



**Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School**  
*Educating for Excellence*

**K-Prep – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Family Handbook**  
**2016-2017**

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances,  
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**



*At Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran we believe everyone is on a spiritual journey to Discover, Develop, and Declare the love of Christ. No matter where you are on your faith journey, the Shepherd family is here to help you along the way. We are a family of believers firmly committed to leading people to follow Jesus and actively serving others.*

Our mission at Shepherd of the Desert is to provide academic excellence in a Christian environment, working with families to discover and develop each child's unique gifts to their full potential, for the purpose of declaring the love of Christ.

**This handbook is provided to:**

- acquaint the reader with the program of Christian education offered at the school
- acquaint children and parents with the functions and regulations of the school

**Licensure & Accreditation:**

Accreditation is granted when nationally recognized criteria for high quality programs have been met. Extensive self-study and validation visits are required.

***National Lutheran School Accreditation*** of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, St. Louis, MO (since August 2005). Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School has been awarded **Exemplary Status** by the National Lutheran School Accreditation commission (since February 2013). National Lutheran School Accreditation encourages and recognizes Lutheran schools and preschools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous academic and ministry improvement.

Nationally, Shepherd of the Desert is the only Lutheran school and preschool to have both programs honored with this award. Out of 2,500 LCMS schools nationwide, only five percent have been honored with exemplary status. This honor must be earned every five years.

**Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church carries the appropriate liability insurance for our school.**

## Important Contact Information

Address 9590 E. Shea Blvd.  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260-6724  
School Telephone 480/860-1188 prompt 6  
Church Telephone 480/860-1188  
Fax 480/860-4152  
Website [www.sotdaz.org](http://www.sotdaz.org)  
E-mail Type the worker's first initial and last name@sotdaz.org

### **School Offices:**

Elementary Office (Building B) prompt 6

Chad Block  
Principal Ext. 200

Shari Greene  
Assistant Principal Ext. 352

Lisa Straight  
Office Manager Ext. 202

Elementary & Middle School Office Ext. 200

### **Church Offices:**

Church Office (Building A) prompt 5

Brenda Christensen  
Church Secretary Ext. 400

Tracy Grindle  
Church Secretary Ext. 401

Parents and families understand and agree that it is a privilege to attend Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School and therefore we will uphold SOTD with a positive attitude and prayer. We place our trust in Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran, its administration, faculty and staff and will work together in a spirit of unity between the school and home.

**Admissions Policy:**

Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in order to benefit from the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Neither does it discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship opportunities (tuition assistance), loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

In order to be eligible for enrollment, parents must acknowledge, accept and uphold the following:

- Each child will receive training in the teachings of the Bible as taught throughout the curricula of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School.
- Each child will comply with all rules and regulations of the school for efficient, safe, and orderly operations.
- Each child will participate in school-related activities throughout the year, including school programs, field trips, and other functions.
- Each child transferring from another school may be tested.
- Each child's academic capability must be in line with grade placement.
- Each child will meet the following minimum age requirement upon entry into school:
  - ✓ K-Prep – 4 years old
  - ✓ Kindergarten – 5 years old by Sept. 1
  - ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – Must have completed an accredited Kindergarten program

**Admission Requirements:**

1. All forms in the enrollment packet must be filled out completely and submitted to the school office for review. The following forms must be submitted:
  - a. Registration Form
  - b. Permission Slip Form
  - c. Immunization Record (exclusion form available)
  - d. Birth Certificate
  - e. Teacher's Evaluation form for grades 1-8
  - f. Most recent report card
  - g. Most recent standardized test results
  - h. A recent photograph of the student
2. An interview with school administration may be scheduled for all new enrollees.
3. Placement testing may be required of new applicants.
4. Registration fees are not refundable to students who have been offered placement.

***Shepherd of the Desert School is a private educational institution. As such, the principal reserves the right to decline admission or continuous enrollment of a member or non-member child for the following reasons:***

1. the previous record or present status of the child indicates that he/she would have great difficulty obtaining growth within our school program
2. the child has a disability which would prevent him/her from learning adequately in the school environment
3. it is determined that the child provides a significant hindrance to the safety and/or academic and spiritual nature of the school
4. the student has been suspended or expelled from a previous school or has a record of discipline or truancy problems
5. remaining balance of tuition and fees is not paid by May 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year
6. the parent is unwilling to follow and support SOTD rules and regulations

SOTD parents understand and support the rules and policies of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School. Parents understand that the school does not tolerate profanity, obscenity in word or action, or any type of action or harassment from students or parents that are deemed disrespectful or harmful to school staff or students. Parents who behave in this manner toward a student or a staff member will be asked to leave the campus and may be banned from the campus.

SOTD parents expect our child(ren) to comply with school regulations. We will withdraw our child(ren) or accept the school's right to dismiss them if we become unable to support these policies, procedures and rules. We realize that SOTD reserves the right to dismiss any student who does not respect its spiritual standards or cooperate in the educational process of SOTD. We understand that damage to school property by the student, due to willful or negligent means, will be directly charged to the student or parents.

