

The Golden Rule Christian Academy

Parent Handbook



The Golden Rule Christian Academy, LLC

2656 Walnut St Harrisburg, PA 17103

Phone: (717)-525-8938

Email: Info@goldenruleca.com

Website: www.goldenruleca.com

“One child can change the world”

The Golden Rule Christian Academy

Parent Handbook

The Golden Rule Christian Academy accepts applications for enrollment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, or sex. We have two locations that will be referenced throughout this agreement, the location for children 0-5 years will be referred to as “The Center”, while the school age site will be referred to as “the SACC Site”, “the centers” will be used for policies that apply to both locations hereafter. There is a \$30.00 nonrefundable registration fee. All paperwork and fees except for physical forms must be completed before your child enters the program. All information on the forms must be complete. You have thirty (30) days from the date of enrollment to return the completed physical form. We are unable to continue to provide care for any child who has not returned a completed physical form after 30 days or does not get a new one annually.

Introduction

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for considering “The Golden Rule Christian Academy” for your childcare needs.

Our primary goal in caring for children is to create a loving environment in which every child knows that she/he is loved by staff. We seek to foster the emotional, intellectual and physical growth of the children entrusted to our care as a service to working parents.

All staff have appropriate education qualifications. The Centers are licensed according to the PA Department of Public Welfare Rules and Regulations.

We are looking forward to meeting you and getting to know your child. Should you at any time have questions or concerns about the Center, its program, the caregivers and/or your child, please contact us at 717-525-8938 or online at info@goldenruleca.com

Thank you for your interest in The Golden Rule Christian Academy.

Philosophy

The Golden Rule Christian Academy provides its childcare programs according to the philosophy of the development of mind, body and spirit. All components of our curriculum are fitted to the age and specific development of each child and are designed to promote the physical, educational, emotional and social growth of our children. Children are natural learners and when they are placed in an atmosphere that is conducive for growth, fosters a good self-image and offers direct experiences with nurturing caregivers and a range of objects that stimulate growth, they thrive and become empowered to change their world.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Golden Rule Christian Academy is to provide exceptional, affordable care to the families and workers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This exceptional care shall consist of developmentally-appropriate programming which complies with DPW regulations, meets Keystone level criteria and enhances the growth of every child regardless of race, gender, religion or economic status. Furthermore, our service shall be administered through a highly trained staff that is committed to Christian values and an unsurpassed level of professionalism. WE BELIEVE THAT ONE CHILD CAN CHANGE A FAMILY; AND THAT FAMILY, IN TURN, CAN CHANGE THE COMMUNITY INTO ONE THAT CAN CHANGE AN ENTIRE CITY.

School Hours

The Center will be in operation 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and the SACC site will be in operation 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except during designated holidays and closings. Children should not arrive before these hours or be left at the center after 5:30 p.m. Parents who leave their children at the center after 5:30 p.m. will accumulate late fees.

Breakfast will be served until 7:30 a.m. at the SACC site and until 8:30 a.m. at the center. You will be responsible for feeding your child if they cannot be dropped off by the cutoff times. Additionally, any child arriving after 9:00 a.m. will be denied care for the day. Exceptions to this policy shall include children with written excuses for prescheduled appointments.

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit at any time.

Dismissal Policy

The Center reserves the right to dismiss or withdraw a child from the program for reasons relative to child behavior problems and/or parent discrepancies.

Parent Participation

We strongly encourage and welcome parents to volunteer. Occasionally, teachers will ask parents to assist in supervising a field trip or to bring in items for their child's class. We wish to maintain a close and positive relationship with our parents. Daily Communication is essential in order to ensure an effective program and avoid misunderstandings.

Pick-up/Drop-off Policy

Parents are expected to bring children into the centers and see that they are supervised before leaving the premises. Parents are expected to re-enter the building when picking up the children and sign the child out.

There will be a sign-in chart at the front desk. It is very important for your child's safety and for our records that you sign your child in and out each day.

Holidays/Closings

The centers will be closed for each of the following holidays on the day the holiday is nationally observed: New Year's Day, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The full tuition amount will be charged for these days.

The centers will also be closed on the following days: the day immediately before, and the Friday following, Thanksgiving Day; and, the day immediately following Christmas. The full tuition amount will be charged for these days as well.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is necessary to maintain a slot on the enrollment roster. If a child is absent for more than two weeks without a justifiable excuse such as a doctor's excuse or a scheduled vacation, you will be expected to pay for the time missed and/or your slot will be terminated.

