



Parent Handbook

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843-571-2994

Website: www.goodshepherdsc.com

Email: denyse@goodshepherdsc.com

Facebook: [facebook.com/goodshepherdsc](https://www.facebook.com/goodshepherdsc)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/gsds.charleston/>

Church Center App: [Click here](#)

GSDS is a peanut/tree nut sensitive preschool

The Vision of the Church of the Good Shepherd

We exist to develop and equip mature followers of Jesus Christ who apply His Gospel to every aspect of life.

Good Shepherd Day School's Mission

Our mission is to display the love of Christ through grace-centered relationships with students, parents, and teachers by providing a nurturing, safe, and developmentally appropriate environment that allows children to grow socially, emotionally, spiritually, and academically. With these skills, we believe our children will grow to be confident leaders in their communities, families, and churches.

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Overview of the Day School Ministry

Our Staff/Lead Teachers

Director	Denyse Steen	843-729-6030
Assistant Director	Krista Skenes	714-305-5839
4s class	Marlo Burgess	843-860-1149
3s class/5 days	Liz Shaijram	843-478-4706
3s class/5 days	Jennifer Gardner	843-412-2520
3s class/3 days	Tobin Guerry	843-697-2504
2s class/5 days	Rachel Simonis	843-408-4780
2s class:3 days	Daniela Annibale	843-609-5619
Tots class	Paige Dadin	843-270-0393
Music	Brenda Albinger	843-571-2993

Ratios – Teachers:Students

Class	GSDS	SC Regulation
4s class (Marlo)	2:18	1:18
3s class (Liz & Jennifer)	2:10	1:13
3s class (Tobin)	2:14	1:13
2s class (Rachel)	2:10	1:10
2s class (Daniela)	2:10	1:10
Tots (Paige)	2:10	1:6

Children must meet the age requirement for their specific class by or before September 1st of the year they are enrolling.

For the Tots class specifically, children must be at least 18 months old to join. However, for the 2025-2026 school year only, children who turn 18 months old as late as February 29, 2026, may still be considered for enrollment in the Tots class, provided there is space available.

Classes/Days

4-year Kindergarten	5 days
3-year preschool	3 days or 5 days, must be *fully potty-trained
2-year preschool	3 days or 5 days
Tots program (18 months)	2 days, 3 days, or 5 days

***Potty Trained defined:**

A child is considered fully potty trained when they can recognize their need to use the restroom and prompt themselves to go, manage most of their hygiene needs independently during restroom breaks, and consistently remain clean and dry without accidents. All 3K students must be fully potty trained.

For our 4K students, being fully potty trained also includes the ability to independently manage all of their hygiene needs during restroom breaks and maintain dryness/cleanness.

Potty Training:

For 2 year old children who are training, please connect with the teacher to share the language used at home for training.. Make sure you resupply backpacks with a change of clothing. If the child constantly has bowel movement accidents - more than 2 in a week, a conversation with parents may be warranted. The child may not be ready to be trained.

Once your child has transitioned out of diapers or pull-ups, please ensure they wear underwear to school. For girls who often wear dresses, we recommend having them wear shorts underneath. This is particularly helpful as they spend a significant amount of time playing and sitting on the floor.

School Hours - Good Shepherd Day School is open from 8:45 am – 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Days off and teacher workdays are published on our [parent calendar](#). This calendar is on our [website](#) as well.

Early Drop off - (EDO) This is a separate program that will be available to all of our GSDS students. We offer early drop off daily beginning at 8:00 until 8:45. This class will be held in the 4K classroom on the first floor of the Education Building. We maintain 2 teachers in this class with the students, and we will have a list of registrants on hand. Children will be taken to class at 8:43 by their class assistant teacher. EDO includes a breakfast snack and water (water bottle from home). [Click here to register](#) for EDO.

Day School Chapel - Fr. Will Klauber, Evan Jackson, and Ms. Brenda Albinger lead our weekly chapel. Chapel takes place on Wednesday mornings inside the Fellowship Hall for all ages. Our tots class will experience chapel in their classroom space until we feel they are all ready for the transition into the Fellowship Hall. The Tots will join the 2s classes when they are ready. Chapel schedule is as follows:

Tots - 9:15 in their classroom, 3s and 4s - 9:30, 2s - 9:45.

