

# Grand Rapids Christian Schools

## Preschool Family Handbook



### **Iroquois Campus**

1050 Iroquois Dr. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
Phone: 616.574.6500  
[grcs.org/iroquois](http://grcs.org/iroquois)

### **Evergreen Campus**

1630 Griggs St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
Phone: 616.574.5900  
[grcs.org/evergreen](http://grcs.org/evergreen)

### **Rockford Christian**

6060 Belding Road SE  
Rockford, MI 49341  
Phone: 616.574.6400  
[grcs.org/rockford](http://grcs.org/rockford)

### **Olivia Haverkamp Early Learning Center**

1630 Griggs St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
Phone: 616.574.5900  
[grcs.org/evergreen](http://grcs.org/evergreen)

*“Be joyful always, pray continually, and give thanks...”*

I Thessalonians 5:16-18a



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# Licensing Notebook

The Grand Rapids Christian Schools Preschool Licensing Notebooks are available in the school offices. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past three years are available on the child care licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

## About Grand Rapids Christian Schools

At Grand Rapids Christian Schools, we believe that both the Christian perspective and academic excellence go hand in hand. Here, one doesn't exist without the other. And together, they help form and transform every student.

### Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Mission

*Preparing students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society.*

### Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Core Values

#### **Rooted in Christ**

Developing a strong knowledge of God, a love for His Word, and an understanding that all we do is for God's glory is fundamental to a Grand Rapids Christian Schools education.

—Deuteronomy 6:6-9

#### **Educated for Life**

Our passionate and dedicated teachers prepare students to enter today's world through effective and relevant methods that engage students and instill a love for learning that is lifelong. Our goal is that all students will learn and grow to their full potential as they prepare to transition to be effective students of Christ in today's society.

—Deuteronomy 4:9

#### **Connected Through Relationships**

Developing a strong, personal relationship with Christ, as well as intentional, meaningful, and respectful relationships with their teachers, other students, their parents, and their church are essential building blocks in a student's education. Through meaningful relationships, developed in a Christian context, students mature in their faith and fulfill their God-given potential.

—Philippians 2:3-5

#### **United with Home and Church**

When churches, families, and schools work in partnership, they create a rich atmosphere for faith to grow.

—Ecclesiastes 4:12

#### **Called to Serve**

Excellence in God's eyes is doing one's best in Glory of Him. Service is an opportunity for Christ to be visibly revealed as the Lord of all things. Through service, we engage in worshiping God and extending the love of Christ in transformative ways.

—I Peter 4:10

# Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Portrait of a Graduate

By using their unique gifts to glorify God, pursue personal faith, and bring about shalom in the world, graduates of Grand Rapids Christian Schools will be...

## **CULTURALLY COMPETENT**

Prepared to engage with a diverse range of people and ideologies.

## **COMMUNICATORS AND COLLABORATORS**

Prepared to work in a team environment, articulate ideas, and consider multiple viewpoints.

## **THOUGHTFUL NEIGHBORS**

Prepared to practice hospitality, compassion, service, and empathy for those around them.

## **JUSTICE SEEKERS**

Prepared to actively pursue greater wholeness in the world by working for justice and practicing stewardship.

## **CREATIVE SOLUTION FINDERS**

Prepared to identify issues, engage in critical thinking, and persistently work toward solutions.

## **LIFELONG EXPLORERS**

Prepared to live a life of discovery and wonder in God's world.

## **DISCIPLES OF CHRIST**

Prepared to follow Christ with faithfulness, resilience, and humility in a broken but hopeful world.

# Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has revealed Himself in the Holy Bible. This God is present today and controls both humankind and history. We believe and confess that:

- God shows himself through all he has made - for God has made everything
- God shows himself in justice and mercy over against the sin and evil which has invaded God's creation
- God shows himself and the way of salvation in his Word the Holy Scriptures
- God shows himself most fully in his Son Jesus Christ, who, by miraculous birth, became a human being for our sake, suffered, died, and was raised to conquer the power of sin and the curse of death under which we all live.

Further, we believe and confess that:

- Jesus Christ is now the Lord of all things, both in the created world and in the Church - the fellowship of the redeemed
- Jesus Christ is now gathering and preserving his Church so that her members may be his servants in this world
- Jesus Christ shall return on the day of the Father's choosing to judge all humanity, the living and the dead.

This faith clearly has consequences for the church and the Christian home. It also has special consequences for those involved in Christian day schools, which exist in concert with the home and the church for the nurturing of Christian teaching and life. Because the Lord is Lord of all life, we profess and declare that:

- Our students will be presented with the basic message of Scripture and the redemption that has been given in Christ.
- Our students will be instructed in Scriptural principles that will guide them in mature living - in its spiritual, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions.
- Our students will be encouraged to recognize the greatness and the mercy of our Lord in every area of life.
- Our students will be guided into a true knowledge of God's world, its history, and its culture.
- Our students will be enabled to assess the values of the age from the perspective of Christ's redemption and rule over all the world.

Because our Lord is Lord of all life we further profess and declare that:

- Obedience to God involves us in a thorough investigation of all reality, and that students and teachers alike should seek to integrate their personal faith with all areas of learning
- Obedience to God involves us in urgency to promote this Lordship of Christ within the communities of our schools and throughout the entire world through the agency of the schools as well as the church and family.

All this we profess and declare in the sure and certain hope that as we nurture our children in the knowledge and love of the Lord, God himself will guide, preserve and bless these efforts through the work of the Holy Spirit.

# Preschool Program Philosophy

Within a safe, Christ-centered environment, preschool students at Grand Rapids Christian Schools engage with caring teachers who purposefully provide experiences to achieve both developmental and academic goals and position children for future success while respecting the pace of childhood. Students are given the freedom to make choices within an intentional plan of activities that build social and academic skills.