Late Pick-Up Fees

I agree to pay a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per child for each minute after 5:30 p.m. during the time my child is left at the center.

For example, a child left at the center from 5:31 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$15.00.

Your tuition is calculated based on a maximum of 10 hours of care per day. If your child is dropped off at 7:00 a.m., they are to be picked up by 5:00 p.m. Any childcare received after the 10 hours will incur the same late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child.

Sick Child Policy

The director and/or staff shall have the option to deny admission of an ill child on any given day, or to request that a child be removed from the facility if the child is determined to be too ill to remain in care. If this situation occurs, the parent will be notified immediately that the child must be picked up as soon as possible. If the child's absence is due to a contagious disease, a signed statement from a physician which states the child is no longer contagious is required before a child can return. There will be no deductions from tuition for absences due to illnesses. Please see our Illness Chart posted on display on the board in the front lobby.

Change of Clothes Policy

Each child at the center is required to have a full change of seasonal appropriate clothes including; shirt, pants, socks, and undergarments. School age children at the SACC site are welcomed to bring in clothes to change into before we have outdoor play.

Violations of Behavior Policy

The following acts shall be considered a violation of Golden Rule behavior policies:

- Spitting, biting, hitting and fighting
- Swearing at any teacher, aide and/or student
- Destruction of property including furniture, toys, etc.
- Disobedience (e.g., disregarding the commands and/or request of staff)

The parents of children who commit one of these acts will be given a written warning for the first offense. A second offense shall warrant a conference with the offending child's parents. After three violations of GRCA's behavior policy, the offending child shall be suspended at the discretion of the staff and/or Director.

Emergency/Medical Treatment

I agree to give Golden Rule staff permission to seek emergency medical and/or surgical treatment, when necessary, for the wellbeing of my child if I am not available.

Food Allergies

If your child has any food allergies, you must complete the Special Care Plan for him/her attached at the end of this handbook and submit at the time of enrollment.

Tuition Policy

Payment is expected biweekly. I agree to pay in advance (Monday or Friday prior to the week of service) a tuition fee of \$ _____ with no deductions for absences, half days, or holidays. Payments made in the form of check or money order will have a \$5 processing Fee. Cash is NOT accepted. *Tuition Express* is our preferred method of payment as it allows us to automatically withdraw from a client's checking account or credit card bi-weekly on Mondays. If tuition monies are not in your account at the time of processing, there will be a \$25 charge to cover the Non-Sufficient Funds Fee.

As a client of the Golden Rule Christian Academy, I agree to pay a registration fee of \$30.00 at the time of enrollment. I understand that this fee is non-refundable. The registration will cancel after thirty (30) days if child is not enrolled.

Golden Rule accepts subsidized funds and I understand that it is my responsibility to pay the difference between the center's rates and what subsidies are paid to the center on my behalf.

Late Tuition Policy

I understand that a payment shall be considered delinquent if not paid for by Tuesday of the same week. At that time, a Notice of Unpaid Fees shall be sent to you. If unpaid fees are not paid within seven (7) days from the due date, the centers will refuse admission and report the delinquency to subsidizing agencies (if applicable).

A late tuition fee of \$5.00 will be charged for each day that tuition is not paid after the due date.

I understand that my child will be denied care if he/she arrives at the beginning of the service week without payment. If I choose to pay bi-weekly, it must be for 2 weeks in advance.

Tuition Discount for Vacation

Parents whose children have been enrolled at the center for one year will be granted a 50% discount off tuition (per family) for vacation if director is notified of a child's planned absence at least two weeks in advance. After two years of enrollment in our program, a 100% discount will be available (per family) for vacation if director is notified at least two weeks in advance of the child's planned absence.

Parents/guardians that fail to give prior notice relating to their child's absence due to vacationing, are responsible for the tuition accrued during the time of child's absence.

Curriculum and Assessment

Our teaching staff uses the PA Early Learning Standards combined with a comprehensive, research-based curriculum as a guide for planning learning experiences that promote the well-rounded growth of each child. Our plans are designed to provide children with a variety of opportunities for learning and encourage individual and group exploration. Our goal is to support a variety of social experiences by organizing time and classroom space to promote peer interactions on both a small and large scale.

