center

"Christ-Centered Excellence in Education"

*"Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6*

Parent/Student Handbook
2011-2012

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MISSION STATEMENT

Good Shepherd Christian Academy is committed to providing a quality Christian education in a caring spiritual environment with the desire to assist Christian families and local churches in evangelizing and discipling their children in biblical truth and the Christian faith.

VISION

In a world of spiritual chaos and uncertainty fueled by a growing acceptance of moral relativism, it is the vision of Good Shepherd Christian Academy to offer a godly alternative to other educational options available.

Good Shepherd Christian Academy seeks to set aside denominational distinctives and in the spirit of love, unity and liberty function as a regional school operating as a spiritual and educational resource to the greater Christian community of our surrounding area.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Introduction

Welcome to the Good Shepherd Christian Academy. This Parent/Student Handbook is intended to help you by describing school policies and procedures. We urge all those enrolling children in GSCA Preschool to read this handbook carefully. Parents of students new to the school will find this handbook a useful tool in becoming acquainted with the school. It is hoped that this Parent Handbook will serve as a helpful resource and as a means of fostering better home/school relations. May God bless you and yours through GSCA Preschool.

History

The Washington Assembly of God Church, as an outreach to the community, established Good Shepherd Christian Academy in 1979. Our goal from the very beginning was to provide care and education for children of all ages. We had Grades K–8 until 1992 when we added the High School. In 1995, we purchased and moved into the former Warren County Community College building on Route 57. In 1996, we renovated the building; and Little Lambs Child Care Center was started at the church campus. We are staffed with caring individuals that will carry on the tradition, established over the last 26 years at Good Shepherd Christian Academy, of teaching, training, and loving your children. In September of 1997, the K-4 Program moved to the Child Care Center. In 2003, the decision was made to suspend our high school program due to extenuating circumstances and to concentrate on our K-8 program. In the future, as the Lord leads, we would hope to be a catalyst in the establishment of a regional high school.

In the spring of 2004, the Washington Assembly of God Church Committee voted to close the Little Lambs Child Care Center. This difficult decision was made in order to enable the growing church to expand into the building LLCCC occupied. In July, 2007 we were able to offer quality Christian childcare and Preschool at our GSCA Preschool campus.

The ministry of GSCA Preschool is to worship the Lord, to edify, or build up, the body of Christ; namely His church, and to evangelize the lost.

Furthermore, we believe . . .

- the Bible is the inspired, only infallible and authoritative written Word of God (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
- there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19)
- in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, and His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, in His personal future return to this earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years. (Deuteronomy 20:1-6; Matthew 1:2-3; Hebrews 7:26; Acts 2:22; I Corinthians 15:3; Matthew 28:6; Acts 1:9)
- the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:14)
- regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation (Titus 3:5)
- the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer. (Isaiah 53:4; James 5:13-14)
- in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life (Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1: 15-16)
- in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the former to everlasting life and the latter to everlasting damnation. (Revelation 20:1-6; 11-16)

PHILOSOPHY

GSCA Preschool will educate children in accordance with the principles of the Christian faith. Through integration of these principles in the process of learning, we believe that children develop Christian values and attitudes by which to live.

Essential to this process of growth and development is the Word of God. Christian principles are an integral part of the curriculum and teaching. The leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of teaching is also a crucial part of the educational process. Christian education seeks to provide a healthy atmosphere in which to teach solid academics and Christian discipleship.

Aligned with this philosophy of education is the realization that man is more than mind and body, but also a spirit. Christian education is directed toward the whole person, spirit, mind, and body thus helping children reach their potential as Christian individuals. GSCA Preschool focuses on the child's spiritual growth and his physical needs as well as academic knowledge. This approach to education assists the child in developing a life-style by which his faith will translate into a visible witness.

In light of these principles GSCA Preschool offers a program which will provide its students with a wide variety of learning experiences in a Christian setting. The Word of God will be presented to children at their level of understanding and with opportunities and encouragement to practice the ideals being taught.

