

# 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)

*“Be joyful always, pray continually, and give thanks...”*  
I Thessalonians 5:16-18a

# Table of Contents

## **Licensing Notebook**

### **About Grand Rapids Christian Schools**

Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Mission

Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Core Values

Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Portrait of a Graduate

Grand Rapids Christian Schools — Statement of Faith

### **Preschool Program Philosophy**

#### **Preschool Contacts**

Preschool Licensee Designee

Iroquois Campus Preschool Director

Evergreen Campus Preschool and Early Learning Center Director

Rockford Christian Campus Preschool Director

Iroquois Campus Teachers

Evergreen Campus

Rockford Christian

#### **Preschool Program Offerings**

Schedule Offerings

Iroquois Campus

Evergreen Campus

Rockford Christian

#### **Preschool Program Drop-Off and Pick-Up Information**

Iroquois Campus

Evergreen Campus

Rockford Christian

#### **Kids Care — Before and After School Care**

Kids Care at Evergreen and Iroquois Campuses

Kids Care at Rockford Christian

#### **Criteria for Admission and Withdrawal**

Admission

Withdrawal

#### **Admission Paperwork**

#### **Waivers**

#### **Day-to-Day Details**

Child Pick-up or Release

Carpool

Classroom Websites/Blogs

Curriculum

Items from Home

Clothing

Outdoor Policy  
Backpacks  
Family Participation  
Birthdays  
Special Person / Star of the Week  
Snacks  
Lunch - Nutrition and Food Service  
Contacting Teachers  
Conferences and Kindergarten Readiness

**Daily Flow and Schedules**

Iroquois Campus Daily Flow  
Iroquois Campus (example)  
Evergreen Campus Daily Flow  
Evergreen Campus (example)  
Rockford Christian Daily Flow  
Rockford Christian (example)

**Behavior Guidance and Discipline**

**Preschool Toilet Training Policy**

**Removal from the Program**

**Policies Regarding Life-Threatening Allergies**

Applies to All GRCES Students and Families  
Applies to All GRCES Students and Families in classrooms with a peanut-allergic student  
Applies to Staff at GRCES

**Grand Rapids Christian Schools Immunization Guidelines**

Non-Medical Waivers  
Medical Waivers

**Preschool Healthcare Plan**

Handwashing  
Cleaning and Sanitizing of all equipment, toys, and other surfaces.  
Preschool Health Policy  
Medication Policy  
Staff and Volunteer Illness Policy  
Controlling Infection, Including Universal Precautions.  
Medical Emergency Procedure  
Serious Accident or Injury Procedure  
Pest Management Actions  
Accident, Incident, Injury, Illness, Death, and Fire Reporting

**Severe Weather and School Cancellations**

Tornado Watch  
Tornado Warning  
Cancellations

**Emergency Response Plan**

Responses Include

Response Examples

**Preschool Staff and Volunteers**

# 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

Our Foundation... The enduring pillars (principles) and cultural framework that shape everything we do in service to our mission.

At GRCS, everything is inspired by and anchored in the 3C's - Christ, Community, and Commitment. These three enduring pillars are our firm foundation, unifying lens, and cultural framework guiding us collectively and individually. They are not meant to be an extensive or exhaustive list of all the values we seek to live out, but rather the fundamental core values that we build upon. The 3C's challenge us to keep God first in everything, love our neighbors as ourselves, and personally commit to leading lives of purpose.

#### Christ

##### **We are rooted in Christ**

*Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Proverbs 22:6, Genesis 1:26-27, Colossians 3:16-17, Jeremiah 17:7-8*

At GRCS, we are rooted in Christ... We believe our world belongs to God and we actively seek to grow deeper in our knowledge of Him, our love for His word, and our understanding that everything we do is for His honor and glory. We fully embrace Jesus' command in Matthew 22:37-40 to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and to "love your neighbor as yourself" and seek to live it out in every environment. We are disciples of Christ, prepared to follow Him with faithfulness, resilience, and humility in a broken but hopeful world.

#### Community

##### **We are better together**

*Philippians 2:3-5, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Colossians 3:12-15, Ephesians 3:6, Ephesians 4:1-16, Colossians 3:11, Revelation 7:9-10, Hebrews 10:24, Colossians 4:6, 1 Peter 3:8-12, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

At GRCS, we are better together... We are a community of belonging, connected through relationships and reflected in the love and respect we show one another. We believe that all people are made uniquely in the image of God. As His image-bearers and covenant partners, we are committed to creating a redemptive environment that reflects the rich differences of God's creation. We strive to make everyone in our community feel known, loved, and connected so they are able to grow in their faith and live into their God-given potential. As followers of Christ and thoughtful neighbors, we practice hospitality, compassion, service, and empathy for all those around us.

