



Parent Handbook

September 2019



Established 1981

1133 Reston Avenue
Herndon, Virginia 20170
703-437-4511

www.gslcva.org

preschool@gslcva.org

facebook.com/GoodShepherdLutheranPreschoolVA

CLASSES FOR 2019–2020

Dinosaurs	Monday–Friday	9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Rabbits	Monday–Thursday	9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Bears	Tuesday–Thursday	9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Ducklings	Tuesday–Thursday	9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Lunch Bunch	(beginning in October)	12:00–12:45 p.m.

Pastor:

Rev. Jotham Johann, Esq.

Director:

Susie Hardwick

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Welcome to the Good Shepherd Lutheran School 2019–2020 PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to our new school year!

Since 1981, Good Shepherd Lutheran School has been blessed to open its doors to *all* God's children and their families.

As a ministry of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, we warmly welcome and celebrate your child's uniqueness in their spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development. Our experienced caring teachers have created inviting, age-appropriate classroom centers to enhance your child's learning through play. Outdoor cooperative games and free play promote gross motor skills, social development, cognitive development, and well-being!

Most important, we strive to nurture your child in a positive, loving, Christ-centered atmosphere where he or she will feel safe in Jesus' love. Parents, friends, and relatives are invited to join us for our weekly Chapel with Pastor Johann, DCE Andy Muich, or our Music Teacher, Monica Greenwood, leading us in a Bible story, prayers, and songs. Please come on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in the Day Chapel. You won't want to miss our Music program immediately following Chapel in the Gathering Place. Monica provides a most engaging, interactive music program for all to enjoy.

Open communication is a vital part of our program's success. At Good Shepherd, the parent/teacher partnership is a cherished relationship and we invite and encourage you to take part in school activities. We maintain an Open Door policy to our families and authorized caregivers during school hours. Please know my office door is always open to you, and I appreciate the opportunity to share your thoughts, joys, and concerns with a visit, email, or phone call.

We realize there is much information on the following pages of our *Parent Handbook*. Please read it carefully. It is our hope that it will provide you with a better understanding of our school policies and be an easy reference guide for your family throughout the year.

Thank you for sharing your precious children with us.

God's blessings,

Susie Hardwick

Director

MISSION STATEMENT

The Good Shepherd Lutheran School seeks to help preschool children and their families grow in their relationship with God and others through faith in Jesus Christ. In response to the love of God through Christ, the School encourages them, by word and by example, to lead lives of praise to God and generous service toward others.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Effective early childhood education must include the development of the whole child. **Our program is designed to meet the needs of your child spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically.**

At Good Shepherd, we want your child to see himself or herself as a valuable person loved and individually celebrated by God and by others. We strive to maintain a Christian atmosphere in our classrooms at all times—in the warm greeting the teachers give each child at the beginning of the day, as the teacher and children pray about an illness or a new baby in the family, or by a hug that expresses love and forgiveness when a child has needed to be reminded of acceptable behavior.

A child who feels loved by God and by others is better equipped emotionally to meet the challenges of life. He or she is free to develop into the unique individual that God created him or her to be. At Good Shepherd, we encourage our students to express themselves through art, music, dramatic play, movement, language, and outdoor play.

We believe that one of the best ways for your child to develop positive social behavior is through guided cooperative play at preschool. We desire for your children, in an atmosphere of Christian love, to learn to take turns, to share their time and materials with others, to respect their teachers and classmates, to show concern for the needs of others, and to resolve conflicts justly and peacefully.

Our goal is that your child would also grow intellectually, through interactions with materials and equipment designed to stimulate a child's interest in God's wonderful world. Books, blocks, puzzles, manipulatives, the sensory table, cooking, music, art, and circle time conversations are all used to foster intellectual growth. Pre-reading and number concepts are integrated into all of our program areas. Language skills are of special importance in early childhood education. Experiences are provided to allow the child the opportunity to practice and perfect oral language; to share ideas with a group and to listen to others; to dramatize a story; to rhyme sounds and songs; and to use puppets and finger plays.

Last, we strive to provide an environment where your child can develop both large and small motor skills. Outdoor play exercises muscles, improving your child's physical well-being. During inclement weather, we set up climbing equipment indoors and/or encourage cooperative games. Art, puzzles, manipulatives, blocks, and practice at writing all help to develop fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

Our Expectations of Children

Our staff celebrates *all* children, and expects them to come to School and be themselves. There are times, however, when teachers need to guide a child on how to handle a situation. Every child needs to have limits set for behavior, in order to develop into a well-adjusted, self-disciplined adult. Until such time as the child is able to display inner control, and know his or her own limits, he or she looks to adults to set those limits and to teach appropriate behavior.