Our Tuesday/Thursday Tots class will have music class in their room every Tuesday at 9:30, and will have chapel once a month during that time.

Child Protection Programs

CPR/First Aid – All teaching staff are CPR and First Aid/AED trained and certified.

Background Checks – All staff, volunteers, and substitute teachers undergo SLED background checks.

Child Abuse/Child Neglect Prevention – Staff members receive training to prevent, as well as identify, report, and respond to child abuse and neglect through the Diocese of South Carolina's Safeguarding God's Children course.

Emergency Communication System: We will be using an App called Church Center. Should we have an emergency at the school, you will receive information through this app. [Click here](#) for download instructions.



Please download the Church Center App to your phone today!

Tuition Payments

Tuition for the 2025-26 school year at Good Shepherd is due on July 1st. This can be made in 1 of 2 ways. You have the option to pay in full at a 5% discount, or you can opt for 9 monthly payments spread out through the school year. The first payment is due July 1st and includes the required materials fee. There is no payment due in August, and the monthly payments would continue on September 1st through April 1st. Payments are made through Planning Center, <https://goodshepherdsc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/day-school-tuition>, or through our [Church Center App](#). Tuition not paid by the 15th of the month will be subject to a \$40.00 late charge.

You will receive a monthly email reminder to pay your tuition if you choose the monthly payment option. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at accounting@goodshepherdsc.com.

Please be aware that any tuition payments that are two months or more overdue will unfortunately result in the automatic suspension of the student's enrollment. The suspension will remain in effect until the outstanding tuition balance is paid in full.

We understand that circumstances can sometimes make timely payments challenging, and we encourage you to reach out to us as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulties, so we can explore potential solutions together. GSDS has a partial scholarship program available to all current families. Email Denyse Steen, denyse@goodshepherdsc.com, for the application.

There are no fee reductions for absences, holidays, vacations.

Withdrawal

At Good Shepherd Day School, we understand that the adjustment period to a new school environment can vary for each child and family. If, after a reasonable amount of time, it is determined that a child (and/or parent) is experiencing significant difficulty adjusting to our school community, Good Shepherd Day School reserves the right to request the withdrawal of the child. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Director and the Day School Ministry Team.

Should you need to withdraw your child, we require two weeks' written notice. In such cases, you will receive a reimbursement for all tuition paid, less the tuition for the two-week notice period. If the tuition for the entire school year has been paid in full, a refund will be issued for the remaining months following the notice period. Please note that if written notice of withdrawal is not provided, no portion of the tuition paid will be refunded.

Registration Process For 2026-27

Current families, including currently enrolled students and their siblings, as well as giving members of the Church of the Good Shepherd, will have an early registration period from January 12th to January 30th, 2026.

Please note that a giving member is defined as an active church member who tithes a portion of their time and income.

Following the current family registration, public registration will open on February 2nd, 2026. Families who have previously toured our school are welcome to register at this time.

To reserve your child's spot, please complete the online registration form and submit it with a non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00. For families with multiple children, the fee for each additional child is \$50.00.

Health Requirements

Immunization Records

For all children to attend our program, we must have a current South Carolina DHEC Certificate of Immunization from your pediatrician.

If you are new to GSDS, please ensure that a copy of this certificate is provided to the school by August 18, 2025. If we do not have your child's certificate by this date, they will unfortunately be unable to attend the program until the required documentation is submitted.

It is the parents' responsibility to provide the school with an updated copy of the immunization certificate whenever your child receives new immunizations during the school year.

We will not accept a religious exemption form in lieu of the requested DHEC form.

Medication

Good Shepherd Day School does not employ a nurse. The school has a temporal infrared thermometer available in the office for temperature checks. Please note that school staff are not authorized to administer any other medications, including over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol and Motrin, as well as topical products like bug spray and sunblock.

The only medications we keep on hand at the school are liquid Benadryl and Neosporin. We will be providing you with access to an online permission form for the administration of Benadryl to your child in the event of an allergic reaction. If your child shows signs of an allergic reaction and we have your prior authorization, we will make every effort to contact you first. If we are unable to reach you immediately, we will administer a single 5 ml dose of liquid Benadryl as needed.

First Aid Kit

Each class has a first aid kit which includes authorized and emergency pick up contacts, band aids, baby wipes, gloves, disposable ice packs and neosporin.

