

Good Shepherd
Little Rams Catholic Preschool

Parent Handbook



2301 N. Stockwell Rd.

Evansville, IN 47715

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gsparish.org

INDEX

Mission Statement.....	3
Our Philosophy.....	3
Admission Information (Application/Enrollment Policy).....	4-5
Registration/Tuition/Fees.....	5
Immunization Requirements/Physical Examination Record.....	6
Goals and Objectives of Our Curriculum.....	6
Prayer and Religion.....	6
Program Sessions.....	6
Attendance Information.....	7
Arrival.....	7
Dismissal.....	7
Separation.....	8
Security Procedures/Visitors.....	8
Illness Policy.....	8
Weather Conditions and School Closings/Delays.....	9
Communication Between Home and School(<i>Conferences, Progress Reports, Newsletters, Mailboxes/Cubbies, & Two Household Families</i>)....	9-10
Lunch Guidelines.....	10
Restroom Guidelines.....	10
Nap Time.....	10
Clothing.....	11
Backpack/Bags.....	11
Snacks.....	11
Birthdays.....	11
Field Trips.....	12
Parties and Special Events.....	12
Allergies and Medication.....	12
Guidance and Discipline.....	13
After-Care Services.....	14
Important Contact Information.....	14

Mission Statement

The mission of Good Shepherd Catholic School is to provide a Christ-centered education in which students grow in faith, knowledge, and service.

Our Philosophy

Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool is an integral extension of the teaching ministry of Good Shepherd Catholic Parish Community.

As early childhood educators we will provide opportunities for the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth of each child meeting his/her individual needs, through developmentally appropriate practices.

Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool knows that children come to our program with different experiences, interests, and abilities. We will challenge each child to grow, learn and develop new skills by offering a variety of hands-on, child- guided activities, as well as, teacher- guided experiences within a Christian environment. Emphasis will be placed on positive self-image and encouraging each child to reach his/her potential.

Admission Information

Enrollment for Little Rams is open to all children regardless of race or religion. **Preschool** children must be **three** years old by **August 1** of the current school year. **Pre-Kindergarten** students must be **four** years old by **August 1** of the current school year. All children must be potty trained (see restroom guidelines)! This means no pull-ups will be allowed. If accidents become an issue a conference will be scheduled. If the problem persists the child will be asked to leave preschool or pre-kindergarten and return when they are potty trained.

Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool Application/Enrollment Policy

The application process for the Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool will begin in December, following the approval of the new application/tuition structure by the Good Shepherd School Council. Preschool Preview Night will take place the second Wednesday in January. Following Preview Night, applications for enrollment will be accepted until Monday, February 4, for returning Little Rams students and all Good Shepherd parishioners. Open enrollment will begin after the first Monday in February for all others interested in attending.

For the preschool class, Good Shepherd parishioners will be given priority until the first Monday in February. Students must be 3 years old by August 1 and be potty trained. Acceptance will be determined using the following guidelines and by chronological order of applications from all Good Shepherd parishioners who submit their application form and \$50 application fee during this time frame:

1. Active Good Shepherd parishioners with children already enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and/or Little Rams Preschool. (Active parishioners demonstrate a commitment to parish life by weekend Mass attendance and by contribution of time, talent, and treasure. Length of time as a Good Shepherd parishioner may need to be considered.)
2. Active Good Shepherd parishioners enrolling their first child.

Open enrollment for the preschool class will occur after the first Monday in February for all others interested in attending. Acceptance will be determined using the following guidelines and by chronological order of applications from those who submit their application form and \$50 application fee during this time frame:

1. Parishioners from other Catholic parishes that have children already enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and/or Little Rams Preschool.
2. Siblings of Non-Catholic students already enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and/or Little Rams Preschool.
3. Parishioners of other Catholic parishes whose preschools have full enrollment.
4. Non-Catholics.

