

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool

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Parent/Student Handbook 2008-2009

SOV Cares

... for God ... for Creation ... for Others ... for Self

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind;
and your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:27*

Welcome to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool, an outreach ministry of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. We provide an environment in which students are given the opportunity to use their God-given gifts and talents to the best of their ability and potential. At Shepherd of the Valley, standards of conduct are encouraged that reflect Christian attitudes and behavior.

This handbook, together with the Enrollment Contract, serves as the contract between Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran School and its students and their parents/guardians. It outlines our policies and procedures, so that families are aware of their responsibilities and of the school's expectations. Attendance at this school is viewed as agreement to the terms and conditions stated in this handbook.

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I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A. Mission Statement of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool

The mission of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool is to provide a program that encourages children to explore, learn, and grow in the love of Christ.

B. Philosophy of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool

Shepherd of the Valley Preschool is a community that respects the individual qualities of each child. Each student is viewed as a child of God with uniquely individual developmental needs and abilities. We help each child to grow in faith and recognize the love and forgiveness revealed through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We recognize that parents have the primary responsibility to educate their children, and we strive to work together in mutual trust and cooperation to enhance the development of each child. Our nurturing staff works closely with the family to ensure a smooth transition from home to school.

Our staff is highly trained in early childhood development and sensitive to children's needs. It is our goal to provide a developmentally and age-appropriate program which allows children to learn at their own pace in a safe and healthy setting. Through structured and unstructured activities and a wide variety of learning materials, children gain knowledge through exposure and experiences. Children will be given time to explore their world, empowering them to reach their highest potential. By asking open ended questions, our staff encourages problem solving skills and critical thinking. We are committed to helping children grow socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically in a warm and caring atmosphere.

SOV is a non-profit, church-related school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, or national or ethnic origin. It is open to children from three to five years of age.

C. Philosophy of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

It is the intent of the Congregation, in meeting its responsibilities and opportunities of mission and ministry, to provide a Christian preschool education through Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool. The School serves to bring to the community our Christian faith.

D. Student Expectations

It is important that students look upon each school day as a new opportunity to grow in knowledge and abilities. That growth also includes further development of personal relationships with peers and teachers within the school's Christian environment. Foundations of those relationships include Christian love, tolerance, and respect for each other. Students are expected to display respectful and appropriate behavior inside as well as outside the classroom at all times.

If a child bites another individual or becomes, through his or her behavior, a danger to self or others, he or she will be taken to the Director's office and the parent will be called to pick them up. If the inappropriate behavior becomes chronic, the parent may be asked to get professional help for their child, or the child may be asked to leave the program.

II. PROGRAM

A. Curriculum

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool offers a program that stresses social relationships and spiritual, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Our curriculum focuses on Christ-centered education developed for the whole child. Each classroom has planned activities geared to the interest level of that particular age group. Some of the activities include:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| art | manipulatives |
| Chapel | pre-math skills |
| cooking | music |
| perceptual motor | creative play |
| science | language arts |
| sharing | |

In addition to the above activities, we include in our curriculum special days, field trips, and creative movement.

Children may be enrolled two days (Tuesday and Thursday), three days (Monday, Wednesday, Friday), or all five days. Our hours are 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The preschool closes at 12:25 p.m. sharp. **There is a \$1.00 per minute charge** for any student remaining after 12:20 p.m. If you are unavoidably delayed, please contact the office.

B. Clothing

Children should arrive at school wearing comfortable, washable, ready-to-get-messy clothes. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name. Each student is required to leave a complete change of clothes at school. Parents are expected to check daily for soiled clothing and replace the next day. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Shoes should sturdy, safe, and have rubber soles. Open toe shoes and Crocs are not permitted.

C. Field Trips

Special activities may be scheduled throughout the year to enhance our curriculum and to broaden the experiences for the children. Parental help will be needed for transportation and supervision of the children. There are no provisions for childcare in lieu of field trips. If you do not wish your child to attend scheduled field trips, please make alternate childcare arrangements.

D. Holiday Celebrations

We will have parties to celebrate Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.