Focusing on the whole child, our highly trained teachers document each child's individual progress with a portfolio centered on faith formation, cognitive and physical growth and abilities, and their social-emotional well-being.

Play is an important part of our preschool program. It inspires creativity, teaches empathy, encourages language development, fosters independent learning experiences, gives students space to solve problems, and prepares them to be lifelong learners.

Our program is a Christ-centered program. We try to glorify and worship God in everything we do. We believe that each child was created in the image of God. We believe in celebrating and respecting the uniqueness of each child. We believe that God created children to learn through play and discovery and have built our program around these concepts.

We learn Bible stories and truths through play and work. We learn games and move to music. We experiment in art, science, and drama. We develop pre-math and literacy skills, work our large and small muscles, appreciate and create children's literature, meet special guests, and visit special places. As teachers, we try to follow the children's interests. Please feel free to give us your input too.

## **We believe**

- That the child is created in the image of God and in need of His grace.
- That parents, the child's family, and the community are essential elements in the educational setting.
- The environment is considered the third teacher and, as such, reflects God's creation, inspiring children to know God's world, learn from it, and care for it.
- The teacher is central to the educational setting, modeling for the children a Christ-centered, joy-filled life.
- Teaching, learning, and subject matter content comprise the curriculum for young children as they seek to know God's world and become discerning stewards doing His will.

## **We seek to**

- Help your child grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically.
- Provide a safe and secure home-like atmosphere where your child will feel loved and nurtured.
- Offer a rich learning environment and expose children to a wealth of different experiences.
- Instill a life-long love and excitement for learning through inquiry and discovery.
- Nurture your child's sense of wonder, appreciation, and excitement about God and His creation.

## **Iroquois Young Fives Program:**

This program is designed to meet the needs of children of kindergarten age who could use additional time to strengthen readiness skills, build independence and self-confidence as a learner, and grow emotionally and socially before entering kindergarten.

Our curriculum is designed to prepare students for kindergarten with a solid foundation in math and pre-literacy skills as well as creatively expose them to science, social studies, art, and music in a positive, structured environment. The daily routine offers opportunities for individual growth along with developing the skills needed to learn how to work and follow instructions within a group setting.

Through connected lesson and activity design, our highly qualified teachers support the development of the whole child — cognitive, spiritual, physical, social, and emotional. We believe that each child is uniquely created by God. We want to provide them with classroom experiences that will encourage them to become culturally competent, lifelong learners, and disciples of Christ.

## **Iroquois Spanish Immersion Program:**

In the Spanish Immersion program, students are taught a parallel curriculum and are held to the same standards as their peers in the non-immersion program.

Students receive instruction in Spanish and will learn to read, write, and speak in Spanish. The total immersion program begins in preschool and kindergarten and continues through eighth grade. Continued Spanish Immersion programming is offered at the high school, including exciting opportunities for travel, internships, and worship, as well as a partnership with Calvin University which allows students to begin working toward a Spanish minor already in high school!

Enrolling students in Spanish Immersion preschool requires parents to be committed to the Spanish Immersion program at Grand Rapids Christian Schools through sixth grade.

## **The Evergreen Experience**

At Evergreen, students learn in community, take an active role in the learning process, and learn with less interruption.

Team Time is a great example of our school in action. Students from preschool through fifth grade are divided into Team Time groups. Students meet with their group to explore various aspects of our school theme. Each student has a Team Time partner in his or her group. Preschool and kindergarten students are paired with an older student. Activities include research projects, experiments, and much more.

As the relationship grows between partners and teams, both the older and the younger students develop new skills related to the topics explored. Students also learn skills that result from being part of a community working together.



# Preschool Contacts

## Preschool Licensee Designee

**Ann Bakker**

616.265.0341 (cell) | [abakker@grcs.org](mailto:abakker@grcs.org)

## Iroquois Campus Preschool Director

1050 Iroquois Dr. SE | Grand Rapids, MI 49506 | 616.574.6500 | [www.grcs.org/iroquois](http://www.grcs.org/iroquois)

**Jessie Connell** [jconnell@grcs.org](mailto:jconnell@grcs.org)      **Nicole Haight** [nhaight@grcs.org](mailto:nhaight@grcs.org)

## Evergreen Campus Preschool and Early Learning Center Director

1630 Griggs St. SE | Grand Rapids, MI 49506 | 616.574.5900 | [www.grcs.org/evergreen](http://www.grcs.org/evergreen)

**Tara Udeh** [tudeh@grcs.org](mailto:tudeh@grcs.org)      **Courtney Vander Lugt** [cvanderlugt@grcs.org](mailto:cvanderlugt@grcs.org)

## Rockford Christian Campus Preschool Director

6060 Belding Road SE | Grand Rapids, MI 49341 | 616.547.6400 | [www.grcs.org/rockford](http://www.grcs.org/rockford)

**Emily Jansen** [EJansen@grcs.org](mailto:EJansen@grcs.org)

## Iroquois Campus Teachers

TEACHER	CLASSROOM	PHONE	EMAIL
Allison Edema	Young Fives	616.574.6575	<a href="mailto:aedema@grcs.org">aedema@grcs.org</a>
Basti Marquez	Spanish Immersion	616.574.6549	<a href="mailto:bmarquez@grcs.org">bmarquez@grcs.org</a>
Berenice Mejia	Spanish Immersion	616.574.6554	<a href="mailto:bmejia@grcs.org">bmejia@grcs.org</a>
Jenna Jansen	Preschool	616.574.6561	<a href="mailto:jjansen@grcs.org">jjansen@grcs.org</a>
Courtney Raleigh	Preschool	616.574.6553	<a href="mailto:craleigh@grcs.org">craleigh@grcs.org</a>
Lorna VanderSluis	Preschool	616.574.6560	<a href="mailto:lvandersluis@grcs.org">lvandersluis@grcs.org</a>

