

The Good Shepherd School

Established 1988

2022-2023

Parent-Child Handbook

Board Approved 02/09/2022

A Non-Profit Ministry of
Dorchester Presbyterian Church

10290 Dorchester Rd.
Summerville, SC 29485

Office: (843) 845-8722

Fax: (843) 871-1064

gss@dorchesterpres.org

Emergency cell phones when land lines are down:
(843) 609-5289 or (843) 509-9973

License No: 14619



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Dorchester Presbyterian Church



10290 Dorchester Road
Summerville, SC 29485
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Fax Number: (843) 871-1064
gss@dorchesterpres.org

www.dorchesterpresbyterian.org/good-shepherd-school



Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Good Shepherd School. We are so happy to have you and your child as a part of our family. We are excited to get to know not only your child, but to build a relationship with you as well. Having parental support and an open line of communication is an essential part of a successful school year.

The first day of school is an exciting milestone in your child's life. He/she is embarking on a journey that will lead him/her on many roads of discovery and learning.

For many children, this may be their first experience of separation from home. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of school. Below are a few suggestions for helping your child settle quickly and adjust easily to the school environment. Remember- our staff will be available to provide support and assistance in any way we can.

- Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions honestly and directly
- Convey a positive attitude. Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure the child that school can be a fun and exciting place
- Establish a routine involving both the night before as well as morning preparation
- Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited

It is truly an honor for us to be a part of a school with such a strong tradition and reputation. It is our hope that together we can continue to bring GSS to new heights. We are looking forward to seeing what God has in store for us this year!

Blessings,

Sherry Posadas, Director

sposadas@dorchesterpres.org

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The Mission and Vision of The Good Shepherd School

Dorchester Presbyterian Church's Good Shepherd School is licensed by the SC Department of Social Services.

The Good Shepherd School is a ministry of Dorchester Presbyterian Church. At the Good Shepherd School, we believe that each child is loved by God, that learning begins at birth, and that each child is unique with his/her own learning style and rate of development.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide a high-quality early childhood education program in a Christian environment that focuses on the whole child- spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

Vision Statement:

The Good Shepherd School strives to provide a high-quality program in a stimulating learning environment designed to help your child grow and develop. Our caring and trained teachers use developmentally appropriate curriculum to optimize learning in a safe, Christian-based setting.

Our year long program will include:

- Christian curriculum supported with current educationally sound practices
- Activities and materials appropriate for the child's age and development
- Continuing education of staff
- Regular communication with parents
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Outdoor play as an essential element of child development, both physically and emotionally.

The Board of Directors

The Good Shepherd School of Dorchester Presbyterian Church is governed by a Board of Directors, which is appointed by the Session of Dorchester Presbyterian Church. The Board has the responsibility for the overall guidance of the total program.

Classroom Goals and Curriculum

Program Goals: Our Programs at Good Shepherd School provide safe and secure learning environments. Our teachers believe that early childhood experiences are crucial one for the child. To ensure that your child's needs are best met, we place a high emphasis on developmentally appropriate practices. With a careful mix of cognitive skills and developmental tasks, we sustain a relaxed—but structured—environment that stimulates curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Children are divided into age groups allowing them to interact with others who are on a similar developmental level. Our teacher's well-rounded activities are designed to stimulate physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Throughout the year children are evaluated on their development and accomplishments. Each program focuses on hand-on active learning, with an interactive component between home and school. Learning centers include reading, writing, math, science, manipulative dramatic play, and create expression. Self-help, problem solving, and critical thinking skills are emphasized.

Classroom Curriculum: “The Creative Curriculum approach to teaching and learning balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interest. “(*The Creative Curriculum 4th Edition*) Teachers at GSS “guide the children in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology without neglecting children's social/emotional development.”

Conscious Discipline – Our teachers use Conscious Discipline to build social and emotional skills and develop discipline within children. This program is research based that helps children learn to self-regulate, help make better choices, and empathize with others. Conscious Discipline builds stronger connections within the classrooms, school, and family by teaching us to stay in control of our emotions and creating a safe environment for our children. This is the only program that integrates classroom management with social-emotional learning, uses everyday events as part of the school's established curriculum, and addresses the adult as well as the child.

Handwriting Without Tears - This curriculum prepares children for kindergarten in a developmentally appropriate way. It will help children get set for school by helping them develop coloring, drawing, counting, and beginning writing skills.

Christian Education: The Christian Education program is based off the “Young Children and Worship program, which spans from the Creation Story to Pentecost.