Our teachers expect acceptable behavior from every child, and the children usually try hard to meet this expectation. The teachers focus on getting to know each child individually, enabling them to assist in the child's learning of putting into practice acceptable classroom behavior. Children often respond positively to hearing, **"I can't let you hurt bodies/hurt feelings."** In applicable situations, this message is easily understood by most preschoolers, serving also as a reminder of our school policy. Please let the Lead Teacher know of **any** changes or problems at home that may affect your child's behavior at school so that we may help guide your child appropriately.

The Separation Process

The process of separation from the parents as a child enters school is one of the most important experiences of a young child's life. In doing so, a child learns to feel comfortable with others and trust that his or her parents will return. Here are some suggestions for making it a successful experience for you and your child:

- Use a positive approach in a calm voice to reassure your child that you or the caregiver will be back at the end of class time to hear all about his or her day.
- Place an emphasis on what activities your child will be doing that day. Check your monthly class calendar for Units of Study, letters of the week, and other activities.
- Avoid prolonged goodbyes. But don't sneak out. Be sure your child is aware that you are leaving. Let your tone of voice and body language reflect your assurance that you are leaving him or her in a safe, loving environment.
- Don't hesitate to ask the teacher for help. She has lots of nurturing experience in this area!
- Please feel free to call the School Office, 703-437-4511, if you are concerned about your child. The office staff will be happy to check on your child and report back to you.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

History

Good Shepherd Lutheran School was established in 1981 as an important part of the ministry of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Its student body includes children of the congregation, children from other faith communities, and children from families who claim no faith community.

Administrative Organization

The day-to-day operation of the school and the direct supervision of the teaching staff are performed by the School Director.

The School is governed by the Pastor and the School Advisory Team, which is made up of church members, some of whom are also School families, and School parents who support our Christ-centered ministry. It is the responsibility of the Advisory Team, in consultation with the Pastor and the School Director, to set School policy. The members of the Advisory Team also serve as a liaison between the congregation and the School to ensure that the mission of the congregation is promoted to School families, and that the governing policies reflect the mission and values of the congregation.

Program and Teachers

Curriculum. The Christian curriculum used at Good Shepherd includes a rich combination of many resources. We use the *Beginner's Bible* materials (Zondervan Publishers) extensively in the classroom as well as specific lessons from *Early Childhood Devotions*. Current Early Childhood publications from Concordia Publishing House, the Southern Early Childhood Association, NAEYC, Resources for Educators (Aspen Publishers), and High Scope are integral parts of our lesson plans. These materials relate to the experiences of the young child while our teaching staff provides Christian guidance. Our goal is to help children discover for themselves God's love in Christ as they learn about the world around them.

Our School year is divided into weekly Units of Study, which include such topics as Family, Friends, Easter, Old and New Testament Stories, Miracles of Jesus, Earth & Ecology, Seasons, and God's World of Wonders. Many of the activities chosen by the teacher relate specifically to the week's particular Unit of Study. Letters of the alphabet and colors are also incorporated into our curriculum.

Our School day typically begins with children being warmly greeted by the teachers and encouraged to participate with others in table toy time or other manipulatives to develop fine motor skills. A circle time may follow table toys where the teacher will assign her helpers for the day, discuss the Unit of Study, the weather and calendar, and share what activities are available for discovery (or choice) time.

During discovery time, the children can choose many different activities that promote learning and play, such as creative art, blocks, books, the sensory table, the listening center, the easels, the writing center, and dramatic play. The School day also includes a snack time, a story time, and outdoor play.

During circle time, the teachers also lead the children in prayer for each other, for family members, and to praise and thank God for His many blessings. Children will be encouraged to pray aloud if they feel comfortable doing so.

Throughout the School day, the teachers refer to Jesus as our special friend and helper, and relate all our different Units of Study to God's wonderful love through Christ. Our staff strives to model caring Christian behavior in the classroom and in all school activities at all times.

Chapel. Children and staff participate in a Chapel service on Wednesday mornings, led by the Pastor or Director of Christian Education of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Our Music Teacher and School Director also serve. Children hear a Bible lesson, sing songs, and pray with others. Families and friends are warmly invited!

