

Shepherd of the Valley Preschool

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Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
12650 Johnny Cake Ridge Road
Apple Valley, MN 55124
952-432-6385 (Children, Youth & Family Office)
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Shepherd of the Valley Preschool

Preschool Handbook
2026-2027



Our Mission:

With God at our center and families as our partners, our goal is to nurture the total child, emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually.

 *Shepherd of the Valley*
Lutheran Church

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SOTVP Weather Policy

SOTVP uses District 196 as the starting point for our weather-related school closure decisions. When school is called off or moved to distance learning in the district, we take our cue to look closely at the weather and the timing of weather events. Because we are smaller and do not transport students, we may be able to remain open on days that they close. We do not adjust tuition for snow days until after we exceed 3 snow days.

The director will email families, post on SOTVP's Facebook page, and an announcement added to the church website if we make the decision close.

We will email you if we decide preschool will remain open, but District 196 closes.

REMEMBER: We do not close when District 196 has conferences or teacher workshop days.

Crisis Management Plan

At SOTVP, we plan for the worst as we hope for the best. We have a crisis management plan available for families to view in the Preschool Office or on our website- <http://sotv.org/preschool/> . You are welcome to view it at ANY time.

In the event that we need to evacuate the building, we will notify families when it is safe to do so. The locations of the evacuation sites are:

(1) South Suburban Evangelical Church
12600 Johnny Cake Ridge Rd, Apple Valley

(2) Easter Lutheran Church
4200 Pilot Knob Road, Eagan

*Which site we use depends on the reason for evacuation

Shepherd of the Valley Preschool admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic or other school administered programs.

Miscellaneous (cont.)

Withdrawal

When you register your child, we plan for them to stay the full year. If circumstances arise where you need to withdraw your child, SOTVP requires written notice prior to or at the time of a tuition payment. If you let us know after the 15th, you will be responsible for the tuition payment that follows the withdrawal. Contact the director with any issues or questions.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Please make every effort to pick up your child on time. A \$1 per minute assessment will be made for any time beyond a five minute grace period. The teachers need the time before and after school to prepare and clean up. We will make allowances for late pick-up in the case of emergencies.

Field Trips/Special Events

We occasionally may take walking field trips. The permission slip signed in the fall gives permission for such trips. If trips requiring transportation are planned, a special permission slip will be sent home.

Pets

Classrooms may have a pet/pets. A child may bring their pet to school to show if the parent/guardian stays with the pet and the director is consulted prior to the visit.

Directory

Each family will receive a copy of the names, addresses and phone numbers of the children/families in their class at SOTVP. This information is for personal use only. This information may not be used for solicitation or given to others for marketing purposes.

Emergency Contact

Preschool Office, 952-985-7370
Children Youth & Family Office, 952-432-6385
SOTV main number, 952-432-6351.

For a major emergency (such as evacuation) the director will be available on her cell phone: 612.810.6127

Families and SOTVP

Preschool will bring about changes in your relationship with your child. The children will become more independent and will have experiences in which you do not share. They will find opportunities for satisfying relationships with other children and their teachers. However, growth seldom proceeds smoothly or in one direction, so it is important that families and teachers work together.

There will be many opportunities for families to become involved in your student's preschool experience. Beginning with the child-teacher-parent orientation conference, where you will be able to meet the staff and hear an overview of school policies. An open house will be held prior to the beginning of school in September. There are two parent/teacher conferences offered (fall and spring) to discuss your child's overall development. We will have a family Advent Celebration in December and an end of the year celebration on the last day of school in May.

Grown ups are welcome to volunteer. Beginning in October, grown ups have the opportunity to sign up to volunteer in their child's classroom. We value the extra individual attention that this makes possible. The children attending preschool need our undivided attention; we therefore ask that arrangements are made for sibling care if you come to volunteer. Each classroom has different guidelines for volunteers. Watch the newsletter for more information. If you are not able to volunteer in the classroom, talk to your child's teacher about volunteer opportunities outside the classroom.

We are always open to talking with you about your child's adjustment to school. It is best not to try and confer with the teachers during school hours or upon arrival and dismissal. Please ask the teacher to call or set up a time before or after school to do so. It is best to work through the director to set this up. They are more available to coordinate.