For the Pre-K class, preference will be given to families who had their child enrolled in the Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool the previous year. Application form and \$50 fee for returning students must be returned by January 7. Being current on tuition and

additional fees will be considered in the acceptance process. Good Shepherd parishioners will be given priority on the remaining available spots. Students must be 4 years old by August 1.

Applications will be accepted for three weeks following Preview Night and ending on the first Monday in February. Admission will be determined using the following guidelines and by chronological order of applications from returning students and Good Shepherd parishioners who submit their application form and \$50 application fee:

1. Students enrolled in the Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool the previous year.
2. Active Good Shepherd parishioners with children already enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and/or Little Rams Preschool. (Active parishioners demonstrate a commitment to parish life by weekend Mass attendance and by contribution of time, talent, and treasure. Length of time as a Good Shepherd parishioner may need to be considered).
3. Active Good Shepherd parishioners enrolling their first child.

Open enrollment for the Pre-K class will occur after the first Monday in February for all others interested in attending. Acceptance will be determined using the following guidelines and by chronological order of applications from those who submit their application form and \$50 application fee during this time frame:

1. Parishioners from other Catholic parishes that have children already enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and/or Little Rams Preschool.
2. Siblings of Non-Catholic students already enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and/or Little Rams Preschool.
3. Parishioners of other Catholic parishes whose preschools have full enrollment.
4. Non-Catholics.

* On February 15, parents will be notified in writing of acceptance to the Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool.

* The tuition agreement must be submitted by the third Tuesday in March to maintain admission in a class.

Enrollment in the Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool program does not automatically assure enrollment in the Good Shepherd Catholic School kindergarten. The admissions policy from the Good Shepherd Catholic School Handbook will be utilized for enrollment at that time.

Registration/Tuition/Fees

Applications for Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool can be found at gsparish.org or at the school's main office. Please refer to the website for deadlines, tuition and fees.

Parents will be asked to sign a **Tuition Agreement**, which specifies the details of when payment is due and responsibility to pay. An outstanding balance of more than 2 months

tuition payment may result in a child being withdrawn from the program. An outstanding balance on the last day of school could prevent a space being held for a student the following year.

Immunization Requirements/Physical Examination Record

All students **MUST** have up-to-date immunizations, by the first day of school. Please provide the school with this information along with general health information. You will need to return your Physical Examination Record signed by your Physician as soon as possible. This information is required by the State of Indiana.

Goals and Objectives of Our Curriculum

Our goal will be to prepare each child to be successful and ready to learn. Realizing the importance of developing the whole child throughout this process we will offer opportunities for social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive, physical, and creative growth.

Research shows that young children learn through play and active exploration of their environment. Our classrooms are arranged in learning centers or interest areas, allowing children to explore and connect with the world around them. This allows for individual as well as group play.

Our early learning curriculum is both comprehensive and research based. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Big Day for Pre-K provides instruction in all 10 learning domains; social-emotional development, oral language and vocabulary, emergent reading, emergent writing, math, science, social studies, fine arts, physical development, and technology.

Prayer and Religion

We will start each day in prayer as a class. Our children also pray before they eat. We will have special activities throughout the year that emphasize our religious beliefs and values.

Program Sessions

Pre- Kindergarten: ½ Day M-F 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Full Day M-F 8-2:30 (may drop off beginning at 6:55 a.m.)

5-Day Preschool: ½ Day M-F 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Full Day M-F 8-2:30 (may drop off beginning at 6:55 a.m.)

3-Day Preschool: ½ Day M/W/F 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Full Day M/W/F 8-2:30 (may drop off beginning at 6:55 a.m.)

Attendance Information

If your child will be absent from school please notify Good Shepherd before 7:45 a.m. to report absences, please call 812-469-2904 and press 2.

All children need to be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school (see Illness Policy). If your child should become ill or injured at school, we will contact the parents first and if no contact can be made we will use the persons listed on your emergency card.