Music. Our weekly interactive Music program teaches children many wonderful songs and gives them the opportunity to practice movement and select simple instruments to enjoy. Our Music teacher also introduces songs in Spanish. All children prepare to participate in our annual Christmas program. Read more about the program on page 16, in the Special Events & Programs section.

Professional organizations. Good Shepherd Lutheran School maintains Comprehensive Membership in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); is a member of the Northern Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children (NVAEYC); and a member of the Southern Early Childhood Association. The Director is a participating member of Administrators of Early Childhood Christian Programs (AECCP).

Staff qualifications. The staff of Good Shepherd Lutheran School is experienced and well trained. Lead teachers have college or graduate degrees, and all teaching staff participate in continuing education by attending early childhood workshops and seminars throughout the school year. The Director provides instruction during annual in-house training sessions. The Director and teaching staff receive certification in CPR, AED, and First Aid, with additional certification in EpiPen administration. School staff members are required to submit an updated TB test/screening and the annual Virginia Health Form signed by a doctor. All school staff and School Advisory Team members complete criminal background checks. The Director and all teaching staff have completed the required fingerprinting search.

Many of our staff members are also members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, and all staff members are committed Christians. Parents have shared numerous testimonials over the years about the positive influence our staff has had in building their child's Christian character.

Changes to program. Good Shepherd Lutheran School may need to make changes to our program, including class offerings, size, and age requirements, based on factors such as class enrollment and parental interest. Changes, additions, or deletions will be implemented after careful consideration of our program needs, with the support of and in consultation with the Pastor and the School Advisory Team.

Parent Participation

Parents are always welcome in our classrooms! Our parents can be involved in many aspects of the program. During the year we need volunteers to be Room Sponsors, to organize parent events, to be classroom helpers, to assist with school picture day, and for special projects. You are invited to be as involved as you would like to be. Please speak with the Lead Teacher if you would like to participate in the classroom activities.

We often use parents as paid Substitutes in our classrooms. Substitutes are required to get a TB test and complete the Virginia Health Form signed by a doctor on a yearly basis. The School pays for the required criminal background checks and fingerprinting. Please feel free to speak with the Director for Substitute training opportunities.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Policy

Good Shepherd Lutheran School welcomes *all* students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, with all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at our School. Good Shepherd Lutheran School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, athletic and other School administered programs.

All children meeting the age requirement, as defined by the School Advisory Team, and who are toilet trained (able to do their own toileting) are eligible for enrollment, provided the school can meet the needs of the child. We celebrate the development of *each* child, and welcome *all* children to our Christ-centered program.

Children are to be enrolled for a full School term (or for the balance of the current School term if enrolled after September). The 2019–2020 School term is from September 9, 2019, to May 22, 2020.

We welcome *all* children to our preschool and strive to meet their individual needs. However, we cannot guarantee that we can adequately serve children with certain special needs or physical impairments.

If parents seek admission to Good Shepherd for their child diagnosed with blood-borne pathogens, a pre-enrollment conference including the child's parents and physician, the classroom staff, and the Director will take place to provide protection for the child and other children in the program. They will decide if any limitations will be necessary on the child's activities at School.

Withdrawal or Removal

Withdrawal. A family will be allowed to withdraw prior to the end of the School year due to a serious accident or illness of the child. A physician's letter will be required.

If a family withdraws a child from the program for any other reason, thirty (30) days' written notice is required along with the following month's full tuition

payment. Also, the last month's tuition payment (May 2020) will be retained. See also the section on Tuition and Fees (below).

Removal. If at any time the School Advisory Team determines that we cannot adequately meet the needs of a child, within our resources, we reserve the right to remove that child from our program. We will at the same time do all in our power to refer the family to a program that will meet the child's needs. Our decision will be made in the spirit of Christ's love for that child and in consideration of the gifts He has given us.

The School reserves the right to dismiss a family from the program for the following reasons:

1. Lack of cooperation.
2. Mutual agreement between the family, the Director, the Pastor, and the School Advisory Team that the child's adjustment to School is unsatisfactory.
3. Nonpayment of tuition and/or fees.

FINANCES

Tuition and Fees

The Director or Office Assistant collects all tuition and fees. Bookkeeping procedures are handled by the School Bookkeeper. You may place your tuition check in the silver mailbox in the school foyer. Please bring cash payments (exact tuition amount) to the School Office so that we may give you a receipt.

Fees and Tuitions are set by the School Advisory Team in accordance with the provisions of the School's annual budget. The budget is formulated by the Director each new fiscal year and submitted to the Team for approval.

