



**SUNSET HEIGHTS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

Faculty And Staff Handbook

SUNSET HEIGHTS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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About Us:

Welcome to Sunset Heights Christian School, nurturing young hearts and minds of pre-K and Kindergarten students for God's glory. With over five decades of service by Iglesia Bautista Estrella de Belen and under Dr. Javier Sotolongo's guidance, we're committed to quality education and spreading the gospel. Our teachers inspire academic excellence, Christian character, and servant leadership, aiming to develop Godly leaders. Join us to empower your child to make a meaningful difference for Jesus Christ.



I. Introducing to SUNSET CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Vision

Our Vision is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world by offering quality education to young girls and boys in our neighborhood.

Mission

Our Mission is to raise up effective Godly leaders with the tools necessary to continue to serve God and their communities throughout their education and life in the name of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy

Our Philosophy is to provide our students with Christlike teachers that will challenge them to academic excellence, Christian character, and servant leadership.

Programs offered

Traditional School-Year Programs (August – May):

Pre-Kindergarten (VPK): Age 4 by September 1st

Kindergarten: Age 5 by September 1st

Hours and Days

The school is open August – May 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. VPK Hours vary depending on enrollment option.

Morning care:

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

VPK Half day enrollment:

8:30AM to 11:30 AM

VPK Full Day enrollment:

8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Kindergarten enrollment:

8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Aftercare Program:

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM



Chapel Service

As part of our curriculum, students will be participating in a weekly Chapel service led by our classroom teachers. This will be a time where classes can get together to worship and spend time learning about God outside of their usual classroom routine. A rotation schedule will be provided at the beginning of the school year, prior to the start of classes. Should there be any concerns or if you would like a date switched, you may communicate it to the teacher you would like to switch with and let the director know. Changes must be communicated and made with enough time in advance.



II. FAMILIES AND COMMUNICATION

Parent-Teacher Communication

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in supporting their child's early education. Families are encouraged to participate in school activities and provide input on a regular basis. The connection between home and school is essential. We ask parents to share information with us; including any changes at home that may affect your child at school. Information shared with the school about families is to be kept confidential. Parents have a variety of options when it comes to learning about their child's day at school. Some avenues used daily include verbally speaking with a teacher, reading posted information on the parent board at the classroom door, emails, Class Tag, and phone calls. Teachers, it is important that you dedicate time to ensure that these avenues are updated, both for the classroom, as well as individual children. Always make sure communication is kept at an appropriate and professional level.

Electronic Communication

Our website, www.sunsetheightscs.org, offers many useful resources. Parents may download forms and current monthly items such as our curriculum, lunch menu and snack menu. It also offers the ability to check their balance, browse our photo studio and view upcoming events.

Parents are required to provide their email addresses so that we may send regular news, updates, and important messages in the event of an emergency. We also encourage parents to follow us on Instagram.

Teacher Code of Conduct

We expect teachers to observe a certain standard of conduct as a part of our school community. The following items are not acceptable while on our campus:

- Physical or verbal punishment of their own children or any other children
- Threatening, harassing, or otherwise disrespecting other staff, parents, or children
- Threatening or obscene gestures, swearing, cursing, or foul language
- Quarreling with other staff or parents
- Making disparaging comments regarding the school to staff, parents, or anyone other than Administration (including outside of school)
- Using contact information of Sunset Heights Christian School families for commercial or any other improper purpose
- Not following policies designated to protect the safety and security of everyone at the school.

Any violation of this policy will result in the termination of the contract with the school.

Grievance Procedure

If you have any concerns regarding a parent or student, you are encouraged to speak directly to the administration or Director of School. Refrain from making any comments to or in the presence of other staff, parents, or students. Solutions can be made when the necessary personnel are involved.

Drop-Off Procedure

Students are to be dropped off at the entrance of the school where a teacher or staff member will guide them to their designated classrooms. Parents may drop off as early as 8:00 AM. For VPK students, the person who drops off the child must sign the child every day with a complete (full legal) signature and time of arrival. It is imperative that the teacher/staff member acknowledges a child's arrival. **Never leave a child unattended.**

Pick up Procedure

Parents must pick up their children by driving up to the designated pick-up area.

The child is to be picked up promptly according to program hours. Children will only be released to adults (18 and older) previously authorized, and picture identification is required for anyone not recognized by our staff.

If the person is not on the authorized pick-up list, the school will have to contact parents before releasing the child to the person picking them up. A complete (full legal) signature and time of departure is required to sign a child out each day if they are in VPK. You must always make sure to acknowledge that parents are taking a child from the designated pick-up area. It is unlawful for a person under the age of 18 (other than a parent), to sign in or out, regardless of their relationship to the child. Therefore, children will not be released to siblings, relatives, or friends under the age of 18.

