

Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center Parent Handbook

1901 E. Commercial Blvd.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308
954.772.5468
www.sotcfl.org



Mission Statement

Shepherd of the Coast Christian School showers Christ's love to our community by equipping, training, and motivating children and their families to service.

The Philosophy of Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center

All children in a learning environment are entitled to feel safe, secure, nurtured, and accepted for who they are. It is the role of the teacher to provide activities that encourage a hands-on learning environment. We create this by making sure that the rooms are colorful, soft, friendly, and safe. The teacher provides materials that are child accessible and put together so the child can independently use them.

Shepherd of the Coast Lutheran Learning Center believes that we have the opportunity and an obligation to minister to the whole child-intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Letter	1
Admission	2
Birthday Celebrations	2
Biting	2
Chapel	3
Clothing and Belongings	3
Confidentially Policy	3
Curriculum	3
Discipline	4
Electronic Media Policy	4
Emergency School Closing	4
Family Information	4
First Aid	4
First Day	4-5
Food	5
Hours and Holidays	5
Illness	6
Medication	6
Naptime	6
Parent-Teacher Conference	6
Payments	7
Safety/Sign In-Sign Out	7
School Calendar – Infants through Pre-K 3	8
School Calendar – Pre-K 4/VPK	9
School Records	10
Service Animals	10
Staff	10
Toilet Training	10
Withdrawal	10

March 16, 2018

Dear Parents:

We feel privileged that you have chosen Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center to fill your child-care needs. Shepherd of the Coast Lutheran Church has established its child-care ministry upon the conviction that God loves each child individually and dearly.

We would like to extend an invitation to you to visit us at any time. Our doors are always open to you.

Our goal is to provide a safe, secure environment with a loving, devoted Christian staff. We are dedicated to promoting the physical, spiritual, social, emotional and intellectual development of each child under our care. Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center is equipped to care for infants (six weeks in age) up to and including four year olds.

Here at Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center, we want the best for your child. We have designed all rules, regulations and policies to provide the optimum learning environment for your child's growth and development. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to come to me at any time.

We eagerly look forward to getting to know you and your child during our association. Come grow with us!

Sincerely,

Brenda Sorren, Director

Admission

Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded to students at the school. All of God's children are welcomed here!

Enrollment in all areas but the infant room is on a first come, first served basis. Infant spaces may be reserved with the deposit of the registration fee by previous arrangement with the Director. Dates cannot be guaranteed. We can only guarantee that the first available space will be given. Following completion of an application for registration and return of the accompanying registration fee, your space is secured.

We accept children between the ages of six weeks and four years old. We will provide you with the registration packet upon your tour of the facility. All students are also required to have on file an HRS FORM 3040 (statement of good health) and an HRS FORM 680 (immunizations). *We must have these forms prior to the first day of attendance. These forms will need to be updated periodically as required by law.* We also require a copy of your child's birth certificate.

All children entering our three year old program must be toilet trained. What does this mean? Our policy is as follows:

- child must be in underwear
- child knows when to use the toilet
- child is able to clean himself/herself completely - if not the parent will be called to assist or pick up the child
- child does not leave feces in underwear after using the bathroom
- child is able to change their own clothes and clean themselves if they have an accident

Birthday Celebrations

You may send special treats on the day of your child's birthday, or give your child a birthday party in class. **We are limited to commercially prepared and packaged food so please no home baked goods.** If you would like to have a party in the classroom please discuss details with your child's teacher ahead of time. If you wish to invite fellow students to a party off premises, please give the invitations to the director and she will pass them out. This will prevent bruised feelings for any children not on your list.

Biting

Biting is a natural behavior for very young children. Children bite out of frustration and many children do not yet have the social awareness to control this behavior when directed against others. It is a phase many young children go through and we deal with each incident on an individual basis.

Chapel

Chapel services are held each Wednesday at 9:15 am and consist of songs, object lessons and prayer.

Clothing and Belongings

The best clothes for the children to wear are comfortable play clothes that encourage self-help, such as those with elastic waistbands. Each child must keep a change of clothing at school. Place clothing in a zip lock bag with your child's name written on the bag as well as each article of clothing. Please include shoes and socks! For infants, toddlers and potty training children please see the teacher about supplies needed for your child.