## Evergreen Campus

TEACHER	CLASSROOM	PHONE	EMAIL
Dominique VanHill	Preschool	616.574.5915	<a href="mailto:dvanhill@grcs.org">dvanhill@grcs.org</a>
Kristen VandenBosch	Preschool		<a href="mailto:kvandenbosch@grcs.org">kvandenbosch@grcs.org</a>
Jennifer Waalkes	Preschool		<a href="mailto:jwaalkes@grcs.org">jwaalkes@grcs.org</a>
Alexandra Bouma	GSRP Preschool		<a href="mailto:abouman@grcs.org">abouman@grcs.org</a>

## Rockford Christian

TEACHER	CLASSROOM	PHONE	EMAIL
Nicole Ott	Preschool		<a href="mailto:nott@grcs.org">nott@grcs.org</a>
Kathleen Ruiten	Young Fives	616.574.6404	<a href="mailto:kruiten@grcs.org">kruiten@grcs.org</a>
Drea Fegan	Preschool		<a href="mailto:dfegan@grcs.org">dfegan@grcs.org</a>
Jennifer Vandlen	Preschool		<a href="mailto:jvandlen@grcs.org">jvandlen@grcs.org</a>

# Preschool Program Offerings

Grand Rapids Christian Schools offers preschool to three, four, and five-year-olds. Children must be fully potty trained (see Toilet Training Policy) and three years old by the first day of preschool. Children in all sessions should arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before class time. We appreciate prompt pick-up at dismissal.

## Schedule Offerings

### Iroquois Campus

<b>PRESCHOOL HALF DAY — MORNINGS</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:20 am — 11:00 am
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:20 am — 11:00 am
<b>PRESCHOOL FULL DAY</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:20 am — 2:45 pm
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:20 am — 2:45 pm
Monday — Friday	8:20 am — 2:45 pm
<b>YOUNG FIVES FULL DAY</b>	
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:20 am — 2:40 pm
Monday — Friday	8:20 am — 2:40 pm
<b>SPANISH IMMERSION</b>	
Monday — Friday (mornings)	8:20 am — 11:00 am
Monday — Friday (mornings) M/W/F (afternoons)	8:20 am — 11:00 am 8:20 am — 2:45 pm
Monday — Friday (all day)	8:20 am — 2:45 pm

## Evergreen Campus

<b>HALF-DAY — MORNING</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:00am - 10:50am
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:00am - 10:50am
<b>FULL DAY</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:00 am — 3:00 pm
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:00 am — 3:00 pm
Monday — Friday	8:00 am — 3:00 pm

## Rockford Christian

<b>PRESCHOOL HALF DAY — MORNINGS</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:35 am — 11:15 am
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:35 am — 11:15 am
<b>PRESCHOOL FULL DAY</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:35 am — 3:10 pm
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:35 am — 3:10 pm
Monday — Friday	8:35 am — 3:10 pm
<b>YOUNG FIVES HALF-DAY — MORNINGS</b>	
Monday — Friday	8:35 am — 3:10 pm
<b>YOUNG FIVES FULL DAY</b>	
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:35 am — 3:10 pm
Monday — Friday	8:35 am — 3:10 pm

# Preschool Program Drop-Off and Pick-Up Information

## Iroquois Campus

- We ask that preschool parents come into the building when dropping off.
- There will be many preschool classes coming at the same time in the morning, and the hallways will be a busy place.
- Please wait with your child until the classroom door is opened by the teacher.
- For student safety and security, the office doors will only be open during certain times:
  - 7:45 am — 8:30 am
  - 2:40 pm — 3:30 pm
- All other times, families will need to ring the bell at the office entrance, and the school secretary will let you in.
- When you drop off your child, you are responsible for signing your child in on your class's sign-in sheet.
- When picking up to go home, preschool students exit the building with the teachers and wait outside at a designated location.
- We appreciate prompt pick-up at dismissal.

## Evergreen Campus

- Children in all sessions should arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before class time.
- We ask that preschool parents come into the building and walk their child to their classroom when dropping off.
- **Drop-off time** for preschool students is from 7:50 am — 8:00 am.
  - After this time, park in the yellow spaces and walk with your child to the front office.
- **Pick-up time** is from 2:50 pm — 3:00 pm.
  - After this time, plan to pick your child up from aftercare.
  - 10:50 am pick-ups and 12:10 pm drop-offs will both be from the front of the building.
- When picking up to go home, preschool students exit the building with their teacher and wait outside at a designated location.
- At all pick-up and drop-off times, you are welcome to park in the yellow spaces and walk in with your child instead of utilizing the drop-off line.
- We appreciate prompt pick-up at dismissal.

## Rockford Christian

- **Drop-Off**
  - Outdoor drop-off time for preschool students is from 8:35 am — 8:45 am.
  - Please park your car in the parking lot and walk your child to the designated spot under the overhang. If dropping off after 8:45 am, please bring your child to the office.
- **Pick-Up**
  - Please park your car in the parking lot and walk in to pick up your child. Teachers open up the lobby double doors near the preschool room at 3:10 am. Teachers dismiss your child by the classroom door.
  - For half-day pick-ups, please park your car in the parking lot. Please meet us in the lobby.