Arrival

If your child is participating in the Full Day program, he/she may be dropped off beginning at 6:55 a.m. Half-Day students may be dropped off beginning at 7:50 a.m.

Please use the entrance off the back parking lot. The back lot is located just north of the rectory off Stockwell Road. Parents should park in the back lot and bring their children into the classroom using the double doors located on the east wing of the building. If the doors are locked, please ring the bell for entrance. Prior to 8:00 a.m., we will offer free play, activities, and the opportunity to eat a breakfast that is provided by the parent.

Our regular school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Please try to arrive on time so that your child does not miss any of their school day. Punctual arrival also allows for the least amount of disruption to the class. If a child arrives at school after 8:00 a.m., please enter through the school's front doors and walk them down to classroom.

Dismissal

Half-Day students being picked up at 11:00 will be dismissed from the main entrance of Good Shepherd School. Please park and enter through the main doors. It is important for our staff to properly supervise all of our children. Your child needs to be picked up by 11:05, or a late fee will be charged accordingly.

Our Full Day program runs until the end of the school day at 2:30 p.m. Children will eat lunch with their class. During this time, we will offer enrichment in the curriculum areas, reinforcement of what we learned that day, and a variety of other activities. Dismissal will be from our back parking lot. The back lot is located just north of the rectory off Stockwell

Road. Older siblings will be dismissed from the back lot, as well. Further instructions will be given to those picking up at 2:30 p.m.

Separation

The staff is trained in this area and will guide you if your child has difficulty transitioning from you to the classroom. To ease the transition when you drop off your child, it is best to give them a big kiss and a big hug, tell them you love them, and that you will be back to pick them up...then leave. We know it is heartbreaking, but separation anxiety is normal. The longer you stay, the longer it is drawn out. We always have an extra person on hand to help the child and lovingly calm them down. Usually, after the first couple of weeks, the children are accustomed to their new surroundings and the issue subsides. Please feel free to call the school anytime you have concerns or just want to check on your child

Security Procedures/Visitors

We encourage our parents to visit Little Rams Catholic Preschool to help, volunteer and observe their child. In the interest of school security, ALL visitors MUST check in at the main office through the main entrance of the school. The far west door at the main entrance is the only door accessible to visitors throughout the school day, as all other doors remain locked. Visitors should ring the buzzer to enter. Upon entering please sign the visitor log and put on a visitor sticker.

In order to spend time in the classroom, help with class parties, and attend field trips with our children, all visitors will need to complete the Youth Protection Training.

Illness Policy

If your child has a temperature (100 degrees or more), diarrhea, vomiting, or rash, please keep them at home. We cannot accept any child with these symptoms. A child must be fever free and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child becomes ill during the school day, the parents will be contacted. The school may request a note from a child's doctor if special accommodations or a medical action plan is needed to meet a child's needs.

Weather Conditions and School Closings/Delays

Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool will follow the Catholic Diocese of Evansville/EVSC regarding closings and delays due to weather conditions.

If the Catholic Diocese of Evansville declares a 2-hour delay, Good Shepherd Little Rams Catholic Preschool children may report at 8:55 a.m. Watch your local news for school closing information. You will also receive a call from SchoolReach.

Make-up snow days are planned on the school calendar. If school is closed due to inclement weather, tuition is not refundable due to continuing monthly expenses. However you will receive the planned make-up snow day as part of your tuition.

Communication Between Home and School

Conferences

Communication about your child is very important. Student evaluations are conducted throughout the year through observations, student work, and social interactions with peers. Parents will be updated with progress at our parent teacher conferences in the fall. Please feel free to schedule a conference any time during the year to talk about your child.

Progress Reporting

The teachers will communicate student progress at least 1 time per quarter in written form. A formal Progress Report will be sent home at the end of the first and second semesters.

Newsletters

A newsletter will be sent home each week. Activities, special events, curriculum areas of focus, and other important information will be included.