Christian education begins with Christian families. Ultimate responsibility rests upon parents to "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6

GSCA Preschool in no way seeks to supplant the God-ordained family structure, but to support it in the total education of the child.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

School Committee: Comprised of people interested in Christian education, appointed and approved by the Deacon Board of the Washington Assembly of God Church. Members of this committee also include the school administrator, a parent representative and teacher representative both elected to serve a term of two (2) school years.

Pastor of Washington Assembly of God: Pastor of Washington Assembly of God, sponsoring church of GSCA Preschool; Member, GSCA Preschool School Committee.

Administrator: The head of staff responsible for the daily program. The Administrator is responsible for the execution of all school-wide policies, providing assistance to teachers, and assuring daily order. He/she implements policy at GSCA Preschool and the Preschool as developed by the School Committee and is responsible for selecting staff for the program in consultation with the committee.

Administrative Assistant: Assists and attends to the needs of the teachers, students and parents. Provides assistance with office work to the Administrator. The Preschool and K-8 Academy each have an Administrative Assistant.

Bookkeeper: Handles all financial related activities including, but not limited to, tuition billing and record keeping, accounts payable, financial statement preparation, etc.

Teachers: Responsible for the day-to-day activities, instruction, and supervision of their individual classes.

Students: GSCA Preschool offers class in three age groups: 2 ½ -3 yrs, 3-4 years, and 4-5 years in our K4 classes.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Policies and Procedures: Parents must accept and agree to abide by all policies, procedures, and purposes of GSCA Preschool. The administration solely reserves the right to admit, refuse, discipline, suspend, or expel any student based upon all information pertaining to the child, the collective welfare of the Christian school's constituency, and the cooperation of the parents.

Immunizations: All students must meet all state health and immunization requirements prior to attendance. A form completed by the child's physician indicating that all required immunizations have been administered must be submitted prior entering school unless a religious exemption to immunizations is on file.

Health: Sick children should remain at home for their protection as well as that of their classmates. If a child has a fever, is vomiting, or suffering from diarrhea, please do not send them to school. Should these conditions develop during school, the child will be made as comfortable as possible and parents will be contacted to pick them up.

Special Needs: Although GSCA Preschool strives to meet the needs of every student, for the benefit of the child, students with needs that cannot be served by the school's program will be referred to other schools that are designed to meet such needs.

Dispensing of Medication:

- Prescription medications may be sent to school with the student along with a note from the parent and specific dosage instructions. Medications will be held in the office and administered to the student at the prescribed times.
- The office personnel may dispense non-prescription medications, such as acetaminophen, only **with prior written permission from the parent.** Parents may also provide over the counter medications such as cough syrup with instructions for their children. These will be held in the office as well.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

1. Call our school office to make an appointment for a tour of our facility and an interview, or visit our website for information: www.GSCAcademy.com.
2. Make application for enrollment by filling out the registration form and returning it to the GSCA Preschool office along with the non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00.
3. An additional interview with the student and parents may be requested.
4. **IMPORTANT!** A copy of the birth certificate, medical and immunization records **must be in GSCA Preschool's possession before the student may start school.**
5. Parents will be notified of the decision regarding enrollment.
6. Enrollment is open to children on a first come, first serve basis.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL POLICY

Registration Fee: \$75.00 per child fee is non-refundable and must accompany the application for admission. Also, one (1) month's tuition payment is required on acceptance to GSCA Preschool.

Tuition: Please see the tuition rate sheet that is part of the enrollment package or can be found on our website.

Tuition Discount for members of the clergy: GSCA Preschool offers a 50% reduction in tuition, only, to ministers serving a local congregation or in full-time Christian service as a missionary. Documentation must be provided.

Other small fees: milk, hot lunches, field trips, school pictures, yearbooks, student insurance and, etc. are not included in tuition.

Payments: Tuition may be paid in full on or before September 1st or may be paid on a 10-month billing period (September through June). Billing for tuition is done on a monthly basis and will be sent several days before the 1st of each month when tuition is due. A late fee will be imposed for any payments received more than 15 days past the due date. **Should any tuition payment reach 30 days past due the student may be suspended from school until the account is brought**

current. A letter advising parents will be sent when the account reaches 20 days past due. Billing/payments for before and after care are done weekly as needed. Unpaid weekly bills for before and after care will result in the suspension of that service until the account is current.