# Kids Care — Before and After School Care

## Kids Care at Evergreen and Iroquois Campuses

- Children may attend before and after school care if extended care is needed.
- Before and after school care only operates on the days that Evergreen and Iroquois are in session.
- There will be no after-school care on half days.
- There will be no before-school care when there is a two-hour delay issued.
- **Iroquois Campus Contact:** Jessie Connell, | [jconnell@grcs.org](mailto:jconnell@grcs.org)
- **Evergreen Campus Contact:** Courtney Vander Lugt, | [cvanderlugt@grcs.org](mailto:cvanderlugt@grcs.org)
- **Kids Care Hours of Operation:**
  - Mornings: 7:00 am — 8:00 am
  - Afternoons: 2:50 pm — 6:00 pm
- Students must be registered at [www.grcs.org/kidscare](http://www.grcs.org/kidscare). Kids Care tuition is billed monthly along with your Smart School preschool tuition payment.

## Kids Care at Rockford Christian

- Children may attend before and after school care if extended care is needed.
- Before and after school care only operates on the days that Rockford is in session.
- There will be no Kids Care in the afternoons when there is a half-day.
- There will be no before-school care when there is a two-hour delay issued.
- **Contact** Emily Jansen | [ejansen@grcs.org](mailto:ejansen@grcs.org)
- **Kids Care Hours of Operation:**
  - Mornings: 7:15 am — 8:35 am
  - Afternoons: 3:10 pm — 5:30 pm
- Students must be registered at [www.grcs.org/kidscare](http://www.grcs.org/kidscare). Kids Care tuition is billed monthly along with your Smart School preschool tuition payment.

# Criteria for Admission and Withdrawal

## Admission

Grand Rapids Christian Preschool welcomes children from a diverse community. Our preschool's criteria for admission are as follows:

1. Parents/guardians complete a pre-enrollment application and pay the non-refundable enrollment fee of \$80 (per child).
2. Upon confirmation of an available seat in the specific class option chosen, the family will be notified via email confirmation.
3. Parents/guardians must complete, sign, and submit a Grand Rapids Christian Schools Enrollment Agreement.
4. Parents/guardians must have all admissions paperwork (see below list) turned in by the first day of school.
5. Parents/guardians new to GRCS Preschool must attend a preschool visiting day. All previous preschool families are also welcome to attend.

## Withdrawal

Parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their child(ren) from our preschool program must give written/email notice. Parents/guardians who withdraw after they have signed the enrollment contract must comply with the withdrawal fee that is stated in the contract. Parents/guardians who withdraw a student after school has started will be responsible for paying for the entire month(s) that their student attended.

## Admission Paperwork

In order for your child to attend our program, parents/guardians are required to complete:

1. Grand Rapids Christian Schools Enrollment Agreement
2. Immunization Records/Health Authorization Form – **it is a State of Michigan requirement that we have these on file in the school office the first day your child attends school.**
3. Child Information Record Card — **it is a State of Michigan requirement that these are complete and handed into the classroom teacher by the first day your child attends school.**
4. Parent Vue account is set up
5. Smart Tuition account is set up
6. Copy of child's birth certificate

## Waivers

Throughout the school year, teachers might ask families to complete waivers for their child to participate in on or off-campus field trips. Waivers must be completed and submitted in order for your child to participate.



# Day-to-Day Details

## Child Pick-up or Release

Safety for your child is our first priority. We are allowed to release your child only to those people whom you have listed on your emergency card. Please inform them that we will ask for I.D. if we do not know them; this policy is to ensure safety for all children.

## Carpool

If your child is in a carpool, please give the teacher a written list of children and drivers. We will not release a child to someone else unless the office or teacher receives a phone call or note. Please – no verbal message from your child.

## Classroom Websites/Blogs

Teachers weekly communicate important information via email. Student learning captured via photos, audio, video, and captions will be shared with families via Seesaw.

## Curriculum

Our work in preschool often derives from the children's interests and will vary in length. We are open to responding to the children's ideas, and our work can change in keeping with those interests. Through using this emergent curriculum approach, we are able to capture your child's unique interests and talents and use them to reveal and explore the mysterious and wonderful creation we have been given.

We use play and hands-on experiences to make sense of God's world. At times it may feel as though academic goals have taken the back seat, but we assure you that there are many critical skills being developed throughout all that we do.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

## Items from Home

Please leave toys at home. Your child will have an opportunity to share his or her favorite things when your child is the "Special Person" of the week.

## Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable and washable play clothes. We do lots of messy art projects, science experiments, cooking activities, and outdoor exploration. We do our best to keep clothes clean, but it is so easy for

children to get paint or other things on themselves. Also, please make sure that your child is able to easily manage the fasteners on their pants, as we do not accompany children into the bathroom.

Please keep an extra pair of weather-appropriate clothing (shirt, pants/shorts, underwear, socks) in your child's bag at all times. It is common for young children to have bathroom accidents. If your child has an accident, they will be guided and supported by the classroom teacher as they learn how to solve the problem and care for their needs. If your child comes home in their "replacement clothes," please wash them and send them back to school the next session.

## Outdoor Policy

We do have outdoor time every day, except in extreme weather (please dress your child accordingly). Warm mittens, coats, hats, snow pants, and boots must be labeled and brought in every day once cold weather begins.

## Backpacks

Please check your child's backpack daily for extra snacks, special notes, and creations that come home in your child's backpack. Take the time to discuss what is going on in preschool or any work your child may have brought home. Ask questions, make observations, and appreciate the work they have accomplished! It is so important for your child to know that you are interested in what they did at preschool.

## Family Participation

Families are a very important part of our preschool program. We believe that a successful program for children exists where there is close family-school interaction. It is also important for your child to see families and the school working together. We hope to work with you as part of our team and desire open communication. Please bring your suggestions, questions, and concerns to us at all times.

- Families are needed to drive and accompany us on field trips.
- We love parent volunteers! Would you consider working in the classroom?
- Families are encouraged to share their jobs, hobbies, and special interests in our preschool classroom.
- Don't forget to complete your Central Registry Check!