Policy for Transitioning Between Classes

The children will transition once a year every August. They must meet the age requirements of each class by September 1st to move into that classroom. Throughout the year, the classrooms and curriculum will change in accordance with the children's age. We feel that the children really thrive when they are comfortable and secure with their teachers, and this is one of the reasons we have limited our facility to yearly transitions for these classes.

Parent Participation

The early years are an important time in your child's life. It takes the cooperation of parent and teacher to build a firm foundation for your child. Therefore, we welcome and encourage parent participation. You can help your child adjust and grow by:

- Helping your child look forward to coming to The Good Shepherd School. Your positive attitude will help your child come to school with joy and anticipation of happy experiences.
- Knowing your child's teacher. Work with her concerning any problems that might arise.
- Taking an interest in what your child does at school. Take time to listen to your child's daily experiences as he/she shares them with you.
- Sharing any upsetting experiences that you think will help the teacher understand the child.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time. We have an open-door policy. Your questions as well as suggestions are welcome.

We realize that parents are busy, whether they work outside the home or have chosen to stay home. We often need parents to help with parties, and other activities. Please let us know if your schedule can accommodate activities planned in your child's class. If you have a special talent you would like to share with the children, or would like to lend a helping hand, either with projects at school or working on projects at home, please contact your child's teacher.

DORCHESTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IS A SMOKE, DRUG, AND ALCOHOL-FREE CAMPUS
PLEASE ABIDE BY OUR POLICY

Parent Complaint Procedure

When a parent or legal guardian with a child and/or children enrolled in The Good Shepherd School has a complaint or concern he/she wishes to have resolved, the following procedures have been outlined:

1. First schedule a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss your concern.
2. If no resolution is possible, schedule a meeting with the Director. The Director will consult with the teacher and keep a file of complaints/concerns made and actions taken to resolve the issue(s).
3. A meeting may be arranged with the parents, Director, and the classroom teacher. If a solution is not found, the parent may request a meeting with the GSS Board.
4. The GSS Board will decide what, if any, action is required on the part of the teacher or Director. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

Arrival and Pick-up Procedures

Childcare hours are from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. School doors will be locked, and parents must enter via their family's individual entry code. This is for the safety of our children. Parents may exit through the locked doors, but we ask that you do not allow anyone to enter through the locked doors.

Please note that Preschool Instruction and Activities begin at 9:00 A.M. If you plan to drop your child off after 9:30 A.M., please call before 9:30 A.M. to notify the office staff so they can ensure we have enough teachers and meals for the rest of the day. Please do not drop-off your child before 6:30 A.M., as it inhibits the opening teachers from getting their classrooms prepared for the day, or between 10:30 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. because it disrupts lunch and nap time for the other children in the classroom.

Please observe the designated Entrance and Exit to the school parking lot. Proceed to the parking area very slowly and with caution! If you have business to conduct inside which will take a while, please park in the large church parking lot.

Please do not leave children unattended in cars or on school grounds or leave your car running unattended in our parking lot. To stress the need for consistency, please help your child get on a schedule. As soon as the child can predict his/her schedule, he/she is able to feel comfortable and enjoy his/her new experiences.

We hope that you realize that this takes several weeks of consistent types of partings for most children to be able to separate from their parents without tears. Feel free to remain in the office area so that we can sit and talk until your child calms down. This usually takes moments and makes you feel better about leaving your child with us. Please call as frequently as you wish for an update about your child's day. We understand that it is difficult to leave your child for the first time.

Please note: Arrival and Pick-up procedures also apply to children who are classified as a "drop-in" and are not part of our regular program

Tuition and Fees

The Good Shepherd School has a “no cash” policy

Tuition is charged weekly on Monday via Tuition Express automatic withdrawal. Tuition Express enrollment forms can be obtained in the office. ***Fees below, and other fees such as event fees, and certain fundraisers, will be invoiced through Tuition Express.***

Tuition Rate: There is no deduction for vacations, absences, holidays, inclement weather, etc. Current rates are subject to change to meet the needs of the school and the children.

Drop-in Rate: \$60.00 per day (*Drop-ins are accepted only on a space available basis.*)

Sibling Discount: If a family has two or more children attending GSS full time, there will be a 10% discount on the oldest child’s tuition.

Registration Fee: A non-refundable yearly registration fee of \$150.00 for each child is required. All registration fees are due upon admission and at every renewal. If a new student enrolls between January 1 and July 31, the registration fee will be reduced to \$75.00. Between August 1 and when the new school year begins in August, the registration fee will be reduced to \$35.00.