You are welcome to come and observe at any time. We feel a strong responsibility for the trust you have placed in us by sending your child to SOTVP and it is our wish to work cooperatively with families at all times. The happiness, growth and development of your child is our main concern. We appreciate any suggestions or criticism you may have.

Philosophy

Shepherd of the Valley Preschool (SOTVP) strives to provide a developmentally appropriate, educational experience that is filled with the wonder of learning. The staff sets up an intentional environment that fosters the growth of self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-confidence. Your child will have varied opportunities to learn:



- About the world as a place full of things to explore
- About being a person among other people
- About being loved by God

It is our goal to provide:

- A happy atmosphere where your child is understood and accepted.
- A place where your child can test his/her abilities and gain self-confidence among peers.
- A place where your child will grow in his/her ability to control emotions and impulses.
- A place where your child will practice respect for other people and property guided by appropriate expectations.
- A place where your child will experience creativity at his/her developmental level.
- A place where your child is nurtured physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

We strive to provide teachers who will respond by listening, comforting and encouraging your child.

Miscellaneous (cont.)

Arrival and Dismissal

All classes will be allowed in the building at 9:25 or 12:40 depending on the class. We ask all students to come no later than 9:35 or 12:45.

All children must walk with the person responsible for the to the door. A child running creates a dangerous situation for the child, as well as others who are in the building. We ask that you discuss this with your child and provide the necessary guidance in having your child walk in the hallways. Children found running will be asked to walk. If they continue to run, they will be dismissed from their class last for a period of time. It is a matter of safety and respect.

Dismissal for all morning classes are at 12 pm and the afternoon is at 3:15 pm. Only people on the Authorized Pick Up form will be allowed to take your child from the building. If you are having someone not on the list picking up, please email the preschool director or bring a note with your child to school.

Please do not leave any valuables in your car. Even if you are just running in and out, they may not be safe in your vehicle. SOTV and SOTVP are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Curbside Drop Off

Cars will pull up to the curb outside of door 1 or 3, depending on the class. Maps with specific instructions will be given at time of orientation. Parents are responsible for getting the child out of the car. Staff will get them into the building safely.

Pick Up

Grown ups picking up from preschool are asked to park in the parking lot and come into the building to pick up the student. Do not park your car by the curb while you come in the building. This creates a dangerous situation for the others who are entering and exiting the building.

- Under no circumstances should siblings be left in the car when you come in to pick up your child.

Please make sure to lock your vehicle when you come in and out. SOTVP and SOTV are not responsible for any lost or stolen items

Miscellaneous (cont.)

Snacks

A mid-session snack is served daily. Snacks must include two of the five basic food groups and must be store bought and commercially packaged. This is a requirement of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Please bring any snack that requires washing or preparation, ready to serve. Exceptions would be apples & bananas which can easily be cut into servings at school.

- 3s classes-Families are asked to bring snacks for their child's class.
- 4s classes & High Five class - students provide their own snack daily.

Water Bottles

Students are allowed to bring water bottles from home to use during the school day. Each classroom will have a procedure for the students to follow. Families must:

- Clean the whole water bottle every night.
- The water bottle must be labeled with their first and last name.

Birthdays

We will acknowledge your child's birthday either on the day or another planned day. If you sign up for snack for your child's birthday, please remember that it needs to fit into two of the four food groups. Treats such as cake, cupcakes, popsicles, etc. will not be served. Also, no small gifts will be allowed to be passed out to the other children. Please do not bring birthday party invitations to school to distribute. We want to avoid hurt feelings of children who are not invited.



Play is an important part of our daily preschool program. Young children learn best by playing and following their own curiosities. We work toward organizing the play space to make it attractive, stimulating and functional for the children. The children are able to dramatize, organize, and problem solve whether independently or with other children.

Our curriculum includes hands-on experiences in art, music, language, science, social studies and cognitive readiness activities that may occur individually, in small groups or large group settings. Our program encourages the development of motor skills and coordination through the use of large and small equipment. Our daily schedule includes interest center times, a play period outside and/or in the large activity room, large group times and snack.

This is outlined further in our "child care program plan" which is on file in the office. You may ask to see it at any time.



General Information

SOTVP is a nonprofit, community service organization of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church located at 12650 Johnny Cake Ridge Road, Apple Valley. It is viewed as an outreach service and ministry of the church. Christian traditions and holidays will be celebrated. The school is administered by the Preschool Director, the Senior Pastor and a Financial Advisory Member.