Tuition. Tuition is based on the actual costs of operating the School. The tuition is a yearly amount, derived by computing the per-hour, per-child cost of the program. This yearly amount is then divided into 9 equal monthly installments, due on the first day of the month. The monthly tuition payment is due each month and is not based on the child's attendance.

The last month's (May 2020) tuition payment is due by August 28, 2019.

All younger siblings receive a 20% tuition discount.

Fees. The **Registration fee** covers all field trips, in-house programs, a subscription to *Happy Times* magazine for each child, and a School bag and T-shirt. The Registration fee is payable upon the registration of each child for each new School term.

The **Activity fee**, based on the number of class days per week, supplements the cost of classroom educational materials.

Refunds. September's tuition (paid at registration) and the Activity fee are refundable ONLY up to and including May 1 prior to the school year for which the payment was made. The Registration fee is never refundable.

Financial Assistance

Partial tuition Scholarships may be available to qualifying families. In order to be considered, parents must complete a financial statement and give specific reasons in writing why they are requesting tuition assistance. The decision to grant financial assistance to a family is made by the Director and the School Advisory Team Chair. These proceedings are kept strictly confidential.

Monetary gifts for the School Scholarship Fund come from donations given by the congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, families and friends of the school, and by Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod organizations.

SCHOOL POLICIES

School Hours

All classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and dismiss at noon. An optional Lunch Bunch program is scheduled to be offered from October 1 through May 14 and will run from noon to 12:45 p.m. Details about this program will be available in September.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival. When you arrive, **please take your child to the bathroom**, either in the Parent/Fellowship Room (102) or in the hallway bathroom, to offer toileting. Be sure to have your child wash his or her hands with warm water and soap for at least 30 seconds. We ask that you please follow this important health policy, even if you arrive after School is in session. See also the Handwashing section.

We ask that children not be brought to the classrooms before the doors open at 9:00 a.m., as teachers are preparing for the class. The entrance doors will be unlocked at 8:45 a.m. If you and your child arrive before 9:00 a.m., you are welcome to wait in the Parent/Fellowship Room (102). You may visit with other parents while your child enjoys reading a book or playing with toys. Please help your child put away the toys when finished. When the classroom doors open, please escort your child inside the classroom.

Children may not be dropped off and may never be left unattended. See also the Child Safety section.

Dismissal. At the end of each class time, the Lead Teacher will verbally brief parents/caregivers for several minutes, sharing the events of your child's day. You will want to be on time in order not to miss this special sharing opportunity! This briefing takes place outside or in the hallway. The Assistant Teacher remains with the children in the classroom during this time.

If you are an authorized caregiver or a member of a carpool, **please relay to the other parents the information shared by the teacher at the end of the day.**

After the briefing, children are dismissed one-by-one to a parent or other authorized individual.

For the safety of your child, we simply will not release your child to anyone, even a relative or another school family, without your written permission. **Only persons whom you authorize to do so may pick up your child at the end of the day.**

This authorization must be in writing and signed by a parent. You must either have this person listed on your yellow Emergency Contact Form, or you must send in a note dated and signed by you to authorize that individual. **A fax, email, or phone call will NOT be accepted.** Authorized persons must be willing to show proper ID before the child is released.

Late pick-ups. Because young children worry when you are late, we ask that you be on time to pick up your child at the end of their class. The Director needs to be available to all teachers and preschool families during dismissal times, so your prompt arrival is deeply appreciated. **Please call the School Office (703-437-4511) if you will be late. Children will be brought to the School Office for pick-up.**

We will excuse the first time you are late during the school year. You will be asked to sign in at the office at that time and whenever you are late. After the first excused late arrival, there will be a flat \$10 charge, payable upon arrival, after 10 minutes. Parents, caregivers, or carpoolers who habitually arrive after the dismissal time will be asked to meet with the Director.

School Closings and Delays

For the safety of the children and our staff, we may need to cancel, delay, or dismiss classes throughout the School year when necessary. We rely on Fairfax County to determine the closing of schools during inclement weather, or for any other reason. When Fairfax County Public Schools close, we also close.

FCPS closings are announced on its website (www.fcps.edu) and on local TV and radio stations.

If Fairfax County schools open two hours late, classes meet from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Lunch Bunch will not be offered when we have a delayed opening.

If Fairfax County schools close quickly during the morning hours, you will need to pick up your child up as soon as possible. If our school must close quickly, parents and caregivers will then be notified by phone.