We take the safety of all children on campus seriously. While children are in our care, we supervise them carefully and enforce rules that pertain to safety. It is important for parents to follow and enforce the same safety rules when picking up their children and moving outside the classrooms, since the children are no longer in our presence. Unaccompanied children are not permitted in the office. Children must be in the company of their parents or guardians when exiting the building. They may not run ahead of their parents when leaving and must have their hand held while in the parking lot.

Half-Day Schedule (VPK)

A half-day schedule option is offered from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM **ONLY** in our VPK Preschool program. Late fees will be charged if students are not picked up by 11:45 AM.

Late Pick-Ups

If parents expect to be late picking up a child, they are to call the school immediately. We understand circumstances can sometimes occur that will cause a parent to be late picking up a child. However, if a parent is frequently late, please inform the office and a meeting will be held with the parents and an Administrator to determine a plan of action. If there is no resolution, dismissal from school may be necessary.

Release of Child

We maintain a strict policy regarding the individuals to whom we will release a child. Enrollment forms require a parent to specify individuals to whom the child may be released.

Advance authorization is required for a child to be released to an individual other than those already listed. It is recommended that parents name everyone who might pick up their child when enrolling and update this information regularly. Only in cases of necessity or emergency should a change be made over the telephone. When notified by telephone, we may request that certain family information be confirmed for verification. The person picking-up the child will be required to present identification when arriving at school.

Should a person other than the child's parent(s) or those indicated arrive to pick up the child, a parent and/or the first available person on the emergency contact form will be notified and the child will not be released until proper authorization is received. Should an unauthorized person

become confrontational or uncooperative with our staff, we will immediately notify the police. **We will not release a child to any parent, relative or other authorized adult who appears to be impaired using drugs or alcohol. In the event this situation occurs, a telephone call will be made to an alternate emergency contact person or the police.**

Core Programs/Aftercare

Full Day Preschool & Kindergarten Program hours are 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM. There will be a 30 minute window for parents to pick up children before they are dropped off in aftercare and a late fee will be charged. If the child remains at school past 3:00 PM, and they are not enrolled in aftercare, parents will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 3:01 PM.

Aftercare will be offered from 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM for an additional fee (See tuition schedule). The school closes promptly at 6:00 PM. If the child remains at school past 6:00 PM, parents will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 6:01 PM. If the child is left at school longer than 30 minutes past the school’s scheduled closing time without contact to the school and the school has exhausted all emergency options from your emergency card, the Hialeah Police Department will be contacted.

Morning Care

Morning care will be available for students that need to be dropped off early for an additional fee. This service is provided from 7:00am- 8:00am. There will be a designated staff member that will cover the 7:00 am -7:30 am shift. A rotation schedule will be provided to teachers for the 7:30am -8:00am morning post. Please make sure to be on time. If you are running late or need to switch with another teacher or staff member because you are unable to make your post, be sure to communicate this as soon as possible to your supervisor.



III. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND DISCIPLINE

Health Assessments

Each child is required to have a current health form on file. The health form must be completed by a physician and must have been conducted within one year prior to the date of enrollment. The form must include a record of up-to-date immunizations and the signature of the child’s physician. The form must be completed and returned before the child’s first day of school. Thereafter, whenever immunization renewal information is needed, parents must update immunizations by bringing in the documentation filled out by the physician. Parents will be given 15 days to update current records. Failure to do so may result in the child being withdrawn from school.

Child Immunization Requirements

Children in Florida are required by law to receive certain immunizations in order to attend public and private elementary and secondary schools, childcare centers, family day care homes, nursery schools, day nurseries, and developmental centers.

Nut-Free Environment

To reduce the risk of severe allergic reactions, our school strives to be “nut-free”. We do not serve peanuts or any nut products. Please do your best to make sure parents do not bring any item into school that contains nuts. If you find that a child’s lunch contains nuts, you will need to contact the parent. The child will be served a school lunch as an alternative, and the parent account will be billed.

Allergies or Special Dietary Needs

If a child has severe allergies that require monitoring and intervention in case of an allergic reaction, please be sure to read the outline of all allergies and the required treatment on the Food Allergy Action Plan form and discuss it with the parents. The allergy information will be attached to all required medication(s) and copies will be made for teachers and student files. If there are additional items a child is allergic to, we will work with parents in trying to prevent the child from encountering the item(s).

Children's Birthdays

All children's birthdays are celebrated at school. We do not make food the focus of any birthday, instead choosing to promote special activities such as games, crafts or singing. In making sure that we adhere to our healthy food guidelines, remember we are a nut-free school. Please keep that in mind if parents decide to bring food items, goodie bags or decorations into the classroom to share with the students. Large balloons/decorations (pinatas, bounce houses, etc.) will not be allowed. Parents will be allowed to participate in their child's special day; however, plans need to be made in advance and coordinated with the classroom teacher so that the celebration does not interrupt important lessons/learning time. For space and safety reasons, no more than 2 parents will be allowed to participate. Birthdays will be celebrated during the child's lunch time in the cafeteria. Recognition of the child's special day varies by classroom, but usually includes a birthday crown and the singing of "Happy Birthday". Teachers will make sure the child feels special and celebrated on their birthday. If parents are having an outside party, to prevent hurt feelings, please advise them not to send party invitations to school unless they are inviting the entire class. To invite only a few children, they can mail the invitation directly to their home or send direct emails to parents.