Please do not send money, jewelry, or sentimental items to school with your child, as the school cannot be responsible for such items if lost.

Confidentially Policy

All information on a child will be kept confidential. Parents may view their child's records upon request. Only information that is pertinent to the child's education and well being will be shared with the teachers. Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). No teacher will discuss confidential information in the presence of other parents or students. In our Early Childhood Center the Department of Children and Families licensing specialist has access to all center records for the purpose of program regulation. Under FERPA, schools may disclose directory information including: Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, enrollment status, awards received, and most recent previous school attended.

Curriculum

We are a play-based center, our curriculum is designed to provide developmentally appropriate activities for the individual child. We strive to aid in the development of the "total child" through activities that promote growth in the following six areas of development: social, emotional, physical, cognitive, creative and spiritual.

We teach the total child through a theme based early childhood curriculum and Abrams "The Letter People Curriculum". Children learn best by doing. We use a hands-on approach that includes a balance of both child-initiated and teacher-directed activities each day.

Discipline

We adhere to the policy that the rights of all persons must be preserved. This includes students, parents, the school and church property and employees on an equal basis. We are all responsible for making certain that this goal is achieved. Please read and review the following with your child.

This center DOES practice:

- ...positive reinforcement of children exhibiting desired behaviors.**
- ...removal of a child from disruptive situation and redirecting attention to another activity.**
- ...assisting older children in verbalizing their feelings and emotions. We also teach them to find acceptable means of handling these emotions.**

This center DOES NOT:

- ...use spanking or other forms of physical punishment.**
- ...use discipline methods involving food, rest or toileting.**
- ...use discipline that is severe, humiliating or frightening.**

Electronic/Media Policy

The use of electronic media devices (television, videos, or computers and games) in our preschool programs are not used on a regular basis. Children younger than two years of age are prohibited by Child Care Licensing Standards to have any electronic media time. Electronic media will only be used for educational purposes or physical activity for children older than two years of age. **Children may not bring personal electronic devices of any type (including but not limited to tablets, cell phones, wrist watches that receive, transmit information or pictures, and video games) to the program.**

Emergency School Closing

Our policy is as follows: We will not be in session when acts of God (hurricanes, heavy rains, etc.) make it unsafe and/or unreasonable to hold school. We will close when Broward County Schools close (Hurricane Warning). We will reopen when the school is deemed safe and all utilities are working properly. We will notify you either by a recorded one-call message when we will be opening, or by using the local TV stations in our area.

Family Information

Children are very much affected by occurrences or changes in their home situation. It is helpful for your child if you make these known to the director or teacher. Confidential information given to the director remains just that – confidential. Change in marriage status or custody must be a part of your child's file. Please remember, legally we are not allowed to stop any parent from removing their child unless we have documentation on file, from the court, so stating.

First Aid

County regulations prevent us from providing anything beyond the use of soap, water and bandages. If more extensive treatment is needed, parents will be called.

First Day

During the first few weeks, do not be disturbed if your child:

- is shy and clings to you.
- is aggressive and won't share.
- hits and refuses to take turns.
- tires easily and cries a great deal.
- resists using the bathroom and has accidents.
- doesn't talk much about what happened at school.

These are all symptoms of tension and stress in a new situation and will disappear as your child becomes used to the new staff, other children and the routines. Be sympathetic and supportive! Need for adjustment is expected. When the parent lingers at drop off time after the first few days, it makes the period of adjustment more difficult for your child, other children, and the staff. Our staff has been trained to handle these situations. REMEMBER: the more relaxed the parent is, the more relaxed the child will be.

You can help by:

- letting the child just stand and watch.
- not pushing the child to conform to routines without adjustment time
- allowing time for personal routine, a nourishing breakfast and a pleasant ride to school.
- Have a cheerful, positive attitude as the child leaves you. A hug and a kiss, "I'll see you later" are sufficient. They will soon learn that you will return after work.

Please do not carry your child into their classroom. Let them walk into the building on their own. This helps the child make a smooth transition. Allow them to carry something (lunchbox or blanket) to help make them feel like an important part of the process.