## Birthdays

You may send a simple treat to celebrate your child's birthday. This can be a sweet rather than nutritious treat if you would like. Children with summer birthdays will celebrate their half-birthday with us. Please, no candy.

In addition, please note that GRCS Elementary Schools are **peanut-free campuses**. No food clearly identifiable as or clearly labeled as containing peanuts is permitted. Please refer to our peanut-free policy for more information.

## Special Person / Star of the Week

Each child has the opportunity to be the “Special Person” or “Star of the Week” at least once throughout the year. There will be some items that your child may bring to share with us during this time. We will send home all of the necessary information with your child approximately two weeks before they are the “Special Person.”

## Snacks

The children have a snack opportunity every morning and afternoon during their exploration time. They will learn how to serve and clean up after themselves as well as choose when they would like to eat their snack.

Each family is responsible for bringing in a snack. Your child’s teacher will share a plan for providing and sharing snacks.

On the week your child is the “Special Person,” you may bring in a special snack for the whole class one day that week.

GRCS follow all USDA food guidelines. In addition, please note that GRCES/RCS are Peanut-free campuses. No food clearly identifiable as or clearly labeled as containing peanuts is permitted. Please refer to our Peanut-free Policy for more information.

## Lunch - Nutrition and Food Service

Grand Rapids Christian Preschool offers hot lunch with milk for a daily fee - of \$3-3.50 for full-day preschoolers. Parents have the option to sign up their child to receive lunch on a daily/weekly basis.

## Contacting Teachers

We are generally unable to answer the phone while we are teaching. You are welcome to leave a voice message, and we will return your call as soon as we are able. Feel free to send us an email as well.

In the case of an emergency, or a message that needs to get to a teacher right away, please call the school office, and they will get the message to us:

<b>Iroquois Campus</b>	Arrin Brisbane: 616.574.6500
<b>Evergreen Campus and Early Learning Center</b>	Carrie Doezema: 616.574.6590
<b>Rockford Campus</b>	Ashley Howe: 616.574.6400

## Conferences and Kindergarten Readiness

We will hold conferences in mid-winter where we will share formal assessments and will be happy to assist you in your decision regarding your child’s entry into kindergarten.

# Daily Flow and Schedules

## Iroquois Campus Daily Flow

*\*If your child needs care before 8:10 am, please refer to Before and After Care. We do not provide before-care in the classroom.*

<b>Iroquois Campus Full-Day (example)</b>	
8:10 am	Classroom doors open
8:25 am	Gathering time
8:30 am	Opening/devotions/worship
8:45 am	Morning meeting/story
8:55 am	Music/movement
9:05 am	Morning meeting
9:20 am	Recess
9:50 am	Free exploration
10:45 am	Clean-up time
10:50 am	Story
11:00 am	Lunch
11:35 am	Rest time
12:15 pm	Afternoon devotions
12:30 pm	Music/movement
12:50 pm	Afternoon meeting
1:10 pm	Recess
1:40 pm	Free exploration
2:30 pm	Clean-up time
2:35 pm	Story
2:45 pm	End of day

## Early Learning Center and Evergreen Campus Daily Flow

Days tend to flow in this order but also vary depending on the interests and ideas of the students. We also attend Library, Chapel, Prayer Circles, and Team Time once a week.

\*If your child needs care before 7:50 am, please refer to Before and After Care. We do not provide before-care in the classroom.

Evergreen Campus (Half-day Example)	
7:50 am	Classroom doors open
7:50 am	Gathering time
8:15 am	Devotions/prayer
8:20 am	Story
8:30 am	Music/movement
8:40 am	Story/morning meeting
8:50 am	Free exploration
9:50 am	Clean-up time
10:00 am	Outdoor exploration
10:50 am	Prayer and Dismissal

Evergreen Campus (example)	
7:50 am	Classroom doors open
7:50 am	Gathering time
8:15 am	Devotions/prayer
8:20 am	Story
8:30 am	Music/movement
8:40 am	Story/morning meeting
8:50 am	Free exploration
9:50 am	Clean-up time
10:00 am	Outdoor exploration
10:50 am	Prayer, lunch (AM children go home)
12:25 pm	Devotions/prayer
12:30 pm	Story
12:40 pm	Music/movement
12:50 pm	Story/afternoon meeting
1:05 pm	Free exploration
1:55 pm	Clean-up time
2:00 pm	Outdoor exploration
2:45 pm	Prayer
2:50 pm	End of day

## Rockford Christian Daily Flow

*\*If your child needs care before 8:30 am, please refer to Before and After Care. We do not provide before care in the classroom.*

<b>Rockford Christian Half-Day (example)</b>	
8:30 am	Drop-off begins
8:40 am	Gathering time/morning meeting
9:05 am	Bible story/devotions/prayer
9:20 am	Free exploration and bathroom break
10:10 am	Clean-up time
10:15 am	Prayer and snack
10:25 am	Story/music/movement
10:35 am	Outdoor exploration
11:15 am	Morning dismissal

<b>Rockford Christian Full-Day (example)</b>	
8:30 am	Drop-off begins
8:40 am	Gathering time/morning meeting
9:05 am	Bible story/devotions/prayer
9:20 am	Free exploration and bathroom break
10:10 am	Clean-up time
10:15 am	Prayer and snack
10:25 am	Story/music/movement or worship
10:35 am	Outdoor exploration
11:15 am	Exploration or story
11:45 am	Prayer and lunch
12:20 pm	Bathroom break
12:30 pm	Rest time
1:00 pm	Story
1:20 pm	Devotions/worship
1:40 pm	Bathroom break
1:50 pm	Afternoon meeting/snack
2:05 pm	Indoor or outdoor exploration
2:55 pm	Clean-up time
3:05 pm	Prayer/pack-up
3:10 pm	Dismissal

# Behavior Guidance and Discipline

Grand Rapids Christian Preschools work to create classrooms that are positive, safe, and engaging. As Christian Educators, our goals reflect our belief that all children are made in the image of God. Children are capable beings, they are inquisitive beings, and they are diverse beings. If a child can follow through on an expectation they will. Teachers come alongside children to support them in the growth of self-regulation skills.