*****There will be a \$25.00 fee for all returned checks*****

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports will be issued in January and June and will indicate the level of skill demonstrated by the student in each age-appropriate category. Any concerns about developmental and/or academic ability may be discussed with the teacher by scheduling a conference through the Preschool office.

ATTENDANCE

School Hours: GSCA Preschool is open for child care from 7:00am – 6:00pm Monday through Friday. Parents have several options for the number of days and hours their children may attend. Most academic instruction is done between the hours of 9:00am and 11:30am. Your child's teacher will supply you with a monthly calendar and general daily schedule.

School Year: 180 days of instruction plus utility days for non-scheduled school closings. A school calendar is issued to each student listing scheduled holidays and can also be found on our website.

School Closings: GSCA has an automated emergency call system in place. Each family will receive a call both for a.m. school closings and delayed openings and for early closings due to inclement weather. In the event of inclement weather or other emergency, please tune in to 69 News WFMZ TV (Comcast channel 18) or radio station WFMZ (100.7 FM). YOU MAY ALSO CALL THE VOICE MAIL SYSTEM after 6 am on the day in question. If no information on closing is given by 7:15 a.m., you may assume that school will be in session. School may be delayed by one or two hours as an alternative to closing if conditions tend toward improvement. All decisions regarding closing and delayed opening will be governed by those made by the Warren Hills School District.

Absences: Parents are encouraged to establish regular and punctual habits of attendance for their children. Continuity of instruction is very important. A dated, **written** excuse from home is **required** for any absence. A written excuse from a doctor is required when a student is absent for four (4) or more consecutive days.

Vacation, Leaves of Absence: Please let us know if your child will not be attending school for any length of time due to vacation or other reason so that we may plan accordingly.

DRESS CODE: There is no specific dress code for GSCA Preschool other than clothes that are appropriate for the weather, neat and clean. Please supply a full change of clothing for your child to be kept in the classroom in a bag clearly labeled with your child's name. Remember to submit different changes of clothing based on the season/weather.

GSCA Preschool DISCIPLINE POLICY

Good Shepherd Christian Academy bases its discipline policies upon the principles of the Word of God which presents God's discipline as primarily being redemptive, not punitive (Hebrews 12:6-11.) See Hebrews 12:6-11. From that foundation all discipline is administered fairly, lovingly, and with the philosophy that all discipline is for the purpose of correcting wrong behavior, for the good of the child being disciplined.

Initially, discipline problems will be handled by the classroom teacher. If a disciplinary problem is persistent, the teacher will contact the parent for a conference; however, not every problem requires a parental conference. This is left to the discretion of the teacher.

In keeping with Jesus' instructions for resolving conflicts, the first level of administering discipline to students is within the classroom, and by the teacher directly involved. Teachers are to always strive to make the corrective action equivalent to the offense. Parents are reminded to direct any questions to the classroom teacher before coming to the Administrator.

In almost all cases a verbal reminder and guiding the child to another activity is enough. If negative behavior continues the child will need to go to the "think about it" chair. After a brief time the teacher will speak to the child and walk him/her through an opportunity to apologize and receive forgiveness before returning to regular classroom activities. When the conflict is between children they are encouraged to talk it through and reconcile in similar biblical fashion.

In the event that the following circumstances exist, the Administrator will be notified and involved in the disciplinary process:

- The teacher feels his/her discipline is ineffective
- The discipline has been administered previously for the same offense
- The student remains rebellious or resistant to correction
- The situation is too serious for classroom methods

The following are infractions that warrant the immediate attention of the Administrator, even at the first occurrence:

- Aggressive physical assault such as: punching, kicking or choking;
- Foul language or cursing
- Deliberate destruction of school property
- Persistent spirit of rebellion
- Stealing another's property
- Malicious lying

Determinations of appropriate discipline will be made considering the following factors:

- The development and maturity level of the student
- The level of harm
- The surrounding circumstances
- The nature of the behavior
- Past incidences and continuing patterns of behavior
- The relationships between the parties involved
- The context in which the alleged incidents occurred

In very rare cases, after all efforts at achieving successful classroom behavior have been exhausted, it may be necessary to suspend the child's attendance.