**Admissions Priorities:**

Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School exists to share the *Good News* of the Gospel through a Christ-centered education. To that end we invite all who are interested in such educational experiences to apply for admission. It is always our hope and prayer to have space available for all who apply; however, smaller class sizes promote a quality education. Therefore, when space is limited, a system of admission priorities may be required. In such a case, eligibility for admission shall be based on the initial date of application and the categories listed below:

1. Active members of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church who meet the criteria for enrollment priority.
2. Students who completed the previous school year at Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School or Preschool Department.
3. Siblings of enrolled students who have not previously attended Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School at either Shepherd of the Desert School or Preschool.

4. New requests - not previously enrolled and not members of Shepherd of the Desert Church.
5. Shepherd of the Desert School Board policy establishes classroom size. However, transferring Lutheran students may be allowed enrollment at any time, if classroom space allows.
6. All re-enrollees are required to meet reenrollment deadlines as approved by the Shepherd of the Desert School Board in order to keep their priority enrollment status.
7. Priority of reenrollment is forfeited by any family should the payment of the registration fee be made after the deadlines announced each year.
8. Priority of reenrollment is forfeited by any family should the payment of tuition become an issue.

**Reenrollment Procedures:**

Reenrollment packets are made available to current families in January. Reenrollment is subject to the following procedures:

1. Reenrollment fee payment deadlines are included in the reenrollment information. Adhering to all deadlines will maintain priority enrollment. Failure to pay according to deadlines may cause a student to lose his or her priority enrollment. Reenrollment fees may increase for families that do not meet the reenrollment deadlines.
2. The Reenrollment Form and Parent Release & Consent Form must be filled out and sent with the **first** reenrollment fee payment.

**Withdrawal from Enrollment:**

One month's written notice is required for withdrawal. A withdrawal fee equal to one month's tuition is assessed on withdrawals made without notice. School administration may meet with the parents to assist in the child's transition.

**RenWeb / Online Portal:**

We understand that information contained in the Shepherd of the Desert (SOTD) Online Parent and Student Portal is for the exclusive use of the parents, students and employees of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School. This information may not be reproduced in whole or in part, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopy or otherwise) without written permission. The electronic directories and Parent and Student Portals are not to be used for any form of marketing or commercial purpose, including commercial solicitation and charitable appeals, and copies of the SOTD directory pages may not be provided to individuals or organizations not associated with Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School. Any abuse of this policy, intentional or not, will result in full, immediate suspension of your Portal account.

**Student Promotion:**

SOTD is a private educational institution. As such, the principal reserves the right to approve a student's completion of a grade level based upon his or her attendance and/or completion of academic requirements.

**Tuition:**

Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually, or monthly through FACTS Management Company. All families are required to establish a FACTS account, as tuition and other fees are paid through FACTS. Tuition payments are due on the first day of the month from August through May. FACTS will assess an NSF fee of \$30 if the transaction is rejected. FACTS will attempt to process the payment two weeks later. If the transaction is rejected a second time due to insufficient funds, Shepherd of the Desert will assess an additional fee of \$35.

Enrollment for the following school year is subject to full payment of the prior year’s tuition, fees, and registration. Report cards and other student records may be held until full payment of the prior year’s tuition, fees, and registration has been made.

**Tuition Assistance:**

Tuition assistance programs at Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School award funds to students whose families have demonstrated a need for assistance. These applications are also available at any time to new students. To be considered for tuition assistance, a student must be fully registered. Tuition assistance funds do not apply to registration fees. Families may be required to complete a financial evaluation document as part of the tuition assistance program.

Numerous School Tuition Organizations (STOs) in Arizona offer scholarships to children attending private schools. Please visit our website for more information regarding STOs.

**School Hours Monday through Friday:**

*K-Prep* 8:10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.  
*Kinder – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade* 8:10 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.  
*(Classrooms open at 8:00 a.m.; Office opens at 8:10 a.m.)*

**Progress & Grade Reports:**

Weekly school progress reports and grades are available through RenWeb to keep parents informed. Parents and students can access grades at [www.RenWeb.com](http://www.RenWeb.com). Directions for accessing the RenWeb program are available in the school office.

**Standardized Testing:**

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is administered annually to 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and results are compared against national standards. Scores and other classroom assessments, including teacher observations, are used to help plan and determine academic progress.

**Advanced Math Placement:**

Elementary students with exceptional mathematical abilities are given the opportunity to work at the next grade level. Math grades, achievement test scores, teacher recommendation, and the commitment of the student and his/her parents are considered.

**Curricula / Texts:**

Curriculum and textbook selections are approved to meet state and national standards of accreditation. Additionally, our curricula is Christ-centered and intended to reflect our Christian values and mission statement as printed on page one.