Mailboxes/Cubbies

Children will have an assigned mailbox in their classroom. School notes, tuition invoices, and children's work are all placed in your child's mailbox or backpack. Please check on a daily basis.

Two Household Families

Upon request, the teachers will provide two copies of our newsletters, invoices, and any other important notes/forms of communication. It is up to each parent to notify the teacher of the request and check their child's mailbox to receive the additional copies of communication.

Lunch Guidelines

Hot lunches are **not** included in your child's tuition. Children may purchase a hot lunch provided by the school cafeteria at the current student rate. Hot lunches include milk. Monthly lunch menus may be found on the school website, under the Cafeteria tab.

Parents may also purchase a milk for any child a la carte.

Parents may add money to their child's lunch account by sending a check to the child's teacher.

Some children will also choose to bring a lunch from home.

Each classroom has a weekly lunch count sheet where parents can indicate their child's lunch needs. If you are able to mark your child's lunch request for the week on Monday, our staff is able to better communicate with our cafeteria. Regardless of whether your child is bringing a lunchbox from home or buying a hot lunch from our school cafeteria, you must mark on the lunch count sheet what your child is having each day.

Restroom Guidelines

All children must be potty trained and able to independently able to take care of their own bathroom needs. We will take the class at designated times during the school day, but children are expected to be able to alert a staff member when they need to use the restroom outside of those designated times.

Pull-ups are not allowed to be worn during the day, except at naptime. Children need to be able to change into and out of their pull-up independently.

Nap Time

Preschool students attending the full day program will take naps in the classroom. Cots are labeled and assigned individually for each child. For convenience, children may bring a pillow, blanket, and/or other comfort item from home to use during nap-time.

Nap items should be brought to school in a bag. Children will be assigned a locker to store nap items. Every Friday, or the last day your child is in school during the week, nap items are sent home to be laundered.

Clothing

Your child should wear comfortable clothing and shoes appropriate for active learning and play. Children need to feel free to participate in all activities, no matter how messy! We feel it is most beneficial to their creativity if they do not have to worry about getting dirty. Please provide an extra change of clothing in a bag labeled with the child's name, in case of accidents. Clothing should also be appropriate for the season (label any jacket/coat, hat or glove item that students may take on or off during the day for outdoor play).

Belts, overalls, and pants that use buttons at the waist can be difficult for young children to manage independently and can make it challenging for some children to use the bathroom in a timely manner. If girls choose to wear dresses or skirts, they need to wear shorts or playground pals underneath, which helps support modesty for them.

Please note: any type of shoe that does not completely fasten on your child's foot can be dangerous and inhibit gross motor play activities. The best footwear for your child at preschool is tennis shoes.

Backpacks/Bags

Please send your child to preschool and Pre-Kindergarten with a backpack or bag large enough to hold items we will need to send home. This will allow us to keep your child's artwork and/or important information separate and with the correct child. It is helpful if the bag is large enough to hold a folder. Please write your child's name on their bag.

Snacks

Your child's teacher will send home a snack schedule each month. On your designated day, we ask that you provide a snack for all the children in the class. A list of how many children and any food allergies for the class will be sent home at the beginning of the year. We appreciate you offering healthy snacks to share with the class when it is your turn. Our school participates in a Wellness Program and along with healthy snacks your child will have access to water at any time during the day.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very important and we will recognize your child on their special day. We ask that you refrain from sending food for the class as we are following the guidelines of our Wellness Program. If your child would like to donate a special gift such as a new book or toy to the class, in honor of their special day, you are welcome to do so. Invitations handed out at school must include all children in the class, otherwise invitations will need to be mailed.

Field Trips

Field trips can offer value by increasing a child's interest through hands on learning experiences. We plan to offer a few field trips during the year. Parents are always welcome to attend. We will send out field trip information later in the year.

A Field Trip fee is not included in your child's tuition. There will be a separate fee to cover the cost of our field trips that will be assigned at the beginning of the school year. Transportations to and from field trips are by school bus.