Food

Please send a healthy morning snack for your child. In some cases this may be a breakfast item. When you pack lunch for your child please do not include sugary items and soda. Your child will also need a healthy afternoon snack and drink. Please be sure your child's name is clearly marked on all lunch boxes, bags and juice bottles.

Hours and Holidays

Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center is open from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE PICKED UP BY 6:00 PM. A charge of \$15.00 will be assessed from one minute after 6:00 pm until 6:15 pm and an additional \$20.00 for every quarter hour after that. If an emergency does arise and you are unable to pick up your child on time, please notify the office. **You are responsible for arranging emergency pickup for your child-5-**

There are certain Federal Holidays, as well as the time between Christmas and New Years, when we are open for NEEDED CHILD CARE ONLY. These are the days when most businesses are closed and parents are off. We encourage you to spend these days with your children if possible. If you need care, we ask that you sign up with your child's teacher as each specific day approaches. Usually numbers are very low and we function with a reduced staff. Holidays are not deductible from your tuition.

Illness

To prevent the spread of contagious disease, children who are ill should not be brought to the learning center, for their own good as well as the good of the other children. Signs of illness that should keep children home include, but are not limited to: severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, stiff neck, diarrhea, temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more (if your child is sent home with a fever they must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school), pink eye, infection of the skin, unusually dark urine and/or grayish or white stool, and yellow skin or eyes. A child who has a green or yellow discharge from the nose may result in you the parent having to bring in a doctor's note stating that the child is non-contagious. The director will make the final determination as to whether the child may stay at the learning center while the green or yellow discharge is present. With any of the previous stated illnesses a doctor's note may be required for readmission to the learning center. When taking an antibiotic a child must be on the prescription for 24 hours before returning to the learning center. If a child becomes ill during the school day, parents will be notified and the child must be picked up within the hour. If a child is too ill to participate in normal school activities they should be kept home for the day. **It is the parent's responsibility to have alternate care and pick up arrangements in the event of illness or emergency.**

If your child is ill with a contagious disease or will be absent please let the office know by calling (954)-772-5468 ext. 224. Feel free to leave a message on the answering service or you may send an email to bsorren@shepherdofthecoast.org.

Medication

We dispense medication as directed on the label or prescription only. The medication must be in its original container and be accompanied by a clearly marked medicine dispenser/spoon and a completed HRS #5 form. These forms are available in the office or in the classrooms.

Naptime

If your child is staying for naptime please provide a mat for them to sleep on. Mats should be at least 2 inches thick as required by Broward County Child Care Licensing. A towel, blanket, small pillow or small stuffed animal may be brought to school for use during naptime. Please make sure that these things are labeled with the child's name. Napping gear will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and returned to school on Monday. No large pillows or blankets please, as storage space is limited. This time of day is for the children to rest. They do not need to sleep, but they do need to remain on their mats and be quiet.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences may be arranged by appointment with your child's teacher. Her goal is to provide the best possible care and educational experience for your child, and she welcomes contact with you. However, please do not try to discuss issues during class time, when dropping your child off or picking him/her up. The teacher is supervising other children, and adequate attention cannot be given to you at this time. Thank you!

Payments

Shepherd of the Coast requires an annual non-refundable registration fee. This is due with the registration and information update form every August. Tuition is due and payable on Monday of each week. Monthly payments are due on the first or the fifteenth of each month as scheduled by the office. A \$5.00 late fee will be charged for any tuition that is five days late. If a child is going to be absent for an extended period of time the office must be notified and arrangements discussed for maintaining their space in the class.

Checks returned because of insufficient funds, closed accounts, or any other reason will result in a **\$35.00 returned check fee**. This fee will automatically be assessed upon notification from our bank.

Safety/Sign In – Sign Out

All children must be signed in and out on the clipboard for their classroom each time they arrive and depart from the school. Children must be escorted to a classroom and left in the company of a staff member. When you pick up your child, you must make sure a staff member knows you are taking your child. Your child will only be released to those persons listed on the registration form. If someone else is picking up your child, the office needs to be notified. The person picking up your child should know the family ID number and may be requested to give that number as well as present a picture ID.