***The replacement of lost or damaged school property, including textbooks,  
is the responsibility of each family.***

**Discipline “Do all to the glory of God!”:**

Classrooms are a place where students can learn and teachers can teach: a place where students, teachers and others live and work together in harmony. Corporal punishment (spanking) will not be administered by school personnel or volunteers.

**Discipline:**

In a school setting, it can be necessary to define boundaries that are in keeping with a Christian school setting. Good behavior is essential for learning. While the school recognizes the importance of parental authority, when students are on the school campus, teachers are responsible for student discipline. Discipline encourages students to develop their God-given gifts and abilities while guiding them toward responsible actions and choices.

Basic components for developing healthy discipline and a healthy learning environment include mutual respect and acceptance of students, teachers, and the educational process, and an environment where daily forgiveness is practiced and modeled. Our discipline system uses logical consequences for inappropriate behaviors. By encouraging students through consistent, respectful and loving discipline, we believe that optimal learning and growth can take place.

Students are to recognize that Christian conduct is expected not only on the school campus but outside the bounds of the school as well. Students represent their Lord, their homes, and their school in all activities. Therefore, Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School expects its students to exhibit Christ-like behavior at all times.

In order to resolve a disciplinary issue, the following steps may be utilized.

1. Verbal warning
2. Consequence(s) and parent notification
3. Principal and parents notified; students potentially suspended for up to three school days
4. Student may be expelled from school due to the seriousness of the violation(s)

There are several school rules which, when violated both on and off campus, may result in immediate suspension with possible expulsion from school. They include but are not limited to:

1. Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances
2. Immoral sexual conduct
3. Bullying, physical violence, or threats
4. Possession or use of fireworks, explosives, or possession of a weapon or other incendiary devices
5. Willful destruction or defacing of property
6. Stealing
7. Leaving campus without authorization



8. Using foul and profane language
9. Disrespectful and non-compliant behavior toward those in authority
10. Truancy
11. Excessive absences and tardiness

***In the event that a student refuses to accept responsibility, the student by virtue of his/her own attitudes and actions disqualifies himself or herself from continued enrollment or re-enrollment.***

A demerit system is used in grades 5-8:

- 1 Demerit = Warning
- 2 Demerits = Parents notified
- 3 Demerits = Detention required
- 4 Demerits = Detention required
- 5 Demerits = Detention required
- 6 Demerits = One (1) day suspension in school
- 7 Demerits = Two (2) day suspension in school
- 8 Demerits = Three (3) day suspension and possible board review
- 9 Demerits = Three (3) day suspension and board review
- 10 Demerits = Suspended until enrollment review with School Board**

**Bullying Policy:**

At Shepherd of the Desert, our goal is to provide a safe and secure environment for our students. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated. Reported or observed instances of behavior determined to be bullying or harassment will immediately be dealt with.

Definition: Bullying is defined as “*any written or verbal expression, or physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, intended to intimidate or cause harm to someone else*”.

The following is the bullying policy at SOTD:

- First occurrence
  - a conference with the student, principal, and parents/guardians will be held to discuss the seriousness of the action. The student will also be moved to the next step on the Conduct Card.
- Second occurrence
  - a conference with the student, principal, a school board member, and parents/guardians will be held to reiterate the seriousness of the action and warn of possible withdrawal. Again, the student will be moved to the next step on the Conduct Card.

- Third occurrence
  - another conference will be held and the student will be withdrawn from Shepherd of the Desert.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Obligations:**

- In accordance with Arizona Law, the school staff is obligated by law to report reasonable suspicion of physical or 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 when making a report to legal authorities. The clear requirement of the law mandates that a report of reasonable suspicion of abuse be made.**

### **Scholastic Honesty:**

Work submitted by a student at Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School is presumed to be the student's. SOTD holds students individually responsible for understanding and maintaining a standard of scholastic honesty in their work. SOTD defines *scholastic dishonesty* broadly as “any act that violates the rights of other students in the execution and evaluation of their work or that involves the misrepresentation of the work of another as one's own”.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating
- Plagiarizing
- Submitting the same or substantially the same work as another student (or yourself) to meet the requirements of an assignment
- Collaboration on an assignment, project, or research paper without the prior consent of the teacher
- Giving or receiving assistance, or information of any form before, during, or after an examination for the purpose of obtaining or granting an unfair advantage
- Submitting as their own assignment work that has been prepared in whole or part by another student, or the use of materials without proper citations identifying sources

Violations of scholastic honesty fall under the general discipline policy of the school.