MISCELLANEOUS

Electronic Devices: No cell phones, iPods, GameBoys, etc., are permitted to be carried in school. It is a time of learning and social interaction and playing with electronic toys do not permit either.

Conferences: Teachers are available for conferences as needed. Please make an appointment through the office.

Drop off & Pick up: Students should be escorted into the building and signed in by a parent or authorized representative. Likewise, students should be signed out at pick up time. No student will be released to any party without prior authorization from parents and a check of identification.

Field Trips: Some of the most significant hands-on learning experiences take place on field trips, off school grounds. Parents will be notified of upcoming trips and permission must be granted for students to participate.

General Information:

- All students must take great care to respect and care for the facilities and surrounding property.
- Gum is not allowed at all on the school grounds. Food is to be eaten only at lunch and snack time.
- No littering, particularly in the restrooms.

Lost & Found: Lost and found items will be held until the end of each month. Unclaimed items will be given to charity.

Lunches: Lunches may be provided from home or you may participate in our hot lunch program which is ordered and paid for in advance from our caterers. Milk will be available at the option of the parent. Information will be sent home concerning these programs throughout the school year. If your child forgets his lunch, please drop the lunch at the office and we will deliver it to your child.

To prevent many interruptions in the classroom, please leave forgotten lunches, books, clothing, etc. at the office.

Special Treats: Treats are welcome for birthday celebrations and holiday parties. Parents are to notify the classroom teacher in advance of their child's celebration. Summer birthdays may be celebrated during the school year. Please check with the classroom teacher regarding any students with specific food allergies to avoid potential health risks. Special treats are for celebrations and we **strongly discourage candy, soda and other sweets in lunch boxes.**

Transportation: Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents. We will contract bussing services for all-school field trips.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

The objective of this policy is to establish biblical guidelines for the resolution of disputes and grievances in the operation of Good Shepherd Christian Academy. These guidelines are to be followed whenever there is a dispute or grievance concerning any aspect of Good Shepherd Christian Academy's operations, between any two parties connected in a direct way to the school. This includes students, parents, staff, volunteers, administration and Committee.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Students/Parents to Teachers:

1. Concerns about the classroom should first be presented to the teacher by the parents.
2. If the problem is not resolved, the parents may bring the concern to the Administrator.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the parents should contact the Grievance Officer from the Good Shepherd Christian Academy School Committee for a meeting with the Administrator and Teacher.
4. If the problem is still not resolved, the parents should submit a request for a hearing, in writing, to the Good Shepherd Christian Academy School Committee.

Parents to Administrator:

1. If parents have a grievance or dispute about the general operation of the school (apart from the operation of the classrooms), they should express their concerns to the Administrator.
2. If the problem is still not resolved, the parents should contact the Grievance Officer (usually the committee chairperson) of the Good Shepherd Christian Academy School Committee for a meeting with the Administrator.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the parents should submit a request for a hearing, in writing, to the Good Shepherd Christian Academy School Committee.
4. This procedure applies to Committee members who are acting in their capacity as parents/patrons, and not as representatives of the Committee.
5. This procedure applies to all faculty members who are acting in their capacity as parents/patrons, and not as representatives of the school.

Please complete, sign, and return this portion to GSCA Preschool by September 30, 2011.

I, _____, have read and understand all provisions
(Print Parent's Name)
included in this Handbook. By signing below I agree to all policies and procedures listed herein and agree to make timely tuition payments according to GSCA Preschool policy. I understand that access to my child/children's academic records are dependent upon satisfying my tuition obligation for this school year. I further agree to support the policy and disciplinary decisions of the GSCA School Committee and Administration.

Parent's Signature

Date