The Grand Rapids Christian Elementary Schools are developing a school culture based on Responsive Classroom.

**Responsive Classroom** is an evidence-based approach to teaching and discipline that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness. In GRCES preschools, classroom routines, rules/expectations, and classroom management are developed collaboratively with the children based on this model. It also focuses on using choices, natural/logical consequences, and time for breaks. This shared responsibility fosters self-confidence and creates many learning experiences. Classroom rules/expectations are shared with families and are short and stated positively - i.e. be safe, be kind, and be responsible.

Positive Relationships are the foundation of everything we do. Within positive relationships, there is safety, trust, reciprocity, and joy. Each child deserves to feel known and understood by those around them and in turn, feel deeply loved.

Supportive Environments help children know what to do and what is expected of them by providing consistent and predictable routines, developmentally appropriate and engaging activities, and positive feedback about social skills and emotional competencies.

Social-Emotional Teaching Strategies are designed to teach children to persist at difficult tasks, communicate their emotions effectively, control their anger, and solve social problems. Learning how to understand and manage emotions, use words to solve problems, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions are key developmental tasks of the early years.

Create an Individualized Intervention Plan for addressing the needs of children with ongoing, persistent challenging behavior. The plan would be developed by a team consisting of the child's parents, classroom teacher, and an administrator.

At GRCES, we recognize that navigating a large school setting can present significant challenges for some students. In the event that there is a pattern of challenging behavior, we as a team of early childhood professionals will consider if your child's needs can be met in our program or if withdrawal from the preschool program is required. A family is welcome to re-enroll their child in kindergarten if it is determined that Inclusion Services and/or Educational Support Services are able to provide the necessary support.

# Preschool Toilet Training Policy

Grand Rapids Christian School preschool students are required to be fully toilet trained and independent in the bathroom. We consider children to be fully toilet trained when they wear underwear during their time at school. The only exception to this requirement is if a pediatrician confirms that a child has a medical condition requiring the use of pull-ups.

We understand that children may have accidents while they are at school. When accidents occur, children are expected to independently clean themselves after toileting and change their clothes. Teachers and aides are limited to providing verbal instructions and prompts only.

Accidents on a regular basis may be a sign that children are not quite ready for preschool and we ask that you keep them home until they are completely toilet trained.

## Removal from the Program

Reasons for removal from the program include (but are not limited to):

- Parent negligence in returning the required enrollment and health forms
- Student behavior that is consistently uncontrollable, destructive, violent, and inappropriate
- Parent negligence in paying monthly dues
- Student inability to adhere to the toilet training policy above



# Policies Regarding Life-Threatening Allergies

*GRCES relies heavily on parental cooperation to implement the following policy. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.*

## **Applies to All GRCES Students and Families:**

1. No food clearly identifiable as or clearly labeled as containing peanuts is permitted.
2. Foods labeled as "processed with peanuts" or "processed in a facility that also processes peanuts" are permitted unless your child's classroom is specifically designated as a "Peanut-Free Zone."
3. To avoid accidental exposure to allergens through residual contact, all students will be expected to wash their hands after meals.
4. Any activities involving food in common areas must be allergen-free, and proper cleaning of tables and common areas must occur after any events in common areas.
5. Threats to students with life-threatening allergies will be considered bullying and will be addressed by GRCES's student discipline process.
6. Information about peanut allergies, how to read labels, peanut-free lunch alternatives, or birthday treat ideas will be available at the GRCES school office.

## **Applies to All GRCES Students and Families in classrooms with a peanut-allergic student:**

1. Children in classrooms who bring peanut products in their lunch will have these products removed and will be provided with a reasonable alternative if available.
2. GRCES maintains the right to declare a classroom a "Peanut-Free Zone," depending on the age of the allergic child and the severity of the allergy.
3. If your child is in a "Peanut-Free Zone" classroom, you will be notified directly. (Peanut-Free Zone: Area where products containing, processed with, or processed in a facility with peanuts are **NOT** allowed due to risks of cross-contamination and accidental exposure.)

## **Applies to Staff at GRCES:**

1. The school (in partnership with parents, health officials, and other agencies) will participate in ongoing school community education programs.
2. The school trains staff on allergies, sources of allergens, avoidance techniques, identification of an allergic reaction in progress, and emergency response procedures.
3. Teachers in classrooms where life-threatening allergies are present may confiscate food that poses a danger to another student and may provide a safe alternative if one is available.
4. Peanuts or peanut-contaminated materials will not be utilized in any teacher-initiated activities (i.e., art projects, baking projects, games, etc.)

# Grand Rapids Christian Schools Immunization Guidelines

Students at Grand Rapids Christian Schools are required to have, at the time of initial entry into school and at the beginning of each school year thereafter while enrollment continues, adequate written evidence on file at their school that they have been immunized against illnesses as required by Michigan statutes and applicable regulations and guidelines. Adequate written evidence of required immunizations shall consist of:

- A signed physician's statement indicating that the student has received the required immunizations, including the immunizations received and the date of receipt
- A stamped immunization record from a public health department or
- An official immunization record from another school

No student may remain in school for more than 15 school days after initial admission unless:

- The student has received the required immunizations or the student is in the process of receiving the required immunizations, or
- The student's parent has submitted adequate written evidence of the required immunizations as set forth in this policy.
- Students who do not comply with this policy may be excluded from school no later than 15 days after their admission.