GSS will hold a spot for a child with a paid registration fee for up to two weeks. If the child does not begin within those two weeks, the spot will be filled, and the registration fee will be forfeited

Late Pick-up Fees: We ask that every effort be made to arrive on time for pick-up. Your account will be charged \$2.00 per minute for each minute your child is here after 6:00 P.M.

Withdrawals: Parents may withdraw a child from the program at any time; however, a *two-week written notice is required*. Parents wishing to withdraw their child, but who fail to provide a two-week written notice, will still be liable for the tuition for the last two weeks. Withdrawal and subsequent re-enrollment will entail an additional registration fee.

Insufficient Funds: A fee of \$50.00 will be charged to your account for any insufficient fund transaction. Overdue tuition and fees must be paid in full by money order or cashier’s check by 9:00 A.M. Friday. If your account is not current by 9:00 A.M. Friday, and arrangements have not been previously made with the Director, your child or children will not be allowed to return to school until weekly tuition and fees are paid in full.

2022-2023 School Calendar

August 12	Teacher Workday	Closed
August 12	Meet the Teacher	5:30-7:00 pm
August 15	New School Year Begins	6:30 am
September 5	Labor Day	Closed
November 23	Thanksgiving Holiday	Close at 12:30 pm
November 24 & 25	Thanksgiving Holiday	Closed
December 23-30	Christmas Holiday	Closed
January 2	Return to School	Open
January 16	MLK, Jr. Day	Closed
April 7	Good Friday	Closed
May	Pre-K4 Graduation	3:00pm
May 29	Memorial Day	Closed
June	Summer Camp Begins	TBA
July 4	Independence Day	Closed

General Policies

Appropriate Attire: Children attending The Good Shepherd School are to be dressed properly for play. Tennis shoes or other closed-toe shoes (no sandals, please) and socks are required for the safety and protection of the children. Shoes must always be kept on while at the center except during water activities. According to DSS regulations, children may not wear necklaces of any kind to school. Seasonal appropriate clothing is to be worn. Extra sets of clothing (including shoes) must be provided for each child attending school in case of accidents. Please label all clothing with your child's name, especially jackets. GSS is not responsible for lost or broken items.

Toilet Training PreK2: Toilet Training is a developmental milestone: it is our policy to work with the families on helping achieve this goal. Children being potty-trained need at least six pairs of training pants. At least two weeks (but no more than a month's) worth of diapers/pull-ups and wipes must be provided by the parents. Please label each with the child's name. Soiled clothing will be bagged as is and sent home for washing to prevent communicable diseases.

Toilet Training PreK3 & PreK4: Children enrolled in GSS must be independently toilet trained. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull ups in NOT considered Toilet Trained. There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups and these classrooms are not equipped for this.

Confidentiality: All information contained or kept in children's records is kept confidential, and no information is to be released without written parent permission or a court order. SC Dept. of Social Services will have access to children's records as requested.

Video Surveillance Policy:

To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, parents, and visitors, as well as the security of our childcare facility, Good Shepherd School is equipped with a 24-hour surveillance system. Security cameras have been installed in our classrooms, hallways, outdoor play area, indoor play area, office, stairwell, and parking lot. We may conduct video surveillance of any portion of our premises at any time, with the exception of our bathrooms.

Because we respect the privacy of all children, parents, and staff, our 24- hour surveillance system/security cameras are for internal purposes only. **ONLY the Director, staff, and others such as DSS are allowed to view our security cameras/video footage.**

Sign In & Out: Each child must be signed in and out every day through the ProCare app. We require that a member of the GSS staff recognize your child's arrival and departure before leaving. **Sign-in and sign-out protocols are state regulated and full compliance is required.**

Visitors: All visitors must report to the office. GSS has an open-door policy, and parents and guardians can visit when their child is present, unless there is a court order limiting parental access. GSS asks that parents respect the other children and classroom structure so as not to disrupt the schedule.

Authorized Pick Up: Children will be released only to those persons whom you have given written permission on an official pick-up authorization form or complete a temporary pick-up authorization form.

Both forms are available at the administration desk. Each designated pick-up person must report to the office and be able to display proper photo identification before taking the child.

Tracking of Children: Parents or authorized pick-up persons must sign in and out on the attendance sheets at arrival and departure. All children are always to be attended and supervised by a parent, guardian, or staff person. No child can wander the hallway or outside unattended. Roll call is recorded on tracking sheets and is done on evacuation drills, fire drills, and playground times to ensure all children are accounted for. Classrooms will have a sign “we are…” posted on their classroom doors to inform parents of where the children are located.

Evacuation Plan: Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom in the event of an evacuation or emergency. Drills are done as required by state agencies.

Field Trips - GSS does not offer off campus field trips or transportation.