### **Dress Code Violations:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense = student must wear items of clothing from office – call home
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense = clothing from office – phone call home – visit with principal
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense = clothing from office – phone call home – after school detention
- 4<sup>th</sup> & subsequent offenses = previous consequences as above as well as next step on conduct card

### **School Uniform Dress Code K-8:**

As one part of the overall Christian environment at Shepherd of the Desert, we observe a uniform dress code to promote our school values and goals. We use a uniform dress code to:

1. Promote modesty
2. Keep the focus on learning
3. Reduce “label” competition (*ornament, applique, décor and logo free*)

4. Make daily preparation for school easier for parents and children
5. Promote neat appearance

Neat appearance is an important component of our learning environment and proven to increase academic achievement. Personal hygiene and appearance of students and staff should reflect positively on the school. Students who fall short in maintaining proper hygiene or appearance may be sent home and allowed to return once the concern has been resolved.

The purpose of the dress code is to promote moderation and uniformity without distractions. Styles change. No policy can cover every present or future possibility. The school administration has authority to make decisions with respect to attire in keeping with the values of this school. It is best to direct questions to the school administration before the purchase of questionable clothing.

***Parents are encouraged to positively support Shepherd of the Desert school uniform dress code.***

Makeup:

- students in K-Prep – 5<sup>th</sup> grade are not to wear makeup
- students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8th grade may wear makeup **in moderation**. Teacher discretion will be used to monitor and enforce moderation

Hair:

- hair should be clean and well kept (no styles that would call undue attention, such as unnatural hair color, Mohawk styles, etc.)
- hair accessories are to be school colors

Bottoms:

- Colors: solid tan or navy (plaid skorts are acceptable)
- pants, skirts, skorts, split skirts, shorts & capris with no visible labels
- skirts, skorts, shorts, split skirts and jumpers must be of modest length. They should be at least fingertip length, but not shorter than 4 inches above the knee (all bottoms should sit at natural waist line)
- Sloppy or baggy shorts or pants, jeans, sweat pants, knit or nylon athletic pants are not considered appropriate for school.

Tops:

- Colors: solid red, solid navy or solid white polo
- no labels or logos
- collared, loose fitting polo type shirts
- dress shirt, or collared blouse (long or short sleeved)
- turtlenecks are allowed
- shirts must be long enough to remain tucked in when arms are raised over the head
- layering is acceptable if layers are school colors—both layers must be tucked in
- **a Navy polo-style shirt with school logo is required for school field trips** (these are available through Dennis Uniforms)

Socks:

- socks are to be worn and visible (socks prevent blisters and control odor)
- solid red, white, or navy blue socks without logos

Belts:

- optional (so long as pants stay up without one)
- plain black, brown or school colors

Shoes:

- athletic or tennis shoes are required for PE
- flat sturdy shoes
- for safety, sandals are to be low-heeled with a heel strap and worn with socks
- boots are **not** uniform attire

Hats:

- hats are **not** to be worn inside the buildings including the fellowship hall during lunch

Jewelry:

- students are allowed to wear one bracelet
- for safety, no hoops or dangling earrings
- limited to one earring per ear located in lower ear lobe

***Medical bracelets are considered an exception to this policy***

Outer Wear (Coats, Jackets and Sweatshirts):

- **solid school colors only**
- no visible labels
- cardigan, pullover sweaters or sweatshirts of regular length
- Shepherd of the Desert spirit wear is acceptable
- ***Scout attire is acceptable on meeting days only***

Personal Hygiene

- All students are expected to maintain and manage a high standard of personal hygiene. Students work closely together, and it is essential that our students bathe and use deodorant daily, come to school with clean clothes, and repair or replace clothing that has become torn, stained, or outgrown.

No Uniform or Special Event Dress Days:

Several times a year there will be opportunities for alternative dress. These opportunities will be announced and students must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Tops (shirts, blouses, etc.)
  - Shirts, blouses, and dresses must have straps at least 2 inches in width
  - Straps thinner than two inches must have an additional shirt underneath
  - Bra straps must not be showing
  - Untucked shirts must be long enough to cover midriff when hands are raised
  - Shirts may not be tied or clipped in the back
- Bottoms (pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, etc.)
  - Skirts, shorts, or skorts must be as long as your extended fingertips, but no shorter than 4 inches above the knee
  - Bottoms must be worn at the waist; no “sagging”
  - Stirrup pants or leggings must be adequately covered

**Dress Code Enforcement:**

Dress code enforcement begins at home. Parents can greatly assist the learning process by ensuring that staff members devote their energies to teaching instead of managing uniform issues. Teachers will discuss dress code concerns with individual students. Violations of the uniform policy will require immediate correction. Demerits will be applied for uniform violations in grades 5-8 as determined by staff. *Even with a uniform policy, there will be judgment calls on areas such as hair, makeup, and jewelry. The school staff will make those decisions and greatly appreciate student and parent support.* In most cases, a gentle reminder to the student will solve the problem.

**Grading:**

Letter grades indicate progress in "major" subjects.