Communicable Diseases and Illness Guideline

If a student is suspected of having a contagious illness, they will be sent home and may not return until they are no longer contagious. These illnesses include, but aren't limited to: COVID-19, pink eye, hand, foot, and mouth disease, chickenpox, pneumonia, scabies, measles, whooping cough, ringworm, head lice, mumps, pinworms, impetigo, strep throat, fever, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Please do not send your child to school if they are experiencing any of the following:

****Fever:**** If your child has a temperature of 99.5 degrees or higher, they should stay home. They must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school. For

example, if a child presents with a fever at 9:00 am, they would need to stay home that day and the following day, and could potentially return the day after.

****Vomiting or Diarrhea:**** If your child has experienced either vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours, they should remain home for the entire day. They may return to school 24 hours after these symptoms have stopped.

****Pink Eye:**** Your child can return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun.

****Contagious Skin Conditions:**** Highly contagious conditions like scabies or impetigo require the child to stay home until there are no new scabs or blisters for 24 hours, or if they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours. Please ensure all open wounds are covered upon their return.

****Yellow/Green Discharge from the Nose:**** While not all yellow or green nasal discharge indicates a bacterial infection, a child may attend school if the discharge has improved from the previous day and they have no fever.

****Head Lice:**** Your child must be treated appropriately and have no visible nits before returning to school.

****Bacterial Illnesses (e.g., ear infections, sinus infections, strep throat):**** Your child should be feeling significantly better and have been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

****COVID-19:**** Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours, and their symptoms should show improvement compared to the previous day.

****Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:**** A child is no longer considered contagious once no new spots have appeared within a 24-hour period. The rash itself may persist for 1-2 weeks without being contagious.

Biting and Aggressive Behavior Policy

The safety and well-being of all our students are our top priorities, and such behaviors can unfortunately disrupt the learning environment and divert our teachers' attention.

Aggressive behavior includes, but isn't limited to, actions like bullying, hair pulling, biting, hitting (with objects or physically), punching, and pushing. Our dedicated teachers and the director work closely with students and their families to understand the underlying causes of these behaviors and develop strategies to help the child learn more appropriate responses and ensure their needs are met. We do this through conference meetings and over email.

It's important to understand that biting and aggression in young children can stem from various reasons:

- For teething children, biting can provide a sensory experience that feels good.
- A child may resort to these behaviors when they want something but haven't yet developed the communication skills to ask for it.
- Feeling threatened by another child can trigger a defensive reaction.
- Frustration or feeling overwhelmed, especially when a child lacks the vocabulary to express themselves, can also lead to such behaviors.

To ensure a consistent and fair approach, GSDS has a specific protocol in place. Once a child has bitten or demonstrated aggressive behavior towards another student or teacher on *three separate occasions*, they will begin following this protocol. You will receive an incident report for each occurrence, and we will also keep a copy in your child's file in the day school office. We will work with your child and with you to try to manipulate this behavior by scheduling conferences either before or after school. The hope is we, you, the parents and the staff at GSDS, can work together to help the child to have successful days at school!

The GSDS biting and aggressive behavior protocol includes the following steps:

- 4th Offense:** The student will be immediately removed from the classroom and must be picked up by a parent. The student will be allowed to return to school after a one-week absence.
- 5th Offense:** The student will again be immediately removed from the classroom and picked up by a parent. In this instance, the student will be allowed to return to school after a two-week absence.
- 6th Offense: **The student will again be immediately removed from the classroom and picked up by a parent. The parents and administration will have a conference.

Staying in Touch

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice annually, in November and March. These meetings are a dedicated time for us to discuss your child's progress, identify any areas where additional support might be beneficial, and share insights into their adjustment to school, friendships, and classroom activities.

Our teachers diligently assess each child to provide you with a clear understanding of their development throughout their preschool years, ensuring they are well-prepared for 5K.

Teachers will be in touch via email or Signup Genius to coordinate a convenient time for us to meet, either in person or by phone, to discuss your child's individual progress.

Communication

Maintaining open communication between home and school is key to your child's success. Please keep your child's teacher informed about any significant changes in your family's daily routines that might influence their behavior at school. These could include events such as the arrival of a new sibling, a bereavement, separation, an upcoming divorce, changes in a parent's employment, or a serious illness within the family.