Incidental Medical Services & Administration of Medicine

Office staff and Administration will provide Incidental Medical Services (IMS) to children for the following:

- Blood-Glucose Monitoring
- Administering inhaled medications
- EpiPen Jr. and EpiPen
- Prescribed and over-the-counter medications

All medications (i.e., prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, lotions/ointments, lip balm, cough drops, etc.) must be in the original package, have the child's name clearly marked on it and will be stored in a medication cabinet or medication refrigerator in the school office. Parents must read and complete an IMS Instruction Form prior to the administration of the first service or dose. All medications must be administered in accordance with the pharmacy or manufacturer's label. Staff administering approved IMS will be trained either by the child's parent or a medical professional prior to administering any IMS. Safety precautions will be taken (i.e., using gloves, a sharps container, etc.). All necessary disposal equipment will be provided by the child's parents. Final disposal of biological materials will be the responsibility of the child's parents. An IMS log will be used to record any services given to a student and will include the date, time, dosage, and administering staff's signature.

No homeopathic ointments are allowed. Medication forms must have a beginning and ending date and can only be kept for a short period of time, except for approved long-term medications held for emergencies. A parent must personally instruct the specific staff member on how to administer the medication to their child according to the attached physician's orders, following all generally accepted safety precautions. The child's parent must communicate any new physician's orders (i.e., dosage changes, etc.) and track expiration dates and replace medicine and/or equipment/supplies as needed. **All medications should be taken and kept in the school office, where it will be administered.** Teachers will **NOT** be authorized to administer any medications in the classrooms, unless absolutely necessary or otherwise previously specified by parents. The office staff must be notified in advance if this is the case.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Weapons-Free Environment

The use of cigarettes, E-cigarettes, vapor devices, and chewing tobacco is not permitted. The possession and/or use of drugs (including marijuana or cannabis infused items), alcohol, or weapons is prohibited. These restrictions apply to all persons on school grounds, including our parking lot, as well as on field trips, outdoor activities, and in school vehicles.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

All personnel working in a licensed childcare facility must report suspected child abuse or neglect. There is a criminal penalty for violation of this reporting law. Teachers are to communicate with administrators prior to calling the Florida Abuse Hotline at 800-962-2873.

Developmental Needs and Special Services

All children have special needs at different stages of their development and require effective accommodations to allow them to attain critical milestones in their life journeys. Certain children may have more needs due to their medical, physical as well as psychological uniqueness or disabilities.

We do our best, within the limits of our professional abilities, to work with children with special needs due to physical, linguistic, mental, and/ or emotional disabilities. A parent must consult with a member of the Administration prior to enrollment if your child has special needs. Despite our best efforts, however, there may be times when participation in our programs, or a group setting in general, will not be in the best interest of a child at the current time.

We are dedicated to helping children achieve their full potential. SHCS teachers have expertise in child development and occasionally identify behavioral or developmental needs in young children that parents may or may not recognize. We work in a shared approach and involve parents in the process of identifying the need and working toward possible solutions. In these instances, our staff may recommend additional observation, professional diagnosis, therapy, or services for the child or family.

We recognize some children may require one-on-one assistance during the day. If parents wish to have an occupational, physical, or speech therapist and/or behavior coach work with a child, at parents own expense, we will work with them to formulate a plan that is in the best interest of the child. We make decisions on whether to allow these arrangements at school on a case-by-case basis, and a limited number of these individuals are allowed on our campus at any one time. Outside support personnel must undergo a background check as required, and meet any other requirements set by SHCS and the state of Florida.

Unfortunately, if we determine a situation is beyond our capacity to assist, or is detrimental to the classroom, we will have to require the parents to make other arrangements and withdraw the child from school. If a child is dismissed from the program, they will assist parents with resources and referrals to assess and evaluate a program that is better fit for the child's developmental needs.

Basic First Aid

In normal supervised play, children occasionally get injured. In case of a minor injury or accident, staff will administer basic first aid. Any cuts will be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water; ice will be applied to any bruises, bites, or other injuries. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented onto a Child Incident Report and provided to parents when the child is picked-up at the end of the day.

We may call and ask parents' permission to apply a topical antibiotic or anti-itch ointment as necessary to treat or prevent infection in minor skin wounds or alleviate itching.

Emergency Medical Care

In case of a medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), we will call 911. All staff have been trained in Pediatric and Adult First Aid and CPR and will administer it as appropriate. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified.