E. Birthdays

Birthdays are special times for the children and we want to make them the greatest ever! Parents who wish to provide a special treat and/or gift to the classroom in honor of their child should make arrangements with the child's teacher in advance. For children whose birthdays fall in the summer months, an "unbirthday" party may be held on a day that is convenient to the parents and the class.

F. Share Days

Show and tell has many positive aspects, but takes a long time to learn and understand. It is difficult sometimes for young children to organize and sequence their thoughts, to recall the recently learned information, to make use of unfamiliar words, and to speak before their friends. Listening and waiting for a turn are also challenging aspects of this activity. Teachers help children focus on what other children are discussing. The teacher will help the parents and children to know what each classroom encourages for this activity. Items that are valuable, fragile, or that have tiny pieces should be left at home.

G. Snacks

The school will provide nutritious snacks for the children every day. A simple prayer will be sung or said prior to the children eating their snack. It is important to notify the school and your child's classroom teacher immediately about any food allergies. No lunch is provided, as this is a half-day program.

H. Parent Participation

Parents as partners in education are an integral aspect of our school community. Parental involvement in the classroom is encouraged. Numerous opportunities for meaningful involvement include, but are not limited to:

- Attending parent conferences and gatherings
- Purchasing Scrip
- Donating to and/or serving at special events
- Classroom volunteer

I. Chapel Service

Chapel services are offered weekly in the preschool classroom. This time of stories and songs, led by the pastors, gives children an opportunity to learn about a loving God.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

A. Enrollment and Admission

1. New Students
 - a. Children of parents or guardians who have been active/contributing members of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church for one year receive first preference for admission.
 - b. SOV congregation members received by Letter of Transfer may be exempt from the one-year waiting requirement.
 - c. Siblings of present students have second preference as space permits. Siblings of present students are defined as siblings of a student who has been enrolled in the school for one year or more.
 - d. Children of non-member parents or guardians who have satisfactorily met the requirements of the school will be enrolled as space permits.

- e. To be eligible to attend preschool, the child must be at least two years eleven months old by October 1 of the current school year. The child’s maturity must be such that they are able to separate willingly from the parent. The Director or Teacher will have an interview with all prospective parents and children prior to admission. The child must be self-sufficient in toilet use (be able to manage all aspects of bathroom use regularly and not wear pull-ups or diapers).
 - f. The child must be self-sufficient in toilet use (be able to manage all aspects of bathroom use regularly and not wear pull-ups or diapers.) In the event of an “accident,” parents will be called to pick up their child.
 - g. Completion of an enrollment contract, payment in full of all fees owed to that date, and attendance on opening day are expected as confirmation of enrollment.
 - h. All new students are on probation for the first six weeks of school.
 - i. Every student entering Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool (SOVLP) must have a physical examination before being admitted, as well as other tests or immunizations as required by California state health laws. Verification is required by a Physician’s Report—Child Care Centers form signed by a physician.
2. Returning Students
- a. The Enrollment Contract is submitted annually. All fees must be current before the enrollment contract is accepted.
 - b. Attendance on opening day and payment in full of all fees are required as confirmation of enrollment.

B. Cancellation of Enrollment

- 1. If the Director is notified prior to July 1 that the child will not be enrolling in Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Preschool, the tuition payment only shall be reimbursed. Enrollment, as specified within this Enrollment Contract, may be canceled by the parents or guardians in writing, without penalty (except forfeit of the initial tuition payment) by July 1. If enrollment is canceled after July 1, parents or guardians financially responsible for the student are obligated to pay the **full annual charges**.

C. Finances

- 2. The **registration fee** for each child must accompany any enrollment or re-enrollment form. The amount will be determined by the School Board and is **non-refundable**.
- 3. Yearly **tuition** is paid in ten equal payments. The first payment is due in June prior to the upcoming school year. The remaining nine payments are due on the first of the month September through May.

For new students, one tenth of the annual tuition payment is due within 30 days following notification of acceptance. Failure to pay within the time allotted will forfeit the child’s place in the class. For all students, if the director is notified prior to July 1 that a child will not be enrolling in SOVLP, the tuition payment only will be reimbursed. If notification is made on or after July 1, the

tuition payment becomes **non-refundable** and payment of the **full annual charges** is required.

Tuition paid in June for the upcoming school year is non-refundable after July 1. Tuition payments are due on the first of the month and delinquent after the tenth, with a \$10 late charge added for each month the payment is late.