## **Commitment**

### **We lead lives of purpose**

*Matthew 5:14-16, Romans 12:1-21, 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 8:28, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 12:1-3, Philippians 4:8-9, Philippians 1:9-11, Psalm 19:14, 2 Peter 1:5-9, 1 Peter 4:8-11, Isaiah 6:8, Hebrews 13:16, Luke 10:25-37*

At GRCS, we lead lives of purpose... We believe that character matters, and we are serious about growth, our own and others. We are committed to excellence as God defines it, giving our best for His glory. We believe that strength is for service, not for status, and we carry that mindset in the classroom, in competition, and in our community. We actively pursue greater wholeness in the world by walking justly and living generously (giving of our time, talent, and treasure) to visibly reveal and extend the love of Christ in transformative ways.

## **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

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. In our multi-age classrooms, 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.

Within a safe and welcoming 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 experiences 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.

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.



# Preschool Contacts

## Preschool Licensee Designee

Tara Udeh [tudeh@grcs.org](mailto:tudeh@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)      Drea Fegan [dfegan@grcs.org](mailto:dfegan@grcs.org)

## Iroquois Campus Teachers

	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	616.574.6560	<a href="mailto:jjansen@grcs.org">jjansen@grcs.org</a>
Courtney Raleigh	Preschool	616.574.6561	<a href="mailto:craleigh@grcs.org">craleigh@grcs.org</a>
Bryndal McGillicuddy	Preschool	616.574.6553	<a href="mailto:bmcgillicuddy@grcs.org">bmcgillicuddy@grcs.org</a>

## Evergreen Campus

TEACHER	CLASSROOM	PHONE	EMAIL
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Dominique VanHill	Preschool	616.574.5920	<a href="mailto:dvanhill@grcs.org">dvanhill@grcs.org</a>
Kate DenBraber	Preschool	616.574.5962	<a href="mailto:kdenbraber@grcs.org">kdenbraber@grcs.org</a>
Jennifer Waalkes	Preschool	616.574.5972	<a href="mailto:jwaalkes@grcs.org">jwaalkes@grcs.org</a>
Alexandra Bouma	GSRP Preschool	616.574.5973	<a href="mailto:abouman@grcs.org">abouman@grcs.org</a>

## Rockford Christian

TEACHER	CLASSROOM	PHONE	EMAIL
Nicole Ott	Preschool	616.574.6405	<a href="mailto:nott@grcs.org">nott@grcs.org</a>
Kathleen Ruitter	Young Fives	616.574.6441	<a href="mailto:kruiter@grcs.org">kruiter@grcs.org</a>
Drea Fegan	Preschool	616.574.6408	<a href="mailto:dfegan@grcs.org">dfegan@grcs.org</a>
Jennifer Vandlen	Preschool	616.574.6404	<a href="mailto:ivandlen@grcs.org">ivandlen@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.

**Spanish Immersion at Iroquois Campus** - Children must be 4 years old by the first day of 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.

**Young Fives** - 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.

## Schedule Offerings

### Iroquois Campus

PRESCHOOL HALF DAY — MORNINGS	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:25 am — 11:00 am
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:25 am — 11:00 am

**PRESCHOOL FULL DAY**

Tuesday and Thursday	8:25 am – 2:45 pm
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:25 am – 2:45 pm
Monday – Friday	8:25 am – 2:45 pm

**YOUNG FIVES FULL DAY**

Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:25 am – 2:45 pm
Monday – Friday	8:25 am – 2:45 pm

**SPANISH IMMERSION**

Monday – Friday (mornings)	8:25 am – 11:00 am
Monday – Friday (mornings)	8:25 am – 11:00 am
M/W/F (afternoons)	8:25 am – 2:45 pm
Monday – Friday (all day)	8:25 am – 2:45 pm

## Evergreen Campus

<b>HALF-DAY — MORNING</b>	
Tuesday and Thursday	8:20 am - 11:30 am
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:20 am - 11:30 am
<b>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

## 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 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

- **Drop-off time** for preschool students is from 8:10-8:25 am.
  - We ask that preschool parents come into the building and to the classroom 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.
  - When you drop off your child, you are responsible for signing your child in on your class's sign-in sheet located near the classroom door.
- **Pick-up time** is 11:00 am (mornings only) and 2:45 pm (full days).
  - Preschool students will exit the building with the teachers and wait outside at a designated location.
  - We appreciate prompt pick-up at dismissal.
- For student safety and security, the office doors will only be open during certain times:
  - 7:45 am — 8:25 am
- All other times, families will need to ring the bell at the office entrance, and the school secretary will let you in.