In case of an injury or accident in which an ambulance is not needed, but immediate professional care is required, we will contact the child's parents. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency contacts will be notified. Staff cannot transport children to a hospital or doctor's office. Injured children shall be transported for medical aid by parents or by calling 911 for an ambulance. The child may be transported to a hospital by ambulance for emergency treatment when necessary.

Emergency Procedures

We have emergency procedures in-place and practice regular fire, earthquake and lockdown drills with staff and children. In case of a fire, there is a central fire alarm that may be activated. Exit routes are posted with procedures by classroom exit doors. Teachers need to make sure to take with them an updated student roster that has parent contact information and account for all students as they are exiting the building and once they reach designated waiting areas. Two fire extinguishers are located in the hallways and one in the kitchen, which are inspected regularly. Classrooms are equipped with both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

In case of an emergency, our staff will be acting in the best interests of the children. Children's safety is always our priority. In the event of such an emergency, parents will be contacted at the first opportunity and given information and instructions.

We will conduct monthly fire and lock down drills to help prepare staff and students on what to do in the event of an emergency situation.

Illnesses and Accidents

Parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children when they show symptoms of any deviation from normal health. Children will not be permitted at our school if they are not well or with any one or more of the following conditions:

1. **Fever of 100 degrees or higher.**
2. **Any communicable disease or contagious infection.**
3. **Vomiting within the past 24 hours.**
4. **Diarrhea – three or more loose bowel movements in a 24-hour period.**
5. **Undiagnosed rash.**
6. **Eye discharge or Pink Eye; children can be readmitted after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection, or after 24-hours on an antibiotic treatment.**
7. **Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.**
8. **Open sores and scabs, unless properly covered and 24-hours on an antibiotic treatment.**
9. **Head Lice – until treatment is effective and a follow-up evaluation has been made by our staff.**
10. **Any one or more of the following: earache, signs of irritability or confusion, sore throat.**

When a child becomes ill or injured at school, the staff's priority is to meet the child's physical health needs. In case of illness, we will take the child's temperature, as well as perform an overall visual health assessment. A phone call to parents will be made when the school deems it necessary. If parents are requested by the school to pick up their sick child, they must do so within one hour, and the child may not return to school for 24 hours following the time sent home and until the symptoms subside.

Parents are advised to make alternate plans for care if the child becomes ill and is not able to attend school. If a sick child is not picked up within one hour of being called, we may call your alternate contact to request pick up. Failure to pick up a sick child in a timely manner, or disregard of this policy by parents, may result in the removal of your child from school.

While a physician's note may be helpful, it does not guarantee that a child may return to school. Final decisions on allowing a child to return are made by an Administrator.



Discipline

While some behaviors are typical for a specific "age and stage", we recognize that children learn appropriate social behaviors at different rates. With that in mind, we observe and make individual behavior plans when necessary.

We believe in "positive discipline", which focuses on positive behavior, rather than negative. We may need to redirect children and speak with them about appropriate behavior. When necessary, we speak to a child with a firm but caring voice. At times, it may be necessary to remove a child from the rest of the group. If a behavior persists, we will arrange a conference with the child's parents.

The following techniques are to be used according to age-appropriateness and the individual needs of each child:

- **Distraction and redirection:** Suggest appropriate behavior (we never use time-outs).
- **A quiet, private talk:** Showing respect for children's feelings, getting down on the child's level, looking at the child directly in the eye and giving him or her our undivided attention.
- **Praise:** Catch the child making "good choices"; praising the child when behaving appropriately.
- **Indirect praise:** Praise the child who is next to the child who may be having trouble.
- **By using examples:** When asking children to use calm voices, use a whisper voice.
- **Arrange contingencies (if/ then statements):** For example, we might say, "If you finish putting the blocks away, then we can..."
- **Redirection to another area:** Redirection is done in a positive manner. Teachers give a forewarning of behavior that needs to be corrected. When the child is not following direction and is demonstrating inappropriate behavior, teachers follow through with redirection to another area in the classroom or yard. If the child persists with inappropriate behavior, the teacher will shadow the child until the child is ready to resume play in an appropriate manner. Once the child is ready to resume play, the teacher will explain to the child why he or she was removed from the area and redirected to another area. The teacher will discuss with the child how to make better choices.
- Staff guide children in learning and expressing socially appropriate behavior that is individual to that child.
- Children are given a 5-minute warning when transitioning from one activity to another.
- **Questioning vs. Telling:** Teachers may ask the child a question such as, "What kind of voice should we use inside?" or "How do we treat our classmates?"