A+ = 99 to 100%	C = 75 to 79%
A = 95 to 98%	C- = 73 to 74%
A- = 93 to 94%	D+ = 70 to 72%
B+ = 90 to 92%	D = 65 to 69%
B = 85 to 89%	D- = 63 to 64%
B- = 83 to 84%	F = 0 to 62%
C+ = 80 to 82%	

Behavior marks are recorded with these symbols:

(+) = Excellent Progress    (√) = Acceptable Progress    (-) = Limited Progress

These marks are used in grades K-5 for Art, Music, P.E., Computers, and Spanish:

**O** = 90 to 100%    **S** = 80 to 89%    **N** = 70 to 79%    **U** = Below 70%

**Academic Assistance:**

Most students will be taught through regular instruction provided by the classroom teacher. From time to time, it may be necessary for students to receive instruction or assistance outside of the regular classroom. Classroom aides, an instructional assistant, or parent volunteers may be recruited to work with a child for a single session or for a longer period of time.

The purpose of academic assistance is to better support a student with a specific concept or multiple learning objectives. This is not a special education program, which limits assistance to a few students, but a program that offers support for all Shepherd students who meet qualification criteria as identified by school staff. If the teacher feels that more help is needed than is possible with school academic assistance, he or she may consult with parents and recommend outside tutoring. The school may provide a list of qualified tutors but will not be responsible for contracting, paying, or supervising the work of any private tutor. In some cases of low academic performance, working with an outside tutor may be a requirement for continued enrollment.

### **Outdoor Play:**

Standards of appropriate, safe and respectful behavior are maintained. Children are allowed on the elementary playground with adult supervision.

***Play guns and weapons will not be permitted.  
No potentially dangerous items will be permitted on campus.***

### **Outdoor Playground Rules:**

1. Respect others
2. Use playground equipment as designed:
  - do not stand on top of playground equipment (for example, the monkey bars)
  - face forward when going down the slides; one person at a time
  - pushing & pulling other children will not be tolerated
3. Rocks & wood chips stay on the ground.
4. Please walk on sidewalks & leave large rocks in the spillway.
5. Keep playground clean from trash.
6. Get permission from an adult before retrieving balls that have gone over the north fence or into the main parking area.
7. Adults must retrieve balls that have gone across the fence along Shea.
8. Get permission from an adult before leaving the play area.
9. Students are not allowed on sport court bleachers without permission.

### **Communication**

The staff of Shepherd of the Desert use a variety of formats to keep families informed of the events and activities occurring during the school year:

- [www.RenWeb.com](http://www.RenWeb.com)
- school newsletter
- church newsletter
- middle school newsletter
- classroom newsletters
- parent teacher conferences
- staff emails & phone calls (messages can be left for teachers through voice mail)
- school website – [www.school.sotdaz.org](http://www.school.sotdaz.org)

*\*\*\*It is a parent responsibility to read and be informed of upcoming events and activities.*

### **Chapel / Church / Sunday School:**

As the Word of God is applied, the mind and heart begin to view the world from a new perspective. When students come to know the love and forgiveness Christ offers them, they begin to view themselves as a very special and important creation of God. Daily devotions, prayer, Bible study and weekly chapel are all used to encourage Christian growth. Offerings that are gathered throughout the year are designated for special mission projects. ***Students are encouraged to contribute their own money to develop an attitude of stewardship and thanksgiving.***

### **Prolonged Absence Due to Illness or Injury:**

If it is necessary for a student to experience a long period of absence, please consult with the principal and classroom teacher(s) to coordinate an appropriate educational plan. Shepherd of the Desert may not be able to meet the needs of the student(s) in all circumstances. ***Please call us immediately in case of infectious disease.***

### **When to Keep Your Child at Home:**

- the first days of a cold
- if they have a sore throat or fever
- if they have a rash
- if they have stomach pain
- if their eyes show signs of infection
- ***until they have been without fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours***

***We will call you immediately and isolate your child if these symptoms appear at school.***

### **Medication:**

Medication will not be given to a child without parental consent. Parents are encouraged to time doses so they fall before and after school hours. Inhalers and any other medication routinely taken must be brought to the school office by the parent in an original prescription bottle. Information on the bottle must include the child's name, the type of medicine, dosage and time of dosage. The bottle should contain only enough medicine for use at school. ***When at school, students may not possess prescription or non-prescription medicine.***

### **Health screenings:**

Children in K-Prep, kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, as well as students new to our school, will have their hearing tested. Students in other grades can pay for a hearing screening as well as vision and speech/language screenings. Please contact the school office for more information.

### **Sunscreen**

- UV protection is the responsibility of parents
- apply sunscreen daily to your child
- elementary-aged students may apply sunscreen
- school staff may reapply sunscreen during the school day if a signed permission form is in your child's file

### **Absences & Tardies:**

At Shepherd of the Desert, we strive to teach our students the importance of taking care of their tasks and responsibilities. We understand that situations arise that cause us to run behind schedule or arrive late to an engagement. However, when this becomes a habit rather than a rarity, it is important that the issue of punctuality be addressed.