While we highly value your communication, it can be challenging for teachers to give adequate attention to all students while also trying to have impromptu meetings with parents during drop-off or pick-up times. For daily updates or instructions, written notes or phone calls scheduled before or after school hours are the most effective ways to connect.

If you have any questions, concerns, or issues, we encourage you to first discuss them with your child's lead teacher or the Director.

The following are ways to stay informed:

- Church Center App
- Weekly newsletter every Friday (email)
- Monthly Calendar – either online or in your child's backpack

- Our website – www.goodshepherdsc.com
- Our Facebook page – facebook.com/goodshepherdsc
- [Our instagram](#)
- Private classroom Facebook pages
- Email notices and tuition reminder emails

Teachers' Personal Cell Phones

GSDS teachers have their personal cell phones with them during school hours to use for communications as a day school staff, taking photos of the students for their class pages, and in case of emergency. GSDS parents have access to the teacher's personal number during school hours for similar reasons: in case of emergency, if a parent is running late, etc. If parents would like to discuss their child's progress at school or another matter, they should arrange a time (during the teacher's after school working hours) to meet in person or over a phone call.

Personal Information

Keeping both our records and your child's emergency forms current is very important. Please inform the school office whenever you have a change of address, email address, or phone number (both home and work). Additionally, please remember to update this information in your Church Center App.

General Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

To ensure your child benefits fully from our program with consistent learning, regular attendance is essential. Kindly inform your child's teacher or the director as soon as possible if your child will be absent.

For the safety of all our children, we strictly adhere to specific child-to-staff ratios. Therefore, please be aware that children can only attend on their registered days. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer make-up days if the school is closed or if your child misses a scheduled day for any reason.

Our daily program begins with circle time, a valuable group learning activity. To maintain a focused and calm environment for all children during this important time, we ask that you make every effort to arrive on time. Late arrivals can be disruptive and make it challenging for teachers to continue their lessons smoothly.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures:

The entry to campus off of Orange Grove Road is strictly an EXIT ONLY

Our child pick-up policy to ensure the safety of all our students. Only individuals explicitly listed on a child's emergency contact form are authorized for pick-up.

Should you need to make any temporary or permanent changes to this list, please notify your child's teacher and the director via email.

For drop-off and pick-up, please use the Education Building located on campus. To help with navigation, the front of the building faces Sam Rittenberg Boulevard, and the back of the building faces Orange Grove Road.

We WILL NOT utilize the car rider for pick up on school-wide event days.

November 19, December 17, February 6, April 1, May 15, and May 20.

Drop Off

Car Riders:

The car rider service is available for 3-year-old and 4K students between 8:45 AM and 9:00 AM. Cars should enter the parking lot from the front of the education building and proceed alongside the Fellowship Hall towards the back of the building. All car riders will enter through the back door of the Education Building, where the director or assistant director will be present to receive them. For safety reasons, please do not allow your child to exit the car prematurely. We will assist 3-4 students at a time. Please note that the back entrance will be closed and locked at 9:00 AM. If you arrive after this time, please park in the front and walk your child in, using the GSDS doorbell for late entry. Car riders will exit onto Orange Grove Rd.

Walkers:

Walk-in drop-off is also available from 8:45 AM to 9:00 AM. While all students are welcome to walk in with a parent or guardian, we highly encourage our 3s and 4K students to utilize the car rider line now that we are all on one level. The front door will be open from 8:45 AM to 9:00 AM and will be locked thereafter. Late arrivals will need to ring the GSDS doorbell for entry.

Pick Up

Car Riders:

Car pick-up will start promptly at 11:50 AM. To ensure a smooth flow, please arrive on time. Our director or assistant director will be there to safely escort your child to your car as you pull up. Kindly remember that securing your child in their car seat is your responsibility. Please also ensure that any authorized individuals picking up your child have a valid photo ID readily available. The back door will close and lock at 12:00 PM.

Walkers:

Pick-up for walkers will also begin at 11:50 AM and will conclude at 12:00 PM. Please make certain that any authorized pick-up person has their ID with them. Your punctuality is greatly appreciated as our teachers need to start their cleaning duties promptly after all children have been dismissed.