Aggressive or Disruptive Behavior in Children

We are committed to making our environment as safe as possible for your child. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others and non-aggressive problem-solving between children. Behaviors such as biting, tantrums, defiance, sharing conflicts, or physical aggression may occasionally occur in young children. These types of undesirable behavior can sometimes occur before an adult can intervene, despite our best efforts and it is occurring right next to a supervising teacher. Aggressive Behavior includes, but is not limited to biting, hitting, pushing, sharing conflicts, other physical aggression or in any way provoking an altercation. In older children this may include verbal abuse or inappropriate language. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to when a child requires extensive one-on-one teacher behavioral intervention, is disrespectful to adults, has recurring tantrums, willfully does not listen, or follow instruction, is frequently unkind to classmates, or regularly disrupts the atmosphere in the classroom.

We will be working with parents to teach children to participate, cooperate, and be a responsible member of the group. If a child's behavior places the child or other children in danger or interferes with the focus of the classroom, our policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- When necessary, we speak to a child with a firm but caring voice. At times, it may be necessary to remove the child from the rest of the group.
- Teachers and staff are never to lay their hands on a child. Teachers are encouraged to call an administrator to intervene when necessary.
- If a child is brought to the front office due to their behavior and cannot return to the classroom for the safety of the other children, the child's own welfare, or the inability of the classroom to function without disruption, the child must be picked up within one hour of the phone call notifying the parent of the need to pick up their child.
- We may ask parents to pick up the child and keep him or her home for a period of one day to one week.
- Staff will document a record of behavior.
- Staff will inform and discuss with parents any child's behavior which is persistently disruptive and is not alleviated by individualized guidance techniques.
- If the behavior persists, a member of the Administration will notify the parent that the teacher has requested intervention.
- The Director of School or Administrator will speak with the parents, discuss possible courses of action, then a plan will be designed and agreed upon by the school and parents.

We want the child to be a successful and responsible individual and we need to work with parents should any problem arise. If parents are unable to provide support, or even with the parent's support the plan fails to improve the behavior, the school reserves the right to withdraw the child. If at any time we feel the behavior is a danger to other children or that the child needs more dedicated supervision, we will require the immediate withdrawal of the child until he or she is able to manage the undesirable behavior. If one child constantly harasses another, either verbally or physically, we

will contact the parents of both children. It is our policy in any written or verbal report about an incident involving more than one child that we will not share the name of the other child involved with parents.



IV. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Security

We take security concerns very seriously. We regularly monitor situations that would affect the safety and security of our children and make plans accordingly. We will keep parents up to date when specific situations arise. We have evacuation and emergency response plans in place to best protect our children and staff. We conduct regular fire, earthquake, and lockdown drills. Our main front entry door is locked to prevent unauthorized access onto the premises. For security reasons we ask that you not hold the door open for other individuals. Visitors must wait to be admitted by a staff member. Video and audio recording devices are located throughout the school for observation and security. If you have questions about these and other security systems in place, please talk to a member of the Administration.

Parking and Speed Limit

Parents may park in any available space in our lot. Please observe any posted parking restrictions. Please follow these important rules:

- The parking lot has one entrance and one exit. Enter and exit the parking lot in the proper direction.
- Your speed limit through the parking lot should not exceed 5 miles per hour. Drive at a slow speed, allowing you to stop quickly if necessary.
- Refrain from the use of cell phones while driving in the parking lot and while loading and unloading children.

- In the event of any accident, please notify the office immediately. The parking lot is always monitored by video cameras and a security guard as well.
- Children must always have their hands held in the parking lot and be accompanied by the adult dropping them off or picking them up from school.
- Children may not be left unattended in the parking lot or in a car.
- Only park in designated parking spaces including within the “drop-off” zones.
- Carefully check behind and around you before backing up.
- Do not block other parking spaces and please be mindful of parking accurately within the lines.

Playground Activities and Safety

Children learn through active use of their senses and many great opportunities for learning occur outdoors. The playground is an educational environment and an extension of the classroom. Outdoor play allows children to learn about their physical capabilities and the world around them. Social skills are also developed by organized and informal play.

Children will be reminded to use equipment as it is intended to be used and will never be allowed to engage in hazardous play of any kind. Redirection, distraction, praise, and other techniques of positive discipline will be used when necessary to discourage unsafe play. Teachers are to make sure to monitor children closely when playing outside. To ensure the safety of the children, use of cellphones is prohibited during this time.



Formal Child Assessments

Formal Child Assessments are conducted biannually. These assessments help parents to understand where their child is in his or her development, and what areas can be strengthened. We incorporate both informal and standardized assessments during the year, as well as noting the individuality of each child relative to his or her own progress. Teachers’ observations of a child reflect the child’s growth and needs, both as an individual and as part of a group. These assessments guide us, as educators, in developing our curriculum so that it matches the needs of the children in each age- group.

Parent-Teacher Conferences may be held if we have a concern about a child’s development, or to discuss results of any assessments given. Conferences may be requested at other times by either parents or teachers as the need arises.