Any student who is excluded for failure to comply with this policy shall be readmitted upon submission to the school office of adequate written evidence of compliance.

Students may be exempted from required immunizations in a manner consistent with Michigan laws, regulations, and guidelines:

## Non-Medical Waivers

Non-Medical Waivers (religious or philosophical other objections) *must be obtained from a county health department*. Parents/Guardians must follow the steps below when requesting a nonmedical waiver:

1. Contact the county health department for an appointment to speak with a health educator about immunizations.
2. If following the appointment, a nonmedical waiver is requested, a copy of the current, certified (stamped and signed) State of Michigan Nonmedical Waiver Form is provided.
3. An unaltered, fully completed, certified waiver form must be submitted to the school office.

## Medical Waivers

1. Medical Waivers, signed by a physician on the State of Michigan Medical Contraindication Form indicating medical reasons for an immunization waiver, must be submitted and on file in the school office before a student may be enrolled.

# Preschool Healthcare Plan

## Handwashing

**All staff and volunteers shall wash their hands at all of the following times:**

- Prior to starting the workday at the center
- Prior to the care of children
- Before preparing and serving food and feeding children
- Before giving medication
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
- After handling bodily fluids
- After handling garbage

**Staff and volunteers shall ensure that children wash their hands at all of the following times:**

- Before meals, snacks, or food preparation experiences
- After toileting
- When soiled

**The hands of children and staff shall be thoroughly washed prior to handling food and before eating.** *The following procedures are considered best practices for handwashing:*

- Have a clean paper towel available
- Turn on the water to a comfortable temperature (between 60-120 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Moisten hands with water and apply soap
- Rub hands together until a soapy lather appears and continues for at least 10 seconds
- Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and the back of hands
- Rinse hands under running water until they are free of soap and dirt
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper towel. Turn taps off with the paper towel
- Dispose of the paper towel in a lined trash container

When soap and running water are not available, hand sanitizers and/or single-use wipes may be used as a temporary measure.

*We use precautions when handling potential exposure to blood, including blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharges, and when handling other potentially infectious fluids:*

- Latex gloves are available, and cleaning/sanitizing is done
- Soiled clothing and/or personal belongings are placed in a plastic bag and returned to parents

## Cleaning and Sanitizing of all equipment, toys, and other surfaces.

*The following steps are to be adhered to for cleaning and sanitizing:*

- Wash the surface or item with warm water and detergent
- Rinse the surface with clean water
- Submerge, wipe, or spray the surface or the article with a sanitizing solution
- Let the item or surface air dry
- Mats during rest time are cleaned after each use if they are shared. Rest time bedding used by an individual student should be cleaned weekly
- Toys are cleaned once per quarter and tabletops are cleaned after each use

## Preschool Health Policy

*Please keep your child home if they:*

- Have a fever (your child must be fever free without the aid of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school)
- Have a rash
- Are coughing
- Have red or watery eyes
- Have puss around the eyes
- Have diarrhea
- Are vomiting (your child must be vomit free for 24 hours before returning to school)
- Have yellow-green discharge coming from the nose or eyes

**Please call or email the attendance line if your child will be absent. Please state your student's name, the day they are absent, and any symptoms or diagnosis your child has if they are ill.**

**Iroquois:** 616.574.6590 (press 1) | [IRAttendance@grcs.org](mailto:IRAttendance@grcs.org)

**Evergreen:** 616.574.5990 | [EV-Attendance@grcs.org](mailto:EV-Attendance@grcs.org)

**Rockford:** 616.574.6400

If your child becomes ill while in our care or arrives at school with signs/symptoms of being ill, we will call you and ask that you pick your child up. Please respect others in this regard. We will all stay much healthier if we work together.

If your child has a contagious disease, you must let us know. The Health Department requires notification to parents in some instances.

## Medication Policy

If your child needs to be given any medication at school, a **Medication Permission and Distribution Form** needs to be filled out by the parent or guardian. Prescribed medication requires a note from your child's physician. The staff member administering the medication will fill in the form each time a medication is given.

## Staff and Volunteer Illness Policy

If the school becomes aware that a staff member or volunteer has contracted a communicable disease the school will notify parents of the name and symptoms of the disease. Staff and volunteers will be excluded from the school until the disease is no longer communicable.

## Controlling Infection, Including Universal Precautions.

- Grand Rapids Christian Schools Preschool children need to be able to blow and wipe their own noses, attempt to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing, and be able to use the bathroom without help.
- Our preschool program staff asks that parents use discretion when individual children are not feeling well and potentially need to be kept home from school. For example, some symptoms that would warrant keeping a child home from school are fever, diarrhea, vomiting, lice, etc.
- One of our preschool teachers will communicate to parents, the child's symptoms, signs of illness, or the child's sharing of symptoms.

## Medical Emergency Procedure

- Minor cuts, abrasions, bumps, or bruises will be cleaned and treated with ice and/or bandages as needed.
- Parents/guardians (or other emergency contacts) may be called or otherwise informed of the incident.

## Serious Accident or Injury Procedure

- Check the child for needed medical care
- Call 911 if emergency medical care is needed
- Notify the school administration and parents/guardians
- Apply ice packs, bandages, or other treatments as needed
- Supervising adult(s) complete the School Accident Report and contact parents/guardians
- If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, and the student needs medical attention, the staff will contact the next person on the emergency card

## Pest Management Actions

Parents will be notified of pest management actions.