- a. When a past due balance for tuition reaches the last day of the month in which it was due, a letter will be sent requesting payment of at least 50% of the outstanding balance within 10 days of receipt of the notification and outlining a payment plan for the remainder of the balance. A copy is to be signed by the parent and returned to the school within two (2) days of receipt, which will acknowledge acceptance of the terms of the letter.
 - b. If the terms in paragraph (1) above and in the repayment schedule are not complied with in full, the School Board will be notified of the failure to comply and the child may be suspended from school and all school programs until the tuition is paid in full.
 - c. The School Board maintains the right to review each past due payment situation on an individual basis and to determine individual repayment plans.
4. All checks should be made payable to “Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran School” or “SOVLS.”
 5. A \$25 late fee will be added to the check amount if returned by the bank for further handling.

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Child Abuse Reporting Obligations Policy

In accordance with California law, school staff are obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional deprivation, physical neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. In this very serious and legally narrow area, the school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to legal authorities which would be the procedure followed in most other legal matters. The clear intent of the law, based on the seriousness of the crimes listed above, is to mandate that a report of reasonable suspicion of abuse be made. School staff will make such reports in the best interests of the affected child and do not, once reasonable suspicion is established, have any legal alternative except to make the report to the proper authorities for their investigation and review.

B. Federal Asbestos Management Compliance

Asbestos regulations for schools found in the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act and as promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency are followed at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran School and monitored by Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. The Shepherd of the Valley management plan is complete according to AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act) and the report indicates that our facilities are free of asbestos.

C. Student Insurance

As a part of the Registration Fee, students are extended insurance coverage. Most benefits are based upon partial coverage for medical and surgical services. It is the responsibility of the parent to request from the office an Insurance Claim Accident Form and submit it to the appropriate claims office. This insurance is intended to be supplemental (secondary to your personal insurance coverage). The school is not responsible for expenses that are not covered under your personal or school insurance.

D. Parent Responsibilities

1. Shepherd of the Valley abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1975) with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. We will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and to other school-related information regarding the child as long as there is no court order to the contrary. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.
2. No appeal, solicitations, or representations of any nature, requesting the support of students or their families, teachers, and/or preschool director, are permitted without the express permission of the preschool director and/or school board. The preschool directory is not to be used for any type of solicitation.
3. Any complaint from a parent should first be directed to the appropriate staff member, then to the preschool director, then to the chairperson of the school board.
4. Any parent/visitors entering the school grounds for any reason during school hours must first check in with office personnel.
5. All written communications should be directed to the teacher first.
6. Tuition and all other fees are to be paid in a timely manner.

E. Miscellaneous Information

1. Class and individual pictures are taken in the fall. It is your option to purchase these.
2. Animals and pets, properly caged or carried, may be brought to school only if arrangements have been made with the teacher.
3. The school is not responsible for lost or unclaimed items. Items left after an extended period will be donated to a charitable organization.

V. ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL AND ATTENDANCE

A. Arrival/Dismissal

1. School begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 12:15 p.m. Please be on time. Children should go directly to their classroom in the morning. Your child will benefit from starting the day with friends and knowing about the activities being offered that day. Please make your time in the classroom brief. If you arrive past 9:00 a.m., please enter through the office and quietly enter your child's classroom.

2. Children must be accompanied from the parking lot by a parent or responsible adult at least 18 years of age. State regulations require that adult to sign the child in. Full names should be used when signing in. When entering or leaving the classroom, please stay until the teacher welcomes or dismisses your child.
3. Departure time is important. No child should feel forgotten when all the other children are leaving. If you are unavoidably delayed, please notify the office. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for pick up after 12:20 p.m.
4. If a child is to be picked up by someone other than his or her parent, please notify the teacher in writing. The adult picking up the child at the end of the school day must sign the child out. Parents may be charged a fee for each day a signature and/or time out is missing from the sign in/out sheet.

B. Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures

1. Use extreme caution at all times.
2. Enter from **KITTRIDGE STREET** (east entrance) only.
3. Park in the small parking lot, and enter and exit the small gate next to Shay Center.
4. Leave by way of the **KITTRIDGE STREET** exit only.
5. Do not park in the large parking lot.
6. For the safety of the children, the entrance gate will be locked from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and 12:20 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. If you arrive after 9:00 a.m., please bring your child through the office to his or her classroom.
7. An adult must escort all children exiting or entering parked cars.
5. Please inform everyone dropping off or picking up your child of these rules and regulations.

C. Attendance

1. Your child is an important member of the group. If your child is to be absent, please telephone the office so that the teacher may be informed. We would appreciate advance notice if the absence will be one week or longer. Monthly tuition is due as scheduled.

VI. SCHOOL POLICIES

A. Discipline

1. Disciplinary problems will be prevented by:
 - a. Providing positive reinforcement for good behavior
 - b. Setting realistic expectations for what the child can do
 - c. Looking for and taking care of possible problems before they occur, and redirecting the child.
2. If a rule is broken, the teacher will talk to the child about the rule and what he or she has done wrong. If corrections are not made, the consequences for unacceptable behavior may include:
 - a. Redirection—the child is asked to play in another area or alone for a time

- b. Time out (one minute per year of child’s age, not segregated from the class)—gives the child a chance to “cool off” away from the site of the misbehavior
 - c. Loss of privileges
 - d. Notification of the parent by the teacher or director (by phone, note, or special conference)
3. Corporal punishment is never used, and the personal rights of the child will not be violated.
 4. If a child’s behavior is such that the safety of the other children is jeopardized, the child may be asked not to return.

B. Health and Safety

Teachers are required by the state of California to do a visual assessment of each child. If your child shows obvious signs of illness upon arrival, they will not be accepted into school. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted by the school office and required to pick him or her up immediately. Children must be fever-free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Children may return when they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours.

The following communicable diseases require a doctor’s release for readmission:

- Pink eye/conjunctivitis
- Impetigo
- Chickenpox
- Ringworm
- Scabies

Notify the office immediately if your child has an infectious or communicable disease.

In the event of an emergency, the daily sign-in/out sheets will be used to determine if everyone has been evacuated. SOV Preschool has regular fire and earthquake drills, and we are prepared to take care of your children for several days. The staff is committed to stay with the children are reunited with their parents or a person designated on their emergency cards. All faculty are certified in CPR and First Aid.

It is our policy to provide a safe environment for food-allergic students, to promote an understanding of their needs to the greater school community, and to allow teachers and staff to respond and provide treatment in the event of an adverse reaction. A copy of the complete policy is available in the school office.

These procedures are designed to protect our children. We realize there will be some inconvenience, but if one accident or illness is prevented, it will more than compensate for your efforts.

1. The completion of a Child’s Preadmission Health History—Parent’s Report form is required for each child upon registration. It is a California State law that all children have DPT, polio, hepatitis B, and measles inoculations (or have had measles) to enter school. Every child must have a physical examination before being admitted, as well as a current Mantoux TB test as required by California State health laws. Verification is required by a Physician’s Report—Child Care

Centers form signed by a physician. Any special health consideration for any child must be in writing from the child's physician and must be presented to the director and to the child's teacher.

2. The Los Angeles County Health Office acts in a consulting capacity to our school.
3. Head lice checks are conducted if deemed necessary.
4. Children are instructed in emergency procedures, including earthquake, according to California State regulations.
5. Emergency Cards will be on file for each student.
 - a. Parents are required to complete two emergency/disaster cards. It is the parents' responsibility to keep information current.
 - b. Card information includes:
 - (1) How to contact parents or guardians
 - (2) Any adults who would assume temporary care if parents or guardians cannot be reached. The names on the emergency cards are for emergency pickup (illness, etc.) only. **It is not an authorization for regular pickup unless a note is sent to that effect.**
6. The school will coordinate its program of civilian defense and first aid procedures with that of the City of Los Angeles. In case of an emergency, children will be kept at the school until picked up by a parent, guardian, or authorized person. In case of evacuation, every attempt will be made to communicate with the parent, guardian, or authorized person.
7. Notify the school in writing whenever you desire your child to leave the campus with an adult other than their parent or guardian, even for an after-school play date. This is necessary for both individuals named on the emergency cards and those for whom we do not have written authorization. Please date the note. Understand that even though you may be on someone's emergency card, you still cannot take the child off campus until that child's parent notifies the school.
8. Fighting or inflicting bodily injury (such as biting, hitting, and kicking) on school grounds is prohibited. Throwing rocks, dirt, sand, or other objects that might injure others is prohibited. Spitting is prohibited.
9. No younger siblings or children who attend another school will be permitted to remain unattended without the child's parent, guardian, or responsible adult in any school area or on the playground from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on school days.
10. Medication Policy
 - a. The director shall designate which school personnel are to give medication to a student. The medication form must be signed by a doctor indicating medication name, time of administration, and amount of medication to be given. Parents must sign the liability release section of the medication form and submit it, along with the medication in its original container, to the office before medication can be administered to their student.