Restroom Policy

Our VPK and Kindergarten classrooms do not offer diaper-changing and therefore, children in this age group and up may not wear diapers at school. A child must be fully potty-trained to enroll. Children in this program must be able to use the toilet independently and should be able to manage most personal hygiene needs themselves. Teachers will not be allowed to assist with any restroom needs. If we find that after admission into the preschool (or older) program the child has frequent accidents, and is therefore not fully potty-trained, parents will be contacted, and the child will not be able to attend school until they demonstrate an ability to use the toilet independently. Tuition will continue to be due in these circumstances.

Parents need to ensure that we have extra underwear, multiple changes of clothing, and a spare pair of shoes each day in case of the occasional potty accident. We ask that the child be dressed in “child friendly” clothing. The best items for children to wear are shorts and pants with elastic waistbands. Please avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, as these are difficult for children to remove quickly.



Dress code/Uniform Policy

- White or Royal Blue Short Sleeve Polo Shirt with SHCS School Logo
- White Button Down shirt for Chapel day
- Royal blue tie (boys) & cross tie (girls) for chapel days
- Navy Blue or Khaki Pull-Up Skort (knee-length) **(Girls only)**
- Navy Blue or Khaki Pull-Up Pants

If not in regulation, a call home will be made.

- ✗ No hats, sweatbands, bandanas, or combs are to be worn.
- ✗ Uniforms must be purchased from the official uniform company.
- ✗ No pins, buttons, or clothing, considered by the administration to be of an offensive nature, will be permitted in school or at school related functions.
- ✗ The uniform shirt or blouse must be worn even if a jacket or sweatshirt is worn over it. It must be tucked in.

The child's name should be placed on all clothes either with a permanent marker or label. In addition, an extra set of clothes must be kept in each child's backpack should a change be necessary. When used, the clothing will be placed into a plastic bag to be taken home and washed, and a notice will be sent home to parents.



Children's Belongings

The school cannot be responsible for the safekeeping of any personal belongings brought to school, including clothing items. Clothing and any personal possessions should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Teachers must make sure to communicate this to parents prior to the start of the school year.

Naptime

Individual cots are provided for children in our full day VPK program only. It is a licensing requirement that children under the age of 5 attending full-day programs be provided with an opportunity to nap or rest without disturbance from other activities. Preschool nap mats should be provided for every child, by their parents for naptime (See supply list for nap mat requirements). Please make sure all items sent from home are labeled with the child's name.

It is the parent's responsibility to bring nap items in at the beginning of the child's week and take them home to be laundered at the week's end. Nap time is from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM. Teachers, it is during this time that you may take a 30 minute lunch break. You may leave the classroom if needed but do not exceed the 30 minutes and please make sure to sign in/out at the office with a timestamp.

Meals and Snacks

Lunch may be brought from home, pre-purchased through the school office, or purchased in the cafeteria during lunch hours. Students may only purchase alternative meals and not from the main-meal option if lunch has not been pre-purchased. Make sure to submit the lunch registration forms BEFORE the date they are due, otherwise student's only option for lunch that month will be from the alternative menu. If you see a student has not previously paid for lunch and they did not bring food, please contact the main office and parent as soon as possible to inform them that student will be given an alternative meal and they will be charged to their account.

The child's lunch should be in a lunch box clearly identified with the child's name on the outside as well as on any containers inside. Food and drinks should be in containers that will keep them cold or hot as needed. For safety reasons, teachers and staff are not allowed to reheat a child's meal. Extra snacks should be brought from home, especially if students are enrolled in full day & after care.

If parents would like to donate snacks/drinks to the students class, please communicate with the teacher as to what you would like to bring. Please remember we are a Nut-free school.

Lunch time will be from 11:00 AM-11:30 AM.

Photography

In our classrooms, photos are an essential communication tool for teachers, parents, and staff throughout the school year. We regularly hear from parents about how much they appreciate receiving these photos from the teachers. Photos help prompt parents with talking points about their children's day, which is important because many students (especially the very young) do not always articulate what they did at school or what they are learning. So, to help parents understand the types of things their children are doing and learning, we share classroom photos with the classroom communication app, in emails, or on our Instagram/website. To take these photos, we need a photo waiver signed, which is why we include it on the Admission Agreement:

"I hereby grant, without limitation, permission for the use of any photographs of my child in any printed or online material for the school".

Because photos are an essential communications tool between teachers and parents, we do not offer a general option to opt out of the photo waiver. Consistency in this policy ensures that each child may fully participate in all our educational and social activities. In the classroom, as photos are taken of children, an "opted out" child would be required to stop what he or she is doing and be removed from the area so that they would not be in any of those photos. However, if there is a parent that insists on their child not being photographed, please inform the office staff and let them know.

Additionally, photos are often taken during group activities. Most parents appreciate having pictures of their children with their friends doing fun things in school and on field trips, and it gives parents a chance to see what their child experienced that day.

For privacy, parents may not take photographs or videos of children other than their own at school, except when participating in large group activities together or during all-school events.