Toys from Home: Toys from home are not allowed to be brought to school except for show and tell days. On these days, toys must be small enough to fit in the child’s cubby or backpack. GSS is not responsible for items brought from home.

Rest Time: Each child will receive rest time daily. A small blanket, lovie, and/or a small pillow may also be brought in – but all bedding must fit in the child’s backpack or cubby. All blankets are to be taken home on Fridays to be washed.

Meals: GSS will only provide a light breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. *GSS is a nut-free facility.* Review the menus which are posted and e-mailed. If your child is allergic to an item on the day’s menu, please pack his/her meal or snack for that day.

Cups and Food from Home: All cups, water bottles, and food from home should be labeled with the child’s name and the date.

Correspondence: All newsletters, menus, calendars, memos, lesson plans, receipts, tax statements, permission slips, etc. will be sent via e-mail. Please make sure the office has an updated email address. Please check your email often as this is our MAIN form of communication. Occasionally a paper notice or form may be put into your child’s folder. Additional correspondence will come through the ProCare connect app. We have a Facebook page as well that is used to send friendly reminders.

Conferences: Conferences will be held on an as-needed basis and according to assessment results. Arrangements for teacher/parent conferences for other ages and at other times to discuss your child’s progress can be made through the office.

Discipline: Discipline methods will be based on positive reinforcement. Corporal punishment and deprivation of food, liquids, etc. will not be allowed. Verbal, physical, or psychological abuse is not allowed. Methods used by GSS staff are warnings, positive redirecting, and time out for children ages two and older.

Birthdays: Parents are welcome to bring in birthday treats for their child’s class. Please make arrangements through the office in case of allergies that may be present in the classroom.

If inviting children to an outside function, please invite all the children in the class. GSS is not allowed to give out email addresses, telephone numbers, or home addresses of the children.

Employees: All caregivers are required by Federal Government to have FBI/SLED background checks clear before they are allowed to work in the building.

Emergency Telephone Numbers: The Office Staff has cellular phones used for emergency purposes only. These phones will not be in use unless the land lines are not working properly, the building has been evacuated, the school is closed due to inclement weather, etc. These phones are not used for everyday communication. (843) 509-9973, (843) 609-5289.

School Closings for Inclement Weather or Other Short-Term Emergency: When there is advanced warning of inclement weather conditions, GSS will generally operate according to the delays and cancellations of Dorchester District Two. Closings for all other reasons are decided based on the severity of the situation. Parents will be notified by e-mail as soon as practical regarding the decision to close.

Health Care

Immunization Record: It is required by SC DHEC that a current record of immunization is provided to us for each child and kept on file. GSS must be given an updated copy of your child’s immunization record upon admission and whenever the previous certificate expires. If your child is attending Good Shepherd School for the first time, you have 30 days beginning with your child's registration date to provide a SC Certificate of Immunization.

If Good Shepherd School does not receive the required South Carolina Certificate of Immunization (DHEC 2704A form) within 30 days after the date of expiration, by law, your child will not be able to return until you provide one.

Please note: All SC Certificates of Immunization must have a SC DHEC logo and filled out properly in order to be considered valid.

IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIRED FOR ATTENDANCE What required shots should children have?

By this Age:	3 months	5 months	7 months	12-16 mo.	19 mo.	4 yrs.+
HepB	1	2	2	2	3	3
Polio	1	2	2	2	3	3-4
DTaP	1	2	3	3	4	4-5
Hib	1	2	2-3	3-4	3-4	3-4
MMR				1	1	1-2
Var				1	2	2
PCV	1	2	3	4	4	4

ACCEPTABLE CERTIFICATES OF IMMUNIZATION

- **“Meets Day Care Requirements”** - If child has received all required immunizations for daycare attendance.
- **“Certificate Expires”** - If child has not yet received all required immunizations for daycare attendance. There must be a completed expiration date.

State & Law Enforcement Regulations: We are mandated by the State of South Carolina and the Department of Children and Youth Services to report neglect and abuse. In addition, we are charged with the safekeeping of each child and must deliver quality care. If the teachers or the Director believe that a parent, guardian, or

authorized person is not mentally or physically capable of taking custody of the child and delivering quality care, the proper authorities will be contacted. The following persons will be contacted in the order below:

- A. A parent or guardian of the child
- B. Emergency persons listed on your child's Authorized Release Form
- C. Police Department
- D. Department of Social Services

Administration of Medication: We are not permitted to administer any type of medication (prescription or over the counter) to your child without written authorization from you and your physician. A *Medication Permission Form* is available in the office. Medication must be in the original container/box with the child's name on it.