## Evergreen Campus

- **Drop-off time** for preschool students is from 8:10 am — 8:20 am.
  - If walking your child to his/her classroom, please park in a parking space and walk across the turnaround drive to Door 1 or Door 4.
  - If dropping your child off, stop along the sidewalk and let your child out of your car; a licensed staff member will escort your child from Door 1 to his/her classroom.
- **Pick-up time** is at 2:45 pm for full day students and 11:30 am for half day students.
- During dismissal, preschool students exit the building with their teacher and wait outside at a designated location.
- 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 preschool playscape. 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 at our outdoor designated spot indicated by your child's teacher.

# 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.
- **Iroquois Campus Contact:** Nicole Haight, [nhaight@grcs.org](mailto:nhaight@grcs.org)
- **Evergreen Campus Contact:** Courtney Vander Lugt, [cvanderlugt@grcs.org](mailto:cvanderlugt@grcs.org)
- **Kids Care Hours of Operation:**
  - Iroquois Mornings: 7:00 — 8:10 am
  - Evergreen Mornings: 7:00 — 8:10 am
  - Iroquois Afternoons: 2:45 — 5:30 pm
  - Evergreen Afternoons: 2:45 — 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 Blackbaud preschool tuition payment.
- Before and After Care spots at both campuses are available on a limited, first come, first serve basis.

## 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** Drea Fegan | [dfegan@grcs.org](mailto:dfegan@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 Blackbaud 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 encouraged 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 and [Health Appraisal 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](#) – **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. Blackbaud 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 Child Information Record. 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 app.

### 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" or "Star 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 GRCS/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. 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: 616.574.5901 Courtney Vander Lugt: 616.574.5951
<b>Rockford Campus</b>	Kristin Buursma: 616.574.6400

## Conferences and Kindergarten Readiness

It takes time to get to know your child. We will share what we know about your child's growth with you in the late fall. We will hold parent/teacher 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.*

Iroquois Campus (example)	
8:10 am	Classroom doors open
8:25 am	Gathering time
8:30 am	Morning Meeting - devotions
8:55 am	Music/movement
9:10 am	Recess
9:50 am	Free exploration
10:45 am	Clean-up time
10:50 am	Story
11:00 am	Lunch/Morning Children Picked up
11:35 am	Rest time
12:20 pm	Afternoon Meeting
12:35 pm	Music/movement
12:50 pm	Recess
1:30 pm	Free exploration
2:30 pm	Clean-up time
2:35 pm	Story
2:45 pm	Closing Meeting

### Evergreen Campus Daily Flow

*Days tend to flow in this order but also vary depending on the interests and ideas of the students.*

*\*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>Evergreen Campus (example)</b>	
8:10 am	Classroom doors open
8:25 am	Exploration time
8:45 am	Devotions/Worship/Morning Meeting
9:15 am	Free Exploration
9:45 am	Snack
10:05 am	Bible story / Music & Movement
10:45 am	Recess
11:30 am	Half-day kids dismiss / LUNCH
12:00 pm	Rest Time
12:45 pm	Exploration
1:45 pm	Afternoon Meeting / Prayer & Pack up
2:15 pm	Outside
2:45 pm	Dismissal

## **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 (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	Half-Day Children Picked Up
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 children. 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 removal from the preschool program is required. A child exhibiting behavior that is consistently uncontrollable, destructive, violent, and inappropriate will be required to be removed from the program.

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/Guardian negligence in returning the required enrollment and health forms
- Student behavior that is consistently uncontrollable, destructive, violent, and inappropriate
- Parent/Guardian 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

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 email your child's teacher if your child will be absent. You may also 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 Instructions 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
- Lockdown
- Limited 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 – Lockdown
- A dangerous person in the area around the school – Limited 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 and eligibility
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.