Anti-Bias/Multicultural Policy

Our programs teach children to challenge discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes while increasing respect and understanding for others. We incorporate a culturally diverse/anti-bias philosophy in our curriculum and classroom materials. Our diverse families are one of our best resources. Additionally, we encourage our children to participate in culturally relevant activities. We train staff to be culturally sensitive when interacting with children and families within our program.

Outside Engagement of Sunset Heights Christian School Staff

SHCS Preschool discourages, does not support, and does not sanction the practice of families engaging the services of any of our employees for babysitting, or any other paid or unpaid services. If a teacher or staff member is engaged by a family, we do not, in any way, warrant or guarantee the suitability of the person for this purpose. SHCS Preschool shall not be responsible, in any way, for such arrangement nor shall we be responsible, in any way, for any disputes of any kind and nature, which may arise between you - including any claims, injury, or damage to the family, the minor child/children, the employee or either's property.

Teachers should not be babysitting children that are currently enrolled in their classroom. While engaged by the family, the employee shall be considered an employee of the family and not an employee of SHCS Preschool. Any conduct that occurs during such time, including but not limited to any transportation to and from school, are outside responsibilities and duties as an employee of the family.



V. EMPLOYEE ABSENCE



Personal/Sick Leave

Full-time employees will receive eight (8) days of paid sick leave per school year. Permanent, part-time employees will receive sick leave equivalent to each employee's individual work week per school year. These days are intended to cover periods of sickness or personal days for the employee. Personal/Sick days are cumulative from year to year. Time off will be deducted in hourly increments.

Request For Leave Procedures

Sunset Heights Christian School employees should notify the Administration or their immediate Supervisor as far in advance as possible when they plan on being absent from work for any reason, know they will be late, or must leave early. Notification should include an indication of when the employee can be expected to return to work.

Scheduling Leave

To schedule Leave, employees must request leave by filling out a form provided by the office. The Principal or Supervisor will make the decision as to whether the time off will be approved. In the case of scheduling known medical days off, requests should be submitted a minimum of ten (10) days in advance for approval. Once approved or declined, the employee will be notified as soon as possible. Should the employee be ill or have an emergency and the time off has not been scheduled in advance, the employee should follow the same procedure, as well as calling or texting the Principal or Supervisor's preferred number.

Except in cases of emergency, employees must request Personal Leave at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of each anticipated absence, but preferably a minimum of ten (10) days in advance. Personal leave may not be used within the first two (2) weeks of the school year or at the beginning or end of an extended holiday such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Spring Break, except upon pre-approval of the Administration.

Personal leave in May is discouraged; however, it may be permitted with the pre-approval of the Administration. For each absence that is more than the number allowed, the employee's pay at the end of the year will be reduced by their scheduled rate of pay.

Leaving The Premises During the School Day

Employees of Sunset Heights Christian School may leave the school premises during the school day during their prep and/or lunch periods. Should they choose to do so, they must sign in/out at the school office when leaving the premises and returning to the premises. Please note that all employees must return to their assigned areas on time for their scheduled classes or duties.





VI. GENERAL EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS



Personal Appearance

All employees of SHCS should present a professional image to students and the general public. Good grooming and appearance are important to receiving and interacting with people. Favorable personal appearance is an ongoing requirement of employment with SHCS. Attire should be appropriate for a school setting, modeling modesty and acceptable attire for our students, their families, and the community. In light of this, attire should be modestly fitting, footwear should be clean and in excellent condition, and hair should be clean and styled. Tattoos must be completely covered while at school or at school functions. In addition, SHCS employees should adhere to the following gender-specific guidelines:

Guidelines For Women

1. Skirts/dresses must be worn no shorter than two (2) inches above the knee.
2. Business-style pants are permitted and must fit appropriately as intended.
3. Leggings, running tights, or tight-fitting yoga pants that are worn alone are not permitted. (Leggings may be worn under dresses/tunics that are no shorter than two (2) inches above the knee.)
4. Jeans and jean-material pants may only be worn on dress-down days.
5. Earrings are the only pierced jewelry permitted.

Guidelines For Men

1. Business professional dress (e.g., dress shirt or school polo and khaki pants or dress pants) should be worn.
2. Jeans and jean-material pants may only be worn on dress-down days.
3. Sideburns, mustaches, and beards, etc., should be neatly trimmed.
4. Pierced jewelry may not be worn.

Guidelines For Dress Down Days

Sunset Heights Christian School holds scheduled Dress Down Days the last day of school each week and other periodically approved Dress Down days as well. On such occasions, employees are still expected to present a modest and neat appearance. SHCS dress down apparel or the school colors of Royal Blue, Navy Blue or White may be worn as well as athletic shoes.