In order to help reduce the number of tardy incidents, SOTD will employ the following tardy policy:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tardy = Grace
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy = Email from the office reminding you that your child has 3 tardies
- 5<sup>th</sup> Tardy = \*Email notifying you that your child has received an absence.

\*Every 5<sup>th</sup> tardy will count as an absence. Tardies will begin anew each quarter.

Regular attendance is considered vital to a student's educational progress. All students are accountable for regular and prompt attendance. Absences are indicated on student report cards. Parents are encouraged to limit vacations, medical/dental appointments, and any other unnecessary absences that impact regular school attendance. **If absences are planned, please notify the student's teacher(s) and school office.**

To receive credit for a quarter, Shepherd of the Desert students may not exceed **10 unexcused absences or 15 unexcused late arrivals**. The administration may make an exception for issues such as student travel opportunities or illness when the family has cooperated with the school and assignments have been completed. When the administrator determines that credit should not be granted, the family may make an appeal to the school board. Parents should notify the school as soon as possible when extended absences are expected so that an academic support plan can be arranged for the student.

Student work may not always be provided in advance. Children who are absent due to illness should rest and recover before working on schoolwork.

**Please call the school office at 480-860-1188 before 8:30am to report your child's absence.**

If a parent has not verified a student's absence by 9:00 a.m., the parent will be contacted.

**Students arriving after school begins must be checked into the school office by the parent before the student is admitted to class.** Students leaving early must be signed out in the office. A note from home and picture ID is required when someone other than the parent or authorized guardian is signing a student in or out of school.

#### **Partial Day Absence Definitions:**

- Tardy – arrival between 8:11 and 10 a.m.
- Half-day absence – arrival or departure between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Full-day absence – not present or departure between 8:10 and 10 a.m.

#### **Middle School Homework Policy:**

At SOTD, we strive to teach our students the importance of taking care of assignments and responsibilities. This not only prepares them for life, but it gives them the opportunity to be more successful with their academic achievements. We understand that situations arise that may require immediate attention, and therefore we are not able to complete assignments. However, when this becomes a habit rather than a rarity, it is important that the issue of completing assignments be addressed. The following policy will be implemented for missing work:



- Teachers will keep track of late assignments for the week
- Students missing an assignment will use the lunch period to complete the assignment and parents will be notified
- After the 3<sup>rd</sup> missing assignment for the week, parents will be notified and an after school detention will be assigned for the following day
- Students are required to come prepared to work on missing or incomplete assignments
- If all missing work is complete, they will need to bring a book to read
- Detentions will be served from 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Students who are not picked up by 4:00 p.m. will be checked in to after-care

The purpose of this policy is to help students complete missing homework to prevent their grades from dropping significantly because of incomplete assignments. The following grading consequences generally apply to late homework in the middle school:

- one (1) day late — 50% grade reduction
- two (2) days late — 0%

***All work must be completed regardless of grade earned. Parents should contact the teacher if an emergency prevents a child from completing an assignment.***

#### **Visitors:**

Visitors on campus must check in at the school office to receive a visitor's pass. The Elementary office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

#### **Emergency Planning / Lock Down:**

While emergencies can vary considerably, the following summarized preparations have been made:

1. We will follow directions provided by emergency broadcasts:
  - to hear alerts during orange or higher alert, a radio is kept playing in the school office
  - **preparations are made to keep students at school short-term, for the day, or possibly one night**
2. Lock-down procedures:
  - students and teachers remain in classrooms with door(s) locked
  - school staff will release students only to authorized representatives
3. Emergency supplies:
  - water, snacks, flashlights, etc. are stored in each classroom building
4. Notification:
  - parents or emergency contacts will be notified to pick up students (school office must be notified of any changes to the emergency contact information)
  - all students will be signed out

#### **Evacuation Plan:**

- evacuation routes are posted in each of the classrooms
- an emergency contact system will be implemented to share directions and information

### **Fire Drills:**

- held monthly according to the school’s fire evacuation plan
- evacuation routes are posted in each of the classrooms

### **School Arrival and Departure:**

- students are not to be dropped off without parent supervision before 7:55am (students without parental supervision will be placed in before-care)
- students line up by the gates between building B and C and by the Fellowship Hall/Kitchen
- the first car in line for drop-off should pull all the way up to the beginning of the crosswalk—six cars should be able to simultaneously drop off students
- the first car in line for pick-up should pull up to the first yellow marker—four cars should be able to simultaneously pick up students
- do not pass or let children out of your car early unless directed to do so by school staff
- students remain with teachers until the arrival of their ride home and may not leave school grounds without permission
- students will be placed in aftercare at 3:15
- **please notify the school office of any changes in pick-up routine**

If you choose to park:

- **please do not park or walk in the area in which cars are waiting to drop off or pick up**
- please do not park and allow your child to walk unsupervised through the parking lot

***Parking lot safety is essential—please minimize distractions such as talking or texting on a cell phone during drop-off or pick-up!***

### **Before & After School Program**

The “Before & After School Program” is designed to provide a safe environment for children. This program is a school-sponsored program that follows the guidelines and policies of Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School.