Late Pick-Up Policy:

The designated pick-up time ends at 12:00 PM. We understand that unforeseen circumstances such as traffic incidents or delayed appointments can sometimes cause tardiness. If you anticipate being late, please text your child's teacher and/or Ms. Denyse as soon as possible. For car riders, please be in the pick-up line by noon. Similarly, for walkers, please ensure your child is picked up between 11:50 AM and 12:00 PM. Please be aware that consistent late pick-ups will result in a late fee of \$10 for every 10 minutes of tardiness, which will be reflected on your tuition statement. This policy helps us ensure that our staff can dedicate the necessary time to prepare for the following school day.

Student Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is appropriate for the daily weather, the current season, and the activities planned for the school day. We also request that clothing be age-appropriate and modest. For children who wear dresses, we highly recommend they wear bloomers or bike shorts underneath.

As part of our daily routine, we go outside for play every day, unless it is raining or the temperature is 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor activities.

For footwear, children are required to wear closed-toe shoes with rubber soles that fasten securely with laces, buckles, or Velcro straps. For safety reasons, especially on climbing equipment and around wood chips,

flip-flops and sandals are not permitted. If your child wears rain boots to school, please be sure to pack a separate pair of appropriate shoes for them to change into for the school day.

To help protect your child from the elements, please apply any necessary bug spray and/or sunscreen at home before they arrive at school.

Finally, we kindly request that you **label all items** your child brings to school clearly with their name. This includes any removable clothing such as sweaters and jackets. Additionally, each child should keep a complete, labeled set of extra seasonally appropriate clothing and shoes in a Ziploc bag in their classroom

Inclement Weather

Should it become necessary to cancel school, delay our start, or close early due to weather conditions, we will notify you as quickly as possible via email and text message.

To ensure you receive these important updates promptly, please make sure you have downloaded our [Church Center App](#).

Please also be aware that school days missed due to weather will not be made up during the current school year.

Peanut/Tree Nut Sensitive Policy

Each morning when your child enters his/her classroom, he/she will be asked to wash his/her hands and mouth. Not only does this keep the classroom healthier, but it removes any traces of peanuts or tree nuts your child may have had for breakfast.

Snack Time

Good Shepherd Day School provides a peanut/tree nut free snack to all children during our school day. Please provide a water bottle with a cap or lid every day.

Class Parties

Celebrations and class parties are allowed for your child's class. As always, you may bring in a prepackaged peanut/tree nut free safe snack for the children to enjoy. Non-food items like stickers and games are always welcome, too.

Birthday Parties

If you would like to have your child celebrate their birthday with class friends at school, please clear the date and make arrangements with the teacher. See above (Class Parties) for snack information.

Emergency Procedures

We conduct fire drills (called "Code Hotdog") with the students one to two times each year. Separately, our teaching staff will practice intruder protocols one to two times annually, though the children will not participate in these specific drills.

In the event of a real emergency, the director will send out important information via the Church Center App. Please also remember that all teachers are required to keep the emergency contact list with them throughout the day.

We have a comprehensive emergency plan in place. If you would like to learn more about the specifics of this plan, please feel free to contact either Denyse or Krista.

Personal Items and Toys

To minimize classroom distractions and ensure all children have equitable resources, we kindly request that toys and trinkets from home remain there. The only exception to this is for designated "show and tell" days, which your child's teacher will announce in their newsletter.

School Pictures

We will be having school pictures taken both in the fall and again in the spring. Please keep an eye on our monthly calendar for the specific dates. These photos will be available for purchase online through the photographer's website.

School Security

Ensuring the safety and security of our students and staff is our top priority. All school doors remain locked during school hours. Additionally, the NBC Education Building is equipped with a comprehensive camera system on the first floor. These cameras are continuously recording for the safety of our children and to provide accountability for our staff, including Sunday School personnel.

Volunteering

We warmly welcome and appreciate parent involvement at GSDS! There will be various opportunities to volunteer throughout the year. If you have some time to spare, we encourage you to consider joining our Parent Auxiliary Group (PAG) and/or volunteering for school-wide or individual class events. Please note that all volunteers will be required to undergo a background check.

Substitute Teaching

We are always looking for individuals to join our team as substitute teachers. This is a paid position at \$50 per day. Successful candidates will need to complete a background check and watch our substitute teacher onboarding video. Please be aware that substitute teachers always work in an assistant role and are never the lead teacher in a classroom. Substituting is a fantastic way to get to know GSDS and witness firsthand how we support our families. If you are interested in learning more about substitute teaching opportunities, please [email Denyse Steen](#).

[2025-26 Parent Calendar](#)