SHCS Technology/Network Use

The Sunset Heights Christian School technology network includes computers, both networked and standing alone, imaging equipment, on-line access, all software, and equipment. GCA technology is established for the educational use of SHCS students. The use of the network is a privilege and not a right. The school regulates access to and use of its computers by principles consistent with the educational mission of the school and the rules and expectations published in this handbook. Some classrooms at SHCS are equipped with desktop computers. These desktop computers are purchased with auxiliary funds, and, thus, must be earmarked for student use. As a result, these computers must not be kept on the teacher desk but must be kept on a secondary location which is available for student use. Teachers and Staff should monitor computer usage to assure that SHCS Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) are being followed and that all laptops are properly logged off and plugged in before returning the cart.

Internet Guidelines

1. Users are required to avoid actions which are illegal or unkind, i.e., libel, slander, vandalism, sexual harassment, theft, inappropriate access, personal attacks, invasion of privacy, etc.
2. Chain letters, pyramid schemes, forwarding or replying to contests, fast cash schemes, mass mailings, and things of similar content are highly wasteful of network resources and are forbidden.
3. Employees found in willful and/or persistent violation of these guidelines will have their privileges revoked and may face further disciplinary action. This includes liability for the employee for all costs necessary to remedy the problem created. The Administration reserves the right to make further disciplinary decisions regarding abuse, as deemed necessary.
4. Employees may not use SHCS technology to access inappropriate materials found on the internet.
5. Employees may not access Facebook, Twitter, Instant Messenger, Instagram, etc. during school hours.

In addition, employees may not access YouTube or any other similar sites, except for educational purposes. Accidentally accessing inappropriate sites must be reported to the Administration. SHCS has made and will continue to make every effort to block inappropriate sites by using software designed for that purpose. However, there is no software that offers one hundred percent protection from inappropriate materials; and, therefore, employees must exercise responsibility and integrity when using on-line services.

Internet Usage

Generally, the following hierarchy will prevail in governing access to the internet:

1. Class work, assigned and supervised by a faculty member.
2. Class work, specifically assigned but individually conducted.
3. Training.

The internet has no central authority, so each site is responsible for its users. Complaints received from other sites or from individuals regarding any of our users will be fully investigated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken as the situation merits. Cyber-bullying is considered inappropriate internet usage.

Preservation Of Resources

Sunset Heights Christian School reserves the right to require the purging of files to regain space if necessary. Employee use of resources is governed by the expectations of common courtesy and mutual respect, which govern the other rules of the school. Users having the more pressing need for the resources have priority. Teachers are expected to partner with the Administration in limiting non-educational usage of provided technology and network resources.

Cell Phone Usage & Abuse

Teacher Cell Phone Usage: Teachers should avoid the use of cell phones during regular teaching time. In emergency situations, teachers may alert the main office or another available staff member in the area, should a call come in during class time and they may need to step out to take the call. Text-bullying or sexting are inappropriate behaviors. Text messages should always reflect Christian values.

Media Usage Policy

Software: The knowledgeable use of pirated software is strictly prohibited. Also, Staff may not install software on school-owned computers without approval from the Administration. SHCS owns site licenses for several key software packages and programs.

Movies: All Hollywood-produced movies that are PG-rated or above must be approved by the principal and the parents. A permission slip should go home at least two (2) days in advance of viewing, and children who have not been granted permission to watch a movie should not stay with the class during the movie. If a parent does not give permission for a student to watch a movie, teachers should provide an alternative to the movie that is either fun or educational so that the child does not feel punished. It is suggested that potential Hollywood movies be checked on the following websites: <http://www.pluggedin.com/movies.aspx> and www.commonsemmedia.org.

Music: Since SHCS is a Christian school, all Staff should be very cautious about the use of secular music. While students may claim to not listen to lyrics, we must be the guardians of words promoted and/or endorsed by SHCS. Secular music should be evaluated for content to be sure we are not giving mixed messages. Included among the many websites to check lyrics is <http://www.pluggedin.com/music.aspx>.

Social Media: While SHCS cannot restrict what employees or students post on social media, employees are expected to always adhere to confidentiality policies. Each employee must understand that they are a representation of SHCS, both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition, employees must avoid violating anti-harassment policies or posting something that might make collaboration with colleagues more difficult (e.g., Hate speech against groups colleagues may belong to). In general, employees should follow these guidelines:

- Be respectful and polite when posting to social media.
- Ensure that posts do not contradict the philosophies and beliefs of SHCS.
- Remember that Social Media posts, even those that are marked private, may be seen by our students, parents, other employees, and Administration.
- Be aware that questionable social media posts will reflect poorly on not only the employee, but also on SHCS and may result in disciplinary consequences.

Acknowledgement of Sunset Heights Christian School Faculty & Staff Handbook

I acknowledge that I have signed a copy of the Sunset Heights Christian School handbook, and I understand that it is my obligation to read the handbook and to understand what it says.

Faculty & Staff Signature

Date