All medications must be brought to the school office. **No medication may be left in your child's book bag or left with a teacher.** Medications that have expired will be thrown out. Medications not picked up at the end of the term will be discarded.

***Please note we cannot give over the counter medications for fever.**

Emergency Medical Plan: In the event of a medical emergency involving a child that would require immediate medical care by a health care professional including but not limited to the conditions listed below, the parent will be notified immediately, and the child will be transported by emergency vehicles to Summerville Medical as deemed necessary. Conditions requiring transport would be, breathing difficulties, shock, vomiting, seizure, severe bleeding, neck or back injury, severe allergic reaction, possible broken bones, severe abdominal pain, fever over 103 degrees, sick child, head injury, sprains, loss of consciousness. A GSS staff member will stay with and accompany the child to the facility and remain with the child until no longer needed. An authorization form must be signed by a parent upon admission.

Mildly Ill Child: If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent will be notified immediately and requested to pick up the child within the hour. If the parent cannot pick the child up within the hour, the parent must plan to have the child picked up. If the child is not picked up within the hour, all contacts on the child's emergency form will be contacted for pick up. A child attending GSS is to stay home when he/she has an illness that compromises the well-being of other children and results in him/her having a greater need for care than the staff can provide.

Children **MUST** stay home if they have
one or more of the following symptoms/illnesses

- **Fever of 100 or higher-** Child may return after 24 hours fever free without the use of medication and deemed non-contagious.
- **Difficulty Breathing**
- **Lethargic**
- **Persistent crying**
- **Rash-** Any unexplained or contagious rash. Child may return 24 hours after treatment or a doctor's note deeming rash non-contagious.
- **Sores** that are weeping or draining
- **Diarrhea-** 2 or more loose, watery stools within a 24-hour period not associated with a medication or diet change. If diarrhea is associated with medicine or diet change, a doctor's note is required.

- **Conjunctivitis**- 24 hours after start of treatment. A doctor's note is required to return.
- **Giardia/Rotavirus**- 24 hours after treatment and a doctor's note.
- **Vomiting**- 2 episodes within a 24-hour period (1 if at school). Return after being vomit- free in a 24-hour period.
- **Flu**- 48 hours fever free without medications and able to participate in activities normally.
- **Chicken Pox**- 7 days or when all lesions are scabbed over.
- **Lice/Scabies/Pinworm**- Return after treatment applied and all signs of infestation are no longer present.
- **Impetigo/Ringworm**- Exclusion only if sores cannot be covered completely.
- **Measles/Roseola**- 4 days exclusion after onset of rash. Medical note required to return.
- **Meningitis**- Exclusion until cleared by doctor's note.
- **Whooping Cough**- 5 days after completion of medication and doctor's note.
- **Strep throat**- 24 hours after treatment begins and fever free without medication.
- **Hand Foot and Mouth Disease**- 24 hours after treatment begins.
- **Thrush**- 24 hours after treatment begins
- **Overall feeling of un-wellness**

Aggressive Behavior and Dismissal Policy

If a child exhibits an aggressive behavior towards another student or staff member such as, but not limited to, aggressive hitting, choking, biting, kicking, spitting or physical harm with an object, the following measures will be taken:

- 1st occurrence: The parent/guardian will be called, and a conference held
- 2nd occurrence: The child will be sent home for the day and will not be allowed to return for 2 school days
- 3rd occurrence: The student will be dismissed from the program

Other reasons for dismissal may include but are not limited to:

- A child is unable to adjust to the program in which he/she is enrolled
- A parent threatens physical action towards a staff member or child enrolled in the center
- A parent displays verbal abuse or sexual harassment towards staff especially when in the presence of the children
- A parent fails to pay tuition in a timely manner
- A parent continuously picks up their child late or enters the building prior to opening
- A parent does not provide necessary information required by GSS, the Department of Social Services, or DHEC.
- A meeting with the Good Shepherd School Board can be requested by the parent/guard

Please complete this form and return it to the GSS office.

Parent Signature Page

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2022-2023 Parent-Child Handbook. Please speak with a member of the office staff if you have any questions or concerns.

Please sign and date the following and return this page to the office within one week of receiving.

- ❖ *I have thoroughly read and understand the 2022-2023 Good Shepherd School Parent-Child Handbook and agree to follow the policies and procedures of the Good Shepherd School.*
- ❖ *I understand that my child's full tuition will be drafted via Tuition Express each Monday in advance of service*
- ❖ *I have read the Aggressive Behavior Policy and understand the reasons for dismissal.*

Print Child's Name _____

Print Parent Name _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____