Charges will accrue in half-hour intervals. Parents / legal guardians must sign children in during morning hours and sign children out when picking children up after school.

The Before & After School Program is a benefit offered to Shepherd of the Desert families. Late tuition or fees may vacate the use of this program.

### **Late Pickup:**

- Students who are not picked up before 3:15pm are placed in aftercare.
- Charges will accrue in half-hour intervals.

***\*\*\*Emergencies do arise—please call the school office and advise us of your situation. We appreciate your efforts to be prompt.***

### **Lunch Procedures:**

- Students are escorted to the lunchroom and supervised by school staff.
- Students receiving hot lunch will line up alphabetical by grade in front of the hot lunch window.
- All students will sit in their seats during the entire lunch period unless they have a question for the teacher or lunch aide.
- Once the lunch period is over, the teacher, lunch room assistant, or lunch aide will dismiss the students to throw away their trash and begin the cleaning process
- Students must wipe down tables and chairs as well as sweep under and around their table before being dismissed. When finished, students will raise their hands and wait quietly for a teacher to dismiss them.
- Kindergarten – 1<sup>st</sup> grade students are to sit at designated grade tables.
- Students without designated tables may sit wherever they would like, mixing between grades; however, no more than eight students to a table.
- Students will not be permitted to sit alone at a table.
- All grades will be dismissed for a brief recess after lunch.

***\*\*\*There will be no running, fighting, throwing food, or any other inappropriate behavior during lunch.***

### **Recess Procedures:**

- Students are supervised at all times and may not play in areas where they cannot be seen by teachers or staff.
- Respect and care are to be displayed at all times toward one another.
- Respect of school grounds and property is to be maintained at all times.
- All trash is to be put in proper receptacles to maintain the cleanliness of our school grounds.
- Safety is to be reflected in all play, especially on playground equipment (e.g. one student at a time on the monkey bars or slide, etc.).
- All equipment must be returned to the appropriate storage bin when not in use or when recess is over.

### **Modification of School-Related Activities Due to Weather or Environmental Conditions:**

SOTD is committed to protecting the health and safety of our students and staff while providing and encouraging appropriate physical activities and opportunities. Acknowledging that local weather and environmental conditions can be intense, SOTD will limit or revise certain activities during times when negative health or safety concerns might occur. During times of excessive heat, the intensity and duration of outdoor activities will be adjusted. Students are consistently encouraged to hydrate prior to and during outdoor activities. A designee will assess the Heat Index and advise teachers. The Air Quality Index also provides information regarding potential health concerns. Conditions will be monitored, and teachers will be advised appropriately. In all cases, common sense for the health and welfare of our students will be a priority.

### **High Temperature Precautions:**

- students are given frequent opportunities to drink water
- students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school and take them to recess and physical education classes
- strenuous activities are limited on hot days
- physical education classes may be scheduled to take place indoors during hot or inclement weather

### **Low Air Quality Precautions:**

According to the American Lung Association, people react differently to changes in air quality and ozone levels. People with respiratory disorders such as allergies and asthma may have greater difficulty breathing on some days. Parents should notify teachers whenever their child has a health condition requiring any restrictions.

Decisions and actions are not limited to those identified above. Staff members take additional precautions as required by circumstances and the needs of individuals. School decisions are based on the health and welfare of the students.

### **Field Trips:**

- **K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are required to wear a navy school logo shirt on all field trips**
- special events and visitors are planned during the year to enrich classroom experiences
- walking field trips to other nearby businesses, such as the Lifecare Center or Health South, may be scheduled
- classes schedule several trips each year
- siblings are not allowed on field trips to ensure that parent helpers give full attention to the safety of students
- in accordance with state regulations, permission and driver forms will be required
- students must wear seatbelts, and no child is permitted to ride in the front seat of a vehicle

### **Student Vehicle Safety:**

- all students below the age of 8 years or students who are shorter than 4 feet, 9 inches are required to be seated in a child-restraint system, typically a booster seat
- all field trip drivers must have a copy of their driver's license and current proof of liability insurance on file in the school office—this must be updated every school year

### **Overnight Field Trips:**

- overnight field trips in grades 5 to 8 are considered regular school days
- students not able to participate in overnight field trips are expected to attend school and may be given additional assignments that are comparable to the experiences planned for the field trip
- to provide thorough supervision, chaperones (usually parents) in addition to school staff are needed
- all chaperones for overnight trips will have a completed background check

### **School-Sponsored Events:**

- **All adults, whether chaperoning or not, are asked to refrain from smoking and/or drinking alcohol at school sponsored functions in which students are present**