Please feel free to call the office if you are in doubt about the weather conditions at Good Shepherd. Our School policy is not to make up or provide refunds for missed School days due to bad weather and other events.

Health Policies

Your child's health is important to us. Each day the teachers do a "health check" of each child upon entering class. Your child will not be admitted to class if there are symptoms of an illness. If symptoms appear during class, your child will be brought to the School Office until you or your designated emergency contact individual returns to School for your child.

Please keep your child home if he or she has had a fever within the past 24 hours, a cloudy nasal discharge, a persistent cough, a cold less than four days old, is very tired and lethargic, or has symptoms of a communicable disease or head lice.

Please notify the School Office at once if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease or head lice.

Health forms. The state of Virginia requires that Health Form MCH 213 G be signed by you and a physician **not more than 90 days before the child's admission.** This medical form must be on file in the School Office prior to your child's first School day. **A new health form is required each year for your child to attend class. Children will not be admitted to class for any reason without the signed/completed form.** The Health Department examines our student health forms at the start of each School year. Virginia Health Form MCH 213 G is in the School Office, or you may download the four-page form from the Internet.

If your child requires an EpiPen, our Special Authorization for the Administration of Medication form must be completed, signed (by parent and physician) and submitted by the first day of School. See also Medication Administration below.

Allergies. Please be sure that you have listed all of your child's allergies on the white registration form submitted when you registered your child. If you need to update this information, please notify the Director IMMEDIATELY so that the necessary precautions can be put into place.

In the case of certain severe allergies, including food allergies, every effort will be made by our staff to keep the environment at school safe for the child. In the case of severe food allergies, this may involve posted signs and limitations on food items brought into the building and food served at snack time. Parents and caregivers will be informed of these limitations by the snack flyers as well as by verbal reminders from the staff. Teachers will personally inspect the unopened box and the listed snack ingredients each day.

In order for any precautions to be put into place that would change our policies at School, a food allergy must be documented by a physician. The Director will decide if a change in policy is warranted, what the policy will be, and how it will be carried out.

In most cases of a physician's documented food allergy, even when it is not serious or life-threatening, parents may choose to provide an individual snack for their child each day rather than have their child eat the group snack. Please discuss this option with your child's Lead Teacher so she can plan accordingly. Snacks can be purchased by you and left here at School for the teachers to give to your child at snack time. However, you still may want to remain on the snack rotation so that your child can enjoy serving a special snack to their classmates.

Please note: Despite our efforts, we cannot guarantee that our environment will at all times be free of allergens for your child. We rely largely on the cooperation of informed parents and other adults, so we cannot completely control what items come into the School. Also, church activities occur in the building outside of School hours, and though our policies are posted, we cannot be responsible for what is brought into the building during these times. If you have any questions or concerns on this matter, please speak to the Director.

Medication administration. The Good Shepherd Lutheran School staff will not administer any topical ointments or medications (prescription or over-the-counter) except EpiPens. **All EpiPens must be in their original Rx box, with the prescription labels attached.** EpiPens will be kept in a safe location in the classroom and will travel with the child wherever he or she goes. If your child has an EpiPen, we must have on file our Special Authorization for the Administration of

Medication form signed by a parent and physician for your child to attend class and for the medication to be administered.

Immunizations. See information about required forms under Health Forms, page 11.

Handwashing. Washing hands with soap and warm water for at least 30 seconds greatly reduces the germs that could be brought from home as well as possible allergens. We ask that all children be taken to the bathroom, either in the hallway or in the Parent/Fellowship Room (102), to offer toileting when you and your child arrive. We ask that you please follow this important health policy, even if you arrive after School is in session.

Cleaning and sanitizing. Our School maintains the highest standards of cleanliness. A supply of latex-free gloves is available at all times for use in the classrooms, Parent/Fellowship Room (102), outdoors, and in the bathrooms and travels with each class to music, on field trips, etc. A changing table is available in our Parent/Fellowship Room. Baby wipes, extra disposable diapers, gloves, and plastic bags are stored in the right cabinet above the sink. Please be sure to put soiled diapers in the Ziploc bags that are provided and take them home with you.

Child Safety

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. The school's safety policy is simply stated:

EVERY child MUST be under SIGHT and SOUND 100% of the time.

For further information on how this policy is implemented, please see the Arrival and Dismissal section, page 9.