## Accident, Incident, Injury, Illness, Death, and Fire Reporting

*The school shall make a verbal report to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs within 24 hours of the occurrence of any of the following:*

- A child lost or left unsupervised
- An incident involving an allegation of inappropriate contact
- The death of a child in care

- A fire on the premises that requires the use of fire suppression equipment or results in loss of life or property
- The center is evaluated for any reason

The school shall make a verbal report to the department within 24 hours of notification by a parent that a child received medical treatment or was hospitalized for an injury, accident, or medical condition that occurred while a child was in care. The center will submit a written report to the department each time and will keep a copy of the report on file at the center.

# Severe Weather and School Cancellations

When severe weather is in effect, school will remain in session. The following emergency procedures will take effect:

## Tornado Watch

- Students will remain at school during a tornado watch
- The staff will take every precaution for safety
- Dismissal will be at regular times, although parents may check in at the school office and pick up their child if they desire.

## Tornado Warning

- All students and staff will remain in the building, taking shelter in designated areas
- Students will not be available for pick-up until the “all-clear” is issued
- Please refrain from calling the school office during an emergency to keep communication lines open for authorities.
- *\*Fire and tornado drills are a necessary part of our classroom instruction*

## Cancellations

- Grand Rapids Christian Schools determine when GRCES and RCS campuses are closed due to weather.
- Kids Care is closed all day when there is a snow day and is closed before school when there is a two-hour delay.
- Announcements will mention “Grand Rapids Christian Schools,” “Grand Rapids Christian Elementary School,” or Rockford Christian School,” and will be posted on WOODTV8 and WZZM13.
- School closing announcements can also be found online at [www.grcs.org](http://www.grcs.org).

# Emergency Response Plan

Grand Rapids Christian Schools has a planned response to the threat of dangerous weather, a dangerous fire in the building, to a dangerous situation brought on by the actions of a person, and to a dangerous situation resulting from a natural disaster. There are four levels of response to dangerous situations in and outside of the building. Emergency procedures are posted in the Kids Care rooms. The school administration has the final authority in deciding the level of response appropriate for the situation.

## Responses Include:

- A tornado (dangerous weather) procedure
- A fire procedure
- A shelter in place procedure
- A code red lockdown
- A code yellow lockdown
- Natural or other man-made disasters
- Evacuations:
  - **Iroquois Campus Evacuation:** Walk to East Congregational Church (1005 Giddings Ave. SE. Grand Rapids, MI 49506).
  - **Evergreen Campus Evacuation:** Walk to Plymouth Heights Reformed Church (1800 Plymouth Ave. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49506)
  - **Rockford Christian Evacuation:** Walk to Bella Vista Church (5100 Belding Rd. NE. Rockford, MI 49341)
- All responses are reviewed by each staff member.

## Response Examples:

- Intruder in the building – Code red lockdown
- A dangerous person in the area around the school – Code yellow lockdown
- Power outage in the building – shelter in place
- Gas leak in the building – evacuation to an alternative site

**\*Note:** In the event of a serious accident on campus, appropriate health care providers will be immediately notified. Parents will then be notified. Staff will provide first aid treatment. If safe, the injured person will be treated in the school sick room. In the event of an evacuation or emergency response, parents will be notified through text message and email.



# Preschool Staff and Volunteers

1. All Preschool staff have received staff orientation
2. All Preschool staff have received fingerprint clearance
3. All Preschool staff have received training in crisis management – there is a debrief after every drill.
4. All Preschool staff and volunteers have received criminal background checks.
5. The State Licensing Notebook is available in the school office, and parents may access it upon request (Handbook R400.8110.4).
6. Preschool staff and volunteers must provide evidence that they are free from communicable tuberculosis, verified within one year before employment or volunteering. Documentation is kept on file in the school office.

# COVID-19 Addendums

This addendum to the Grand Rapids Christian School Preschool Program Family Handbook is necessary to:

1. Provide a supplement to the handbook which outlines a preparedness and response plans for COVID-19,
2. Provide additional preparedness and response plans pertaining to the GRCS preschool program, and
3. Amend portions of the handbook due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

***The GRCS preschool program will also adhere to the following;***

## Personal Protective Equipment

- Face masks will be recommended for preschool students during all indoor instruction.

## Classroom Spacing, Movement and Access

- Furniture has been removed and rearranged to allow more space in the classroom for age-appropriate physical distancing.
- Floor tape or other markers have been used to indicate proper social distancing in the classroom.
- Toys, books, and materials that are not able to be sanitized will be removed from the classroom for a minimum of 72 hours before being accessible to the preschoolers again.
- At rest time, the preschoolers' mats will be positioned head to toe and will be distanced as much as possible around the classroom.
- Each class will have its own recess time and/or space to limit interaction with other cohorts.
- Lunch and snack time will take place with socially distant seating and within small groups as possible.

## Hygiene

- Students will sanitize their hands upon entry to the school building.
- Children will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before transitioning into different areas of the classroom.

## Monitor Symptoms of COVID-19

- Temperature and visual checks of each student for illness will be conducted by preschool personnel daily before students enter the classroom.

- Monitoring of symptoms and temperature rechecks will continue throughout the school day if an individual appears to be “not themselves.”

## **Response to Possible or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19**

- In the event that your student or someone in your household becomes ill with symptoms of or has a confirmed case of COVID-19, you must report it to the school office.
- Positive cases of COVID-19 in staff or students shall be reported to the local health department and the preschool licensing consultant.

## **Separation Anxiety Plan**

We will help if your child is reluctant to walk into school. If your child is refusing to get out of the car and/or walk into school, please stay in your car, and we will do the following:

1. We use strategies to distract your child, like previewing the day.
2. If step one is not successful, we will ask you if you are comfortable with us taking your child by the hand to encourage them to come out of the car.
3. If your child is still not able to settle down and walk in with their teacher, we will ask you to park in the lot and walk your child to the main door. Office staff will help to greet them, and once calm; the office staff will walk them to the classroom.
4. If your child is still upset after step three, they might not be ready for school that day.