### **Electronic Devices:**

- cell phones are turned off during school hours
- cell phones may be collected in the morning and returned at the end of the school day
- cell phone use or similar communication technology is not allowed during school hours
- students found using cellphones without permission may have their phones taken away
- repeated cellphone use without permission may require a parent to retrieve the phone
- use of iPods or similar entertainment technology is not permitted during school hours without teacher approval

### **School Telephones & Student Telephone Use:**

- staff or office telephones are *not* for student use without permission
- any parent wishing to contact their child must go through the school office—messages will then be sent to the classroom teacher and relayed to the student
- **students are not allowed to use cellphones during school hours for texting or calling**

### **Lunch/Recess:**

Students bring their lunch meals and drinks to school. Please do not pack meals that require refrigeration or heating. Parents are encouraged to pack healthy lunches with a minimum number of treats. On rainy or especially hot days, recess may be moved to the fellowship hall or the classrooms. Hot lunches are offered several times a week for a charge.

### **Library:**

The Shepherd of the Desert library is located in Building C. It offers a wide selection of books focusing on Accelerated Reader (AR) and high interest non-fiction books as well as Christian-based videos. Items are available to check out on a renewal basis.

- K-8 classes attend library weekly
- parents are responsible for replacement / reimbursement for any lost or damaged book(s)

### **Student Lockers:**

- students (grades 5-8) provide a combination lock (give combination to homeroom teacher before locking and keep combinations confidential)
- lockers should be locked overnight and on weekends but are not to be locked during the school day
- lockers are the property of the school and may be inspected at any time
- like all school property, students are responsible for any damages (do not hit, kick or hang from your locker)
- students are to use lockers for storage of their belongings only
- lockers must be kept clean and neat (no food should be left overnight)
- interior decorations will be in good taste, respectful, and non-offensive—only magnets may be used to hang items on interior walls
- exterior decorations are not allowed

- do not keep valuables in lockers—the school is not responsible for lost or stolen items
- book bags must be able to fit inside our 18”x18” lockers
- locker doors must be closed at all times

***School administration reserves the right to search student lockers or desks if use of drugs, alcohol, or other items in conflict with school standards of behavior is suspected.***

**Pets:**

Some people are allergic to or frightened by pets. **Please keep pets in your car or at home unless they are part of a project or presentation scheduled by a teacher or administrator.**

**Use of Entertainment Videos:**

Movies rated PG are not shown to students below grade 5 without parent permission and are shown to older students only if the videos have been previewed and approved by the teacher(s).

Other videos appropriate to curriculum may be shown throughout the year.

**Birthdays:**

Birthdays are indeed special events and will be recognized in the classroom. Speak to the teacher if you wish to provide an edible treat.

Feelings are easily hurt (at any age) when it comes to parties. **Private party invitations are not to be distributed at school.**

**Room parents:**

Room parents are an important part of making our school year successful and fun. Room parents organize the following classroom parties in collaboration with the homeroom teacher (but are not limited to just these events):

- *Thanksgiving Feast*
- *Christmas*
- *end of school year*

**PATS (Parents and Teachers of Saints):**

Shepherd of the Desert School parents’ organization, PATS, is designed to help our school build community. The main function of PATS is to organize events and support students, parents, staff and teachers as we work together toward the vision of our school. All parents, staff and teachers are welcome to plan, participate and/or attend any and all events.

PATS sponsors or assists with planning the following events:

- New Family Social
- First Day of School “Welcome Back Coffee”
- Thanksgiving Feast
- Advent Dinner
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Grandparents’ and Special Friends’ Day
- Staff Appreciation Gifts

- Book Fair
- School Auction

PATS meetings are held throughout the year and will be advertised in the school newsletter. Our first meeting is held at the beginning of the school year. This meeting is an informational, “getting to know you” meeting where parents will have an opportunity to volunteer and find out how to help build our Shepherd community. PATS looks forward to working with all parents, staff, and teachers to make this year a success for our students. Please consider volunteering your time and talents this school year to PATS.

### **Athletic Opportunities:**

The emphasis for the sports program is teamwork and self-discipline. Our school mascot is the *Saints*. Our athletic colors are white and blue. For a fee, children in grades three and above may participate in track and field. Boys and girls in grades five and above, for a fee, may participate in basketball, soccer, or softball. Additionally, we offer girls volleyball and boys flag football. Full participation is expected and includes after-school practices and games with other schools in the Valley. Parent volunteers are needed for transportation.

### **Athletic Academic Guideline:**

Student athletes must maintain a 2.0 (“C” average) and have no failing grades (“F”) in any subject. If at any time an athlete’s GPA drops below a 2.0 or the athlete has a failing grade (F) in any subject, the athlete and parents will be notified. Upon notification the athlete will be suspended from the team for a period of one week and until the athlete is able to bring up the GPA to above 2.0 or has no failing grade (“F”) in that subject. If after returning to the team, the athlete should again be suspended due to grades, the athlete will be removed from the team permanently.

***Athletes must be present in school on game day to participate in the scheduled athletic event.***