Note: The School staff is not at any time or under any circumstances responsible for supervising your child outside of his or her specified class hours and days. Good Shepherd Lutheran School shall not be held liable for interaction between children and/or staff outside of class hours and days. School staff members are not permitted to transport children to and from School, or to drive children on field trips, except in emergency situations.

Liability coverage with Church Mutual Insurance Company is maintained for each child and the School staff by the congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. A copy of this policy is on file in the School Office.

See also a discussion of safety issues surrounding Snacks under that section on page 15.

Child abuse and neglect. The staff of Good Shepherd Lutheran School will report all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Employee screening. All school staff and School Advisory Team members complete a criminal background check. For more information on staff, see the Staff Qualifications section, page 6.

Building security and emergencies. The School has a Crisis Management plan in place in the event of major emergencies. We regularly conduct "quick exits" (at least 10 drills per year) and "safety drills" for fire and other emergency situations

for all classes. The Fairfax County Health Department and the Fire Marshal inspect our facility and records annually. Permits are posted in the School office. The School is not responsible for accidents or emergencies beyond our control (i.e., weather, terrorism, war, etc.).

In the case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called and your child may be taken by EMS vehicle to the nearest medical facility. Every effort will be made to notify you. The Director or a staff member will travel with your child in the event that you are not available. If it becomes necessary for a staff member to transport a child to a medical facility, another adult will accompany that staff member.

Visitors. We welcome visits from parents, prospective families, and the larger community. Please stop by the office first when you visit. Families interested in a tour of the school should contact the Director to schedule a visit. Email preschool@gslcva.org or call 703-437-4511.

Communication

We strive at Good Shepherd to maintain good communication between home and School. Please feel free to call 703-437-4511 or stop by the School Office with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have.

Calendars. Monthly calendars and newsletters are emailed to all families prior to the beginning of a new month. Copies are also available. The calendar details class events, such as field trips, Chapel and Music days, and your child's Snack day. It also lists our Units of Study for each week, and the color or letter of the week. We warmly invite you to our Sunday School, Worship Services, and special church events (especially family activities!), which are also noted.

We also publish a calendar for the entire School year (this year: September 2019 through May 2020), which generally follows the Fairfax County Public Schools calendar. See our projected School Calendar in this Handbook. It is also available online at gslcva.org/preschool.

Voicemail. The School's phone number—703-437-4511—has voicemail capability. Messages are checked throughout School hours, and also forwarded to the Director when she is away from the office. We will return your call as soon as possible.

Email. Be sure to keep the office notified of any changes in your email address.

Website. The School's website is part of the larger Good Shepherd Lutheran Church website. It can be accessed directly at gslcva.org/preschool. We try to keep the School website as up-to-date as we can. Please refer to the site for the School-year calendar, the Parent Handbook, Registration information and forms. Our Facebook page is updated often as well. Check for announcements and other information at [Facebook.com/GoodShepherdLutheranPreschoolVA](https://www.facebook.com/GoodShepherdLutheranPreschoolVA)

Newsletters. Each month the School will email a newsletter to all families describing upcoming events and giving other useful information.

Change of address. Whenever you change your home address, email address, home phone, cell phone, work phone, or emergency contact information, be sure to inform the School office directly and immediately.

Parent-Teacher conferences. Phone Conferences are held in late fall so that teachers can keep parents informed of their child's progress at School. Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday, January 28, at school.

Classes will not be in session on the day of the Conferences. Child care will be provided for parents during scheduled conference time.

You may schedule a conference with either the Lead Teacher or the Director at any time throughout the school year. When children are arriving or leaving each day is not a good conference time, as our focus is on greeting and dismissing each child, but we are always willing to set aside a more appropriate time.

Problem resolution. Parents should address any concerns about their child to either their child's Lead Teacher or the Director. Parents should refrain from discussing issues regarding their child in front of other children and parents. Staff members will not discuss specific students or their families with other parents. Such concerns should only be heard by the Director. Concerns about individual school staff members should also only be brought before the Director. Please address all questions about School policy or issues first to the Director; she will bring them before the Pastor and the School Advisory Team if appropriate.

Clothing

Clothing and footwear. Please dress your children in comfortable play clothing that is washable. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather, as we go outdoors most every day.

Clothing should be easy for your child to remove and put back on for toileting purposes. Elastic-waist pants work very well for this. Please do not send your child in belts and suspenders, or clothing with snaps and zippers unless your child can **easily** master them without assistance. School policy requires two staff members be present when a child is assisted for any reason with their clothing.