- b. "Medication" includes prescribed as well as over-the-counter medicines. Parents must sign the liability release section of the medication form for over-the-counter medicines. We will not dispense medication without a doctor's signature.

11. For the health and safety of our children, smoking is not permitted on campus.

12. First Aid Procedure

- a. All students receive prompt and proper first aid attention as follows:
 - (1) For simple scratches/scrapes, the wound is washed with soap and water and following the first aid standard of care, a triple antibiotic, such as Neosporin, and a bandage may be applied if necessary. Parent/guardian is **not** notified.
 - (2) For a bump or bruise (other than a head injury), an ice pack is given. Parent/guardian is **not** notified.
 - (3) In the case of a head injury, serious accident or illness, parents are always notified and every effort is made to reach the parent/guardian. As authorized on our "Emergency Information" card, if the school is unable to reach the parent/guardian, the school is authorized to call the physician indicated on the card and to follow his/her instructions. If it is impossible to contact the physician, the school may make whatever arrangements seem necessary.
- b. If a student complains of feeling ill, one of the office staff will take the child's temperature and talk to the child to further determine the nature of the problem. If there is a temperature and/or the child does not seem able to stay in school, the parent/guardian is called.
- c. Staff members are Red Cross certified in First Aid/CPR. This is renewed as required.

13. Earthquake and Disaster Procedures

- a. In the event of a major disaster, we are prepared to take care of your children for several days. The staff is committed to stay with the children until all children are reunited with their parents or a person designated on their emergency cards.
- b. We are well equipped with water, food, and necessary safety equipment and supplies. Drills are conducted regularly with an assigned duty for each staff member.
- c. In the event of a major earthquake or disaster while the children are at school, we would like you to be familiar with the following procedures:
 - (1) **REMEMBER:** While your child is at school, the school, by law, acts in LOCO PARENTIS, meaning that we serve in the capacity of parent in the absence of the legal guardian or parent. We cannot release any student in this situation to a brother, sister, friend, or relative without **WRITTEN** permission from the parent.

- (2) In the case of any earthquake or disaster which dictates that the children must leave the classroom area, all students will be on the parking lot or grassy area closest to Haynes Street side of the campus.
- (3) All parents who wish to take their child from the school grounds **MUST** follow these guidelines:
 - (a) Check in at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). It will be located at the northwest area of the parking lot entrance on Kittridge Street. All of the gates into the school will be locked. Tell the person in charge the name of your student and his or her grade and teacher.
 - (b) The person in charge of the EOC will send a runner to get your child and bring him or her to the EOC. Parents must remain outside of school gates.
 - (c) You will be asked to sign out your child and take him or her with you.
 - (d) Please do not send anyone (including an older sibling) who does not have proper **WRITTEN** authority for pickup.
- (4) We all know that during an emergency of this type, everyone will be very upset. It is important that as adults, we follow the proper procedure so that the children will feel as comfortable and calm as possible. It is imperative that we avoid chaos.
- (5) Patience will be the most important ingredient in this process so that we can unite families as soon as possible. Please contact the school office if you have questions.

C. Conferences

1. Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged and may be scheduled with the teacher.
2. The teacher will notify parents of behavioral problems. Details of such notification are the responsibility of the teacher and the preschool director.

D. Kindergarten Readiness/Acceptance

1. Shepherd of the Valley Preschool students receive priority when applying for kindergarten at SOV.
2. The Director will administer the kindergarten readiness assessment in the beginning of the calendar year for which the child is eligible. The regular testing fee will be waived.