Parties and Special Events

Good Shepherd Little Rams Preschool will have parties to celebrate special occasions such as: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter. We will ask for parent volunteers to be in charge of each party, organizing activities and planning for a special treat. The Little Rams will also coordinate a special family night gathering each semester. We will celebrate our accomplishments at the end of the year as well.

Allergy and Medication

Please notify your child's teacher if he/she has an allergy that requires special medical attention. An Allergy Action Plan must be filled out by a child's physician, if he/she has an allergy that requires special attention during the school day. An Allergy Action Plan must be kept on file at school.

Parents may be asked to provide approved snacks for their child, if special dietary needs/concerns are required.

The Little Rams Preschool program adheres to the policy on storing and administering medication set forth in the Medication policy located in the Good Shepherd Catholic School Handbook.

Guidance and Discipline

Guidance is an important part of learning and we feel that it is a big part of our job. In our preschool and pre-k classes, we work to provide a safe learning environment for ALL students. We will work to help the students develop responsibility and self-regulation behaviors. Self-control is very important and we will provide the children with the tools to work through problems and adapt to their surroundings. By doing this, we will work to create a caring and Christ like community of learners.

Both the preschool and pre-k class use a Positive Behavior reinforcement system (see further explanation designated for each individual class). If a child is having difficulty following the daily routine, rules of the classroom, or expectations set forth, the teacher will respond with positive reinforcement, redirection, frequent reminders, and/or encouraging words.

If a non-desired behavior continues, a child may be removed from the situation that is stimulating the behavior. After a short time, the teacher will sit down and talk with the child about the behavior and alternative solutions. The teachers will communicate these challenges with parents through phone, email, or face-to-face conversations.

If a child's behavior requires ongoing daily attention from our staff and the child's behavior is unable to be directed in a positive and productive direction, the school will request a parent-teacher conference to seek additional input.

If after a period of time of using the methods listed above, a child is not responding to the interventions, the school will reserve the right to determine in its discretion when conduct is of a nature to warrant a child's withdrawal from the program. Students must be able to behave in a manner that is consistent with Christian principles of the school and the Diocese of Evansville.

Program Dismissal Policy

Dismissal from the program may result at the school's request when:

- *The teachers and administrators determine that Good Shepherd Catholic School is not able to meet a child's emotional or developmental needs
- *The child is not potty trained and able to take care of restroom needs
- *The child is not able to follow basic classroom rules
- *The child runs away from staff members
- *The child uses inappropriate language in conversation with staff or peers
- *Physical aggression towards other students or staff (ie- punching, spitting, biting, kicking, pinching)

*Destruction of property on purpose

*Habitual lateness with tuition payment.

This policy can be modified at the discretion of the Good Shepherd Catholic School administrator and Early Childhood Education Coordinator based on the severity of the behavior and situation.

After Care Services

After Care services will be provided from 2:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., and will be located in our classrooms. Those picking their child up after 3:30 must enter through the Good Shepherd After School Program doors located at the west end of the cafeteria off of Stockwell Drive. Please ring the buzzer. All doors are locked and entry into the building is only permitted at this location.

After Care closes at 6:00 p.m. Anyone who is still at school after 6:00 p.m. will be charged a late fee of 1.00 per minute. This will be explained in the tuition agreement.

Children participating in our After Care program will be expected to adhere to the same guidelines outlined in the Guidance and Discipline policy.

Children who attend After Care will receive 1 snack.

Important Contact Information:

Pre-Kindergarten Room: 116

Beth Elpers, Teacher phone: 812-476-4477 ext 116
belpers@evdio.org

Preschool Room: 118

Kelly Hamilton, Teacher phone: 812-476-4477 ext 118
khamilton@evdio.org

Early Childhood Education Coordinator

Brandee Schnarr, School Phone: 812-476-4477

bschnarr@evdio.org