The staff consists of the director, lead teachers & teachers. Teachers in every class meet state requirements to be a preschool teacher in a licensed facility.

License

Our preschool is licensed by the State Department of Children, Youth, and Families of St. Paul, Minnesota (651-431-6500). This assures families that high standards have been met regarding space, equipment, program and staff. We are licensed for 50 children at one time. If you suspect possible violations of statutes or rules, they should be reported to the Department of Human Services.

Student Insurance

SOTVP does not furnish accident insurance covering student injuries received in preschool or on the playground. Families are responsible for carrying any insurance coverage on their children.

Registration and Tuition

There is a \$100 non-refundable registration fee payable when each child enrolls in our school. This fee applies to processing and start-up costs. Monthly tuition is \$180 for the 3 year old classes, \$210 for the 4 year old classes and \$245 for the High Five class. Tuition is due on or before the fifteenth of each month for the following month. September tuition is collected at the time your child is enrolled into the program. October tuition is due on September 15, November tuition is due on October 15 and so forth. If you are having a problem paying tuition on time, please talk to the director. Tuition checks should be made payable to SOTV. Please give payment to the SOTVP Director. If you fall more than 2 months behind in your tuition payments, your child's ability to attend school may become effected. There are automatic withdrawal option, see director for more information. Tuition is the same whether it is a short or a long month. If your child misses school because of vacation, illness or cancellation due to weather, the tuition is the same.

Miscellaneous

Clothing

Please mark all removable clothing with your child's name. This includes school bags, boots, hats, mittens and coats. Please dress your child in durable, washable clothes that he/she can easily play in and handle personal hygiene independently. Please include an extra set of clothing in your child's backpack. This will be used if they have an accident or get wet/dirty at school. Clothes may get dirty while your child is at preschool, so it may be best not to come in fancy clothes.

School Bags

Your child will need a school bag, clearly marked with their name. This is to be brought to school every day for notes to and from the teacher/director, craft projects and shoes when wearing boots. An open top book bag style is best. When you select your child's bag, please try to avoid packs with difficult snaps, buckles and zippers.



Show and Tell

Children may bring carefully selected items at the teacher's request. See individual classroom newsletters for details. Whenever possible, put your child's name on items brought to school. Please do not send money, toy guns, combs or glass items.



Outdoor Policy

Our daily plan is for all children to participate in outside play unless the weather does not allow it. If you feel your child should not play outside on a day when we are going outside, you are responsible for supervision of your child during outside play time. The staff will determine on a classroom basis whether it is appropriate for the children to play outside and may adjust the length of time accordingly. The approximate temperature for deciding where to go out is 0 degrees but we take a variety of factors into account, including: temperature, wind chill, ice, mud and rain will be factors in our decision. Bring your child dressed appropriately for the weather at the time of their outside play.

Each classroom makes an independent decision on outdoor play.

Health Information, Special Needs, Discipline (continued)

What If I Have Special Concerns About My Child?

Any special concerns or problems should be discussed with the director and/or teacher in your child's class. During the year, we would appreciate knowing when there are any unusual circumstances or changes in the family/home environment which may have an effect on your child.

Child Abuse or Neglect

Minnesota State Law requires that we file a report with Dakota County Protection Services (952-891-7459) if we suspect child abuse or neglect or if we suspect that a child is in immediate danger. A copy of our policies on Child Abuse and Neglect is available upon request. To report suspected maltreatment of a child by a school employee, call Dakota County Protection Services (952-891-7459) or the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (651-297-4123).

Discipline Policy

SOTVP utilizes Positive Behavior Management Strategies. SOTVP believes discipline problems can be minimized by providing an interesting and varied program. Teachers model acceptable behavior and redirect children when necessary to constructive behavior. When the occasional problem does arise, the teacher will discuss the problem with the child and explore alternative ways to solve the problem. A child may be asked to sit on a chair for a few minutes to reflect on appropriate choices. The teachers will work with the families to develop plans to deal with any persistent problems.

Grievance Procedure

When a family has a grievance with a staff member or policy at SOTVP, the center's grievance procedure is as follows:

- 1) The grievance should be taken first to the staff member involved.
- 2) If necessary, after meeting with the staff person, the family can then take the grievance to the director.
- 3) If necessary, after meeting with the director, the family can then take the grievance to the highest level authority at the program, the Senior Pastor, at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church.
- 4) Within 10 working days the grievance will be addressed.