Assessment Plan

Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of each day as ongoing teacher observation of group patterns and individual development is used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. Within 45 days of your child's enrollment, an initial assessment of your child will be made. During that assessment, the teacher will observe your child in his or her natural environment and rate them according to developmental milestones. It is important to know that all children grow and develop on a spectrum; no two children's developmental progresses are the same. The results of your child's initial assessment will be shared with you shortly after they are recorded; and, if a concern arises, we will work with you to create a plan for him/her that incorporates both home and school activities.

Assessments of your child will be performed throughout the year, but the formalized documentation shall occur twice a year, one in the fall, and the other, in spring. Parent teacher conferences will be offered to discuss your child's progress, teacher's observations and samples of the child's work.

If possible developmental delays are found as a result of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire that all families are asked to complete twice a year, the staff and director will work with the family to find suitable referrals and resources. The initial results of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire are not always indicative of certain delays; rather, these are used as gauges to help families and staff to meet the developmental needs of the child.

Assessment Procedures

The most effective assessment is performed by the child's primary caregiver through observations. Teachers' observations are documented through photos, videos, anecdotal notes and samples of the child's work. These assessments, which are conducted over a period of time, are used to design classroom activities.

Use of Assessment Results

The primary use of these assessments is to develop a curriculum that supports and challenges

each child's growth and development through planned activities.

Additionally, the results of group observations affect the school's quality improvement process, something that we, as a Keystone STARS center, we are required to report as part of the child/program demographics and child outcome data on children in our childcare program for the PA Early Learning Network (ELN). Only aggregate information, which does not allow for the identification of specific children, will be reported to the Commonwealth in October and May of each year for the purpose of improving the quality of childcare in PA.

Keystone Stars Program

The following statements must be included in The Golden Rule Christian Academy's Parent Handbook.

- I understand that The Golden Rule Christian Academy may refer me to an agency for assistance and support regarding health, wellness, educational and behavioral issues.
- I will supply a copy of my child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), if applicable, to the Golden Rule Christian Academy.
- I agree to update my child's Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) forms every six (6) months and/or when there is a change in any of my information.
- I understand that my child will be observed for developmental status within 45 days of his/her enrollment.
- I understand that the staff is using the PA Early Learning Standards in the daily lesson plans for my child's classroom.

"Getting to Know You" Meeting

At the time of enrollment or within the first sixty (60) days thereof, parents are asked to participate in an introductory meeting with the child's teacher or director to begin laying the foundation of a healthy partnership.

Daily Information Reports

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers will receive an information sheet listing the details of your child's day including meals, diaper changes, moods and developmental activities.

Each classroom will also have a parent information board that highlights classroom news and activities.

Progress Meeting

Your child's teacher and/or director will meet with you after your child has been in our care for four weeks to discuss his/her transition in our program. After this meeting, a two-week probation period will allow us to determine whether your child has adjusted completely or if it is in the best interest of the child for you to seek other care. Failure to wholly adjust to the program during the probationary period shall result in a termination of enrollment.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be offered at the same time that progress reports are sent home. This is typically done at the beginning and middle of the year (i.e. January and June).

Parents/Teachers may request conferences outside these times to discuss issues concerning a child as they may arise throughout the year.

Parent Newsletters

Newsletters will be sent home periodically to keep parents informed of events, childcare and health issues, announcements, birthdays, graduations and promotions, etc. PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO READ THESE PERIODICALS AND GIVE THEIR PROMPT ATTENTION TO ALL MATTERS ADDRESSED THEREIN!

Special Care Plan

Children requiring special attention concerning allergies, developmental behavior, asthma, etc., will need to complete a Special Care Plan of Actions form at the time of enrollment. If your child currently has an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), we will need a copy of either plan so that we can work together to ensure that the prescribed guidelines are put into practice. This is an optional request that is highly recommended, but not required.

Transfer of Records

Parents/guardians requesting a Transfer of Records must complete an Authorization/Request for Release of Confidential Information Form. The Golden Rule Christian Academy will then transfer the child's records to another educational establishment, only at the Parent's Request. We kindly ask that you give us at least one week notice when requesting copies of your child's records.

Transportation

Transportation is available for field trips and to certain schools in the general vicinity of the center. These services will be provided at an additional charge.

Photographing Policy

I give the director and staff of The Golden Rule Christian Academy permission to take pictures of my child. These photos may be used in publications, website, child observations, etc.

Transition to Kindergarten

Our preschool curriculum is designed to provide our students with the best possible tools to make the transition from preschool to kindergarten a success. The following questions and answers can help you assess your child's readiness for this development milestone.

How do you know if your child is ready for kindergarten?