Shoes should be closed-toe with a rubber sole. Please DO NOT send your child to School in slick-soled dress shoes, which can be very slippery, or in Crocs, sandals, or flip-flops, as these will not protect their feet from the playground mulch.

New students enjoy selecting a school bag of their choice at the School visit in September (or their first school day). Please keep an extra set of clothing in the plastic bag, including underwear and socks, at all times. You will want to change the clothing items with the seasons. Also, your child will receive a Good Shepherd Lutheran School tee shirt that your child may enjoy wearing on field trips or at any other time.

Outside wear. Children will go outside to play almost every day. Don't forget to send a winter coat, boots, mittens, and a hat for snowy or bitter cold days. We do have a few extra hats and mittens here at School, but the children much prefer to wear their own things. **Please be sure to initial all of your child's outerwear.**

Clothing should not have any dangling strings or draw cords that can get caught when children run and climb. Children who wear dresses or skirts to School should also wear tights or shorts underneath.

Snacks

Our parents provide snack each day on a rotating basis. Your child's name will appear in bold on the monthly class calendar on the day he or she is assigned to bring snack. **The Lead Teacher assigns snack days.** You are asked to bring a simple snack (**no beverage**) for each child in the class, plus two for the teachers. Snack time is intended to promote social development as well as good nutrition. Please know that your child's Snack Day is a special day to them, and they like to be involved in selecting their snack choice.

Snacks should be easy for children to serve, eat, handle, and clean up. Remember that some packaging can be difficult for small children.

We provide cups, napkins, and water to drink.

The preschool provides snacks for the month of September. You will be receiving a flyer in September with more detailed information about the snack rotation beginning in October. You will also be made aware of any food allergies in the class that may limit your choices for snack. (See section on Allergies.)

Acceptable snacks. Acceptable, nutritious snacks include fresh fruit, raisins, cheese, crackers, pretzels, and yogurt. Snack Guidelines will be distributed to families in September.

Safety considerations. **Please do not at any time send snacks containing nuts, peanuts, peanut butter, peanut products, or chocolate, or those that have been processed in a facility or on equipment containing these ingredients.**

Do not send popcorn; fruit roll-ups; or whole grapes, which are considered choking hazards for young children. If you wish to bring grapes for snack, safety guidelines require they must be cut in half lengthwise.

For the safety of our children with allergies, **all snacks MUST be brought in their original, unopened packaging, with ALL ingredients listed.** Home-baked products cannot be accepted.

Thank you for being in partnership with us to keep all children safe!

Outdoor Play

Children typically spend one-half hour each day on the playground or at indoor play in the large Gathering Place area during inclement weather. On the playground, children have the opportunity to play with their classmates on our large playscape, ride trikes and cars on the paved path, and participate in sandbox play and other gross motor activities. **For the safety of all children, the playground and the Gathering Place are provided only for enrolled students during their class hours.**

Personal Possessions

Except for items that may be needed temporarily to help ease your child's transition from home to School, we ask that personal possessions be left at home. If your child needs to bring a security item to School, help your child understand

that it will be “waiting” in his or her School bag during class time or perhaps will be “in the car when your school day has ended.”

We also ask that you do not bring toys from home. It is very difficult for young children to understand that an identical toy brought to school is not theirs. Of course, on your child’s Sharing Day, he or she may enjoy bringing a special toy or item to share with the class at circle time. However, the treasured item will remain in the School bag until that time.

Potty Training Policy

All children attending School must be potty trained (able to do their own toileting). This means they must be able to clean themselves and change their undergarments and clothing if needed. Our staff understands that preschool-aged children may have accidents. However, if clothing assistance is needed, two staff members MUST be present. Please refer to the section on Clothing.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

Aggressive behavior is the expression of negative feelings by a child through his or her hitting, kicking, biting, or in some other way trying to harm, physically or emotionally, another child or staff member. Aggressive behavior includes severe and repeated verbal abuse as well as cases of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is the unsolicited attention given to a child or staff member by the offending child that is of a sexual nature. It is expressed physically or verbally, and is intended to degrade the recipient.