School Calendar

Infants through Pre-K 3 Closings 2018/2019

September 3, 2018	Labor Day
November 22, 2018	Thanksgiving Day
November 23, 2018	Day after Thanksgiving
December 24, 2018	Christmas Holiday
December 25, 2018	Christmas Holiday
January 1, 2019	New Year's Day
April 19, 2019	Good Friday
May 27, 2019	Memorial Day

We close during the first week of July to do a yearly maintenance of the Early Childhood Center.

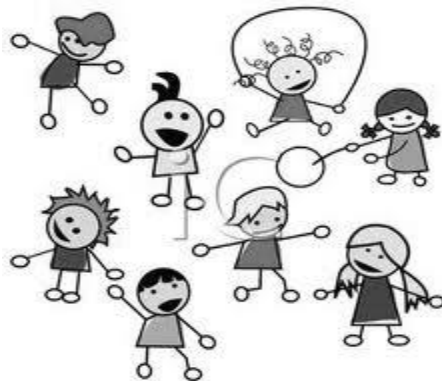
The closing dates are July 1 – 5, 2019. If you pay monthly this week off was part of the planning. If you pay weekly you will not be billed for this closing.



School Calendar

Pre-K 4/VPK Closings 2018/2019

August 15, 2018	First Day of School
September 3, 2018	No School (Labor Day, Closed)
September 10, 2018	No School (Care Available)
September 19, 2018	No School (Care Available)
October 19, 2018	No School (Care Available)
November 6, 2018	No School (Care Available)
November 12, 2018	No School (Care Available)
November 21, 2018	No School (Care Available)
November 22 & 23, 2018	No School (Thanksgiving Holiday, Closed)
December 24 & 25, 2018	No School (Christmas Holiday, Closed)
December 26 – 31, 2018	No School (Care Available)
January 1, 2019	No School (New Years Day, Closed)
January 2 - 7, 2019	No School (Care Available)
January 21, 2019	No School (Care Available)
February 18, 2019	No School (Care Available)
March 22 - 29, 2019	No School (Care Available)
April 19, 2019	No School (Good Friday, Closed)
May 27, 2019	No School (Memorial Day, Closed)
June 4, 2019	Last Day of School & Graduation at 1:00 pm



School Records

It is the policy of Shepherd of the Coast Learning Center that we will not release any information to you or another school if you leave and your account is not paid in full.

We hope that you will remain with us for many years. However, if you choose to leave us we do request in writing a two-week's notice.

Service Animals

Shepherd of the Coast School acknowledges its responsibility to permit individuals (students, employees and/or visitors) with disabilities to be accompanied by a "Service Animal" in its facility, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act 2008. We ask that no others animals/pets be brought into the buildings.

Staff

All lead teachers have a Child Development Associate Credential. All other staff members are required to have training in child growth and development, safety and nutrition, state rules and regulations, child abuse and neglect, observation and assessment, literacy, and first aid and CPR. All staff are required to be fingerprinted and have both federal and state clearance completed every five years. The staff must have a physical every other year. Staff members also must complete 10 hours of in-service annually.

Staff members do not all have the same temperment or personality. You, as a parent, may not "click" with a particular teacher, but that does not mean your child doesn't, nor does it mean that your child is not receiving love, care, and encouragement. If you have concerns, talk to the director. It will remain confidential. Please do not talk to another staff member – this can only cause internal conflict.

Toilet Training

Toilet training can be easily accomplished if your child is developmentally ready, but it takes cooperation and consistency between the parents and staff. If you do not work on the process at home, the child will become confused and no progress will be made at school and vice versa. Clothing used during this time should be the type that is easily taken off and on. No one piece suits or suspender type clothing. Three to four pairs of training pants, extra clothing and shoes and a sealable plastic bag (to send soiled clothing home in) should be brought to the Learning Center each day – ALL LABELED.

Withdrawal

The Learning Center reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a child in special cases such as:

- Failure to keep tuition payments current
- Unattended illness which endangers others
- A child who cannot adjust and/or becomes a disruptive influence
- An uncooperative or disruptive spirit from parents
- Inability to observe our start and closing times