There are basic measures that can help you determine if your child is ready for kindergarten.

Your child is ready if he/she:

- Listens and follows simple directions
- Speaks in complete sentences
- Is able to separate from you
- Plays cooperatively with others
- Recognizes basic colors and shapes
- Shows interest in learning/ books
- Can sit quietly for at least 15 minutes

What are the benefits of a successful transition from preschool to kindergarten?

- Children will feel more comfortable when they are knowledgeable of the transition and the support of all parties involved.
- Children will be able to enjoy their new learning environment when they will feel safe and secure.
- Children will be more positive and adaptable.

Community Information

Below is a list of Community Resources and Assistance Programs in Dauphin County. For additional information, please refer to the blue pages in your local telephone book.

Harrisburg School District

Administration

2101 N. Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-1081
(717) 703-4000

Weather Related Closing/Delay

(717) 703-1234

Melrose Elementary School

2041 Berryhill Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104
(717) 703-1455

Ben Franklin Elementary

1201 North Sixth Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102

Central Dauphin School District

600 Rutherford Road
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Capital Area Head Start

3700 Vartan Way
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 541-1795

Keystone Children and Family Services

3700 Vartan Way
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 541-9620

Youth Advocate Program, Inc.

2007 North 3rd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102

Capital Area Intermediate Unit

55 Miller Street
P.O. Box 489
Summerdale, PA 17093-489
(717) 732-8400

Harrisburg Catholic Elementary

555 S 25th St,
Harrisburg, PA 17104
(717) 232-2551

Sylvan Heights Science Charter School

915 S. 13th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103
(717) 232-9220

Office of Child Development

Department of Public Welfare

(717) 772- 7078
1-800-222-2117

Dauphin County Assistance Office

2432 North 7th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-0959
(717) 787-2324
1-800-788-5616

PA WIC Program- For Information

1-800-WIC-WINS

Hamilton Health Center, Inc.

110 S. 17th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104-1522
Phone: (717) 230-3979

Dauphin County Library System

Kline Branch (717) 234-4961

East Shore Area Library (717) 652-9380

CCIS of Dauphin County

Childcare Network

(717) 233-8454

YWCA of Greater Harrisburg

(717) 234-7931

Violence intervention and Prevention
Hotline

The Golden Rule Christian Academy Childcare Agreement

Enrollment Date: _____

I, _____, the legal guardian of _____, have read The Golden Rule Christian Academy Parent Handbook and I agree to follow the policies and procedures listed therein.

_____ I understand that my tuition is due at the beginning of the service week and I agree to pay the weekly rate of: _____ or the adjusted rate of _____ by Friday of each week.

_____ I understand that if I am late with my weekly tuition two consecutive times, I will be given a warning. After the third delinquency in tuition payment, my enrollment will be terminated. Furthermore, I agree to pay a late charge of \$20/day if my bill is not paid on time and a \$35 overdraft fee for any check returned due to insufficient funds.

_____ My child's arrival time shall be _____; and, their departure time shall be _____. I understand that I must give one week notice to GRCA staff by letter, if any or both times need to be changed.

_____ I understand that I will be expected to pay a late fee of \$1.00 per child for each minute of care they receive after 5:30 p.m.

_____ I have been given a calendar which lists the days that the Golden Rule Christian Academy will be closed.

_____ I understand that I must provide the staff with diapers, wipes and extra seasonal clothes that are necessary for my child's care.

_____ I understand that my child needs a sleeping bag or fitted sheet for naptimes that must be laundered and returned each week.

_____ I understand that my child must have an annual physical and health appraisal form completed by their primary care physician.

_____ I understand that my child's emergency contact information must be updated every six months or as needed.

Continued...

The Golden Rule Christian Academy Childcare Agreement

___ I understand that my child's continued enrollment is contingent on a successful transition during the six week probation period.

___ I understand that the Golden Rule is enrolled in the Keystone Stars program and I am expected to comply with the efforts being made to improve the quality of care for my child.

___ I understand that I must complete a Special Care Plan for my child's special needs (i.e. asthma, allergy, eczema)

___ I am providing a copy of my child's IEP or IFSP.

___ I am giving the Golden Rule permission to photograph or video tape my child. These pictures may be used for training, progress, marketing, or publication reasons.

___ I agree to notify the center, as soon as possible, of any changes in who is authorized to pick up my child and to give my access code to any person that I authorize to pick up my child.

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Director's Signature _____ Date _____