General Information

Hours of Operation and Budgeting

Our session days are:

3 year old Yellowclass-M&W

3 year old Blueclass-T&Th

4 year old Greenclass-T,W&Th

4 year old Redclass-T,W&Th

High Five Purpleclass-M,T,W&Th

*Lunch Bunch

*Extended day programs with separate sign up and fee.

9:30 am-12:00 pm

9:30 am-12:00 pm

9:30 am-12:00 pm

12:45 pm-3:15 pm

9:30 am-12:00 pm

12:00-2:00 pm

Each year SOTVP has a total of 8 1/2 months of school. This is what we base our budget and fees on. Obviously, not all months have the same number of school days, but we have divided the tuition into equal monthly payments to allow families and the school to budget their expenses.

Eligibility

Children must be 3 years old by September 1 and be fully bathroom independent wearing non disposable underwear to participate or you have had an evaluation conference with the preschool director.

Transportation

Transportation is not provided by the school. Children are brought to school by families or designated parties and escorted to outdoor staff at drop off and picked up at their classroom doors.



Messages

Messages for the staff may be left by calling the Preschool Office at 952-985-7370 or the Children Youth & Family Office at 952-432-6385 or email to linda.nelson@sotv.org.

Health Information, Special Needs, Discipline

Immunization Records

Your child's immunization record must be turned in before your child can attend school. Immunizations must be up-to-date as required by the MNDCYF. The State also requires us to have a health care summary, signed by your health care provider on file at your child. The summary must be completed, signed and received at school by October 15. If there are conscientious objections, that portion of the form must be completed AND notarized and kept in the child's file.

Illness

Please do not send your child to school if they show signs of illness. We appreciate a call or email letting us know that your child is ill and will not be coming to school. Please keep your child home if without medication they:

- have an infectious illness.
- have infectious diarrhea.
- have vomited within the last 24 hours.
- have significant respiratory distress.
- have unexplained lethargy and will be unable to participate in all the program activities with reasonable comfort.
- may require more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Have signs of the common cold such as sneezing, coughing, running nose, flushed face or headache.
- a 100 degree Fahrenheit axillary or higher temperature before fever reducing medicine is given.

Licensing regulations state that children must be excluded and the school must be notified if your child has a communicable disease. SOTV Preschool will notify other families in your child's class that their child has been exposed. If your child has any of the following, they must be kept home, and we must be notified:

1. Chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious and lesions are crusted over.
2. Contagious conjunctivitis (pink eye) and has not completed 24 hour of antibiotics.
3. A bacterial infection such as strep or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antibiotics.
4. Head lice, ringworm or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others.

Health Information, Special Needs, Discipline (cont.)

You will be called and requested to pick up your child from school if he/she has:

- vomited since admission that day.
- had two or more abnormally loose stools since admission that day.
- has shown inability to participate in the day's program due to fatigue, illness or signs of a fever.
- shown signs of respiratory distress.

Illness and Accidents at School

If symptoms of illness appear during school, your child will be isolated from the group, with adult supervision, until a grown up/emergency contact person arrives. If poisoning is suspected, we will call the poison control center for instructions.

When there is an injury requiring medical attention, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately. If they cannot be reached, the numbers on the emergency form will be called. If no one is available and medical attention is needed, the child's physician or source of health care will be called, and we will follow their instructions. In case of an extreme emergency, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to an appropriate medical facility. Families are responsible for expenses such as the cost of transportation. Staff members will NOT transport children. Signed emergency release forms are required by the parent/guardians and are kept on file. Please notify us whenever your work, home or emergency phone numbers change, so that we always have current numbers in our files.

Health Problems and Medications

If your child has any health problems, allergies, or is taking medication, please notify the director and teacher(s). Staff cannot administer medication without written authorization from the doctor and the parent/guardian. Medication permission forms for parents/guardians and physicians are available in the Preschool Office. Full allergy policy is available in Preschool Director's office. Each student with an allergy is handled individually.

Medications must be unopened and in the original packaging.

Medical Consultant

We will utilize the services of a medical consultant from the within the congregation. Currently it is an RN, BSN