All incidents of aggressive behavior will be dealt with immediately by the classroom staff in a kind, but very firm, manner. In cases where there is or appears to be physical or psychological harm, the Director will be notified as well as the parents of all involved parties. We will strive to maintain confidentiality whenever possible. Repeated offenses may result in the parent being called to remove the child from School for the remainder of the School day. The Director reserves the right, in consultation with the Pastor and the School Advisory Team, to dismiss a child from the program for continual, uncontrollable aggressive behavior.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Christmas Program

All of the children prepare for our annual Christmas program, which will be performed for families and friends this year on Sunday, December 8, at 2:00 p.m., in the Church Sanctuary. A fellowship gathering with light refreshments will immediately follow in the large Gathering Place in the School area. We hope you will be able to join us!

Family Days

Family Days are scheduled throughout the school year for all classes. A family member or loved one (over 18 years of age) is invited to join us in the classroom (or

designated park) for the scheduled activity. Please check the School calendar for the date, and watch for full details in the School newsletters.

Field Trips

Classes participate in various trips or in-house events each year. We welcome families to join us for these delightful activities. We rely on parents or their authorized caregivers to drive to these events. Each child must be in a child safety seat. Field Trips/events are noted on your child's monthly class calendar.

School staff members are not permitted to drive children on field trips.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays (including summer birthdays) during Snack time. Your child's birthday and Snack day usually coincide. On that day, you may send in a special snack. We recommend peanut-**free** & chocolate-**free** ice cream cups, pudding, plain cookies, or something else your child might enjoy sharing.

Please do NOT send in cupcakes or cake. These are very hard for young children to eat and then help clean up, which takes time away from the celebration of their special day.

Please bring in ONLY the special snack for your child's birthday. Party supplies, favors, candy, horns, balloons, etc. cannot be accepted. Some children are hurt when they perceive that their birthday snack is "lacking" when compared to others. We appreciate your understanding and saving these items for your home birthday celebration.

Note: In consideration of children's feelings, we ask that you not put birthday party invitations in children's School bags or hand them out to parents at School unless your child's entire class is invited. Otherwise, please mail them or deliver them off of School grounds.

Sharing Days

For many classes, your child's Snack day is also your child's Sharing day. Please help your child select one item from home that will fit in their school bag to share at circle time with the class.

Open House

Our Open House offering 2020–2021 Community Registration is scheduled for February 6, 2020, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Personal tours will be given throughout the day. As a currently enrolled family, you may register during **Priority Registration, January 21–31, 2020**. Enrollments will continue to be accepted after January 31, class size permitting.

SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2019–2020

Aug 28	Parent Administrative Day. School Office, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Sept 9	“School Visit Day” for all enrolled students. Schedule for class hourly visits in August 2019 letter.
Sept 10	Classes begin, 9:00 a.m.–noon Ducklings dismiss 1 hour early (at 11 a.m.) first week only.
Sept 12	Parent Orientation, 9:15 a.m., Parent/Fellowship Room (#102)
Oct 1	Back-to-School night, 7:30 p.m. “Hour with the Teachers” in the classrooms.
Oct 14	No classes. Columbus Day holiday. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and GSLS closed.
Oct TBD	Frying Pan Farm Park field trip, 9 a.m.–noon. All classes. School closed. Wagon Rides schedules noted on October class calendars.
Nov 4 & 5	No classes. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Nov 6	School pictures. All classes.
Nov 21	“Giving Thanks Together.” A loved one is invited to share a “Giving Thanks” snack.
Nov 27–29	Thanksgiving holidays. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Dec 8 (Sunday)	Preschool Christmas Program, 2:00 p.m., Church Sanctuary. All classes participating. Reception immediately following downstairs in the Gathering Place. All invited!
Dec 23–Jan 3	No classes. Christmas holidays. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Jan 20	No classes. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. FCPS, GSLS closed.
Jan 21	2020–2021 Priority Registration begins for currently enrolled families, new siblings, church members, and former preschool families.
Jan 27	No classes. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Jan 28	Parent/Teacher Conferences. FCPS closed. GSLS classes not in session. Childcare provided for parents during scheduled conferences.
Feb. 6	Open House and Community Registration, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Feb 12	Family Day. All classes. Snack times noted on February class calendars.
Feb 17	No classes. Presidents’ Day Holiday. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Feb 26	Ash Wednesday Service, 12:15 p.m., church sanctuary
Mar 3	No classes. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Mar 18	Book Exchange. All classes participating.
Apr 6–10	Spring holidays. No classes. FCPS and GSLS closed.
Apr 13	Teacher workday. FCPS and GSLS closed.
May 6	Family Day Picnic, Reston North Park. 9 a.m.–noon All classes. School closed.
May 18–22	Certificates Week. Dates and times noted on May class calendars.
May 22	Last day of school.

