



Good Shepherd Children's Home  
P.O. Box 519 ● Murfreesboro, TN 37130  
Phone: (615) 896-1459 ● Office: (615) 900-4698  
Email: info@gsch.net ● Website: www.gsch.net

## Parent Packet

### Admission Requirements:

Admission of a young person to the Good Shepherd Children's Home is based on his/her willingness to come, and is subject to an interview with the Director and House Parents of the Home, and availability of openings.

1. An Application for Admission must be completed fully and accurately and be returned to the Director of the Good Shepherd Children's Home.
2. No child is considered for admission until all of his/her required forms have been completed and returned and an interview has been conducted. After the interview has been conducted, the Director and/or House Parents will prayerfully consider whether or not the Good Shepherd Children's Home will be the best fit for your child.
3. Once a child has been accepted into the program of the Good Shepherd Children's Home, the parent/guardian should withdraw the child from their current school using the School Withdrawal and Transfer of Transcripts Form included in this Parent Packet. Each child will be placed into school in a timely manner. Upon acceptance to the Home, a completed Physical Examination will also need to be added to the child's file.

### What does GSCH ask of the family?

We want the family to be actively involved. We strongly believe a child needs to be connected to his/her family. Research shows that the more involved a family is with children in placement, the more successful the placement.

Family involvement means:

- Regular contact with the child by phone and through visitation.
- Family participation in planning goals for the child.
- Participation in family counseling, if necessary.
- Working together to help the child comply with rules and to meet program expectations, including the development of productive behaviors and life skill competencies.

We ask that the family share all pertinent information with GSCH Staff. We can only serve the child and family if we have a good understanding of the issues affecting the family and contributing to the need for out-of-home placement. The sharing of information starts with the application process and continues through phone conferences, progress reviews, and meetings. We also ask that the family keep us informed of any changes that may have an impact on the child's behavior or placement.

We want your experience with the Good Shepherd Children's Home to be both helpful and productive. To accomplish this, we must work together.

The Good Shepherd Children's Home is an ALCOHOL-FREE and SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS. Please refrain from any alcohol and tobacco use while you are on campus.



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### Parental Information

1. Parents/guardians should supply the Good Shepherd Children's Home with all available information concerning the child, his/her physical health, habits, experience, academic progress, and background.
2. Parents/guardians should participate in planning for the child where appropriate. A child may remain in the program after their 18th birthday if he/she so chooses with approval of the Executive Board of Directors.
3. Parents/Guardians should keep the GSCH administration aware of any changes in address or family status.
4. In an effort to better monitor the child's activities and their behavior, we ask that parents/guardians not give gifts, including money, directly to the child without permission. If permission has not been granted, parents/guardians may leave gifts and contributions with the Director and/or House Parents to be distributed at his/their discretion.
5. Based on your financial abilities and as agreed upon, parents/guardians should financially support the GSCH each month for the duration of the child's stay.
6. Parents/guardians should visit their child in keeping with the regulations of the GSCH, as laid out in the Visitor's Guidelines and Schedule Form.
7. Parents/guardians may exercise the right of consultation with the Director and/or House Parents in planning for the child, his/her release from care, his/her health, conduct, general development, and education.
8. As a Christian organization, the Good Shepherd Children's Home makes it a policy to regularly attend services at their local church. Children residing at the Home are expected to attend along with the House Parents. All discipline is held according to Biblical standards.
9. It is the policy of the Home that Staff read all incoming and outgoing mail of the children. This is to ensure that no questionable or inappropriate correspondence is sent to or received from the child. Any mail that is not delivered to the child will be held in their respective file until discharge from the Home.
10. The GSCH Staff is required to search all personal belongings when the child enters the GSCH and when the child returns from visits, and to search personal belongings when the child sends items home and when he/she leaves the program. (All personal belongings of the child are subject to random checks any time GSCH Staff deems necessary.)



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## Doctrinal Statement of Faith

We believe the King James Version of the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God for the English-speaking people.

1. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
2. We believe in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, and in His personal return in power and glory.
3. We believe that men become children of God by true repentance, turning from sin and turning to Christ the Savior. True repentance results in a changed life and seeking to live according to the will of God.
4. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
5. We believe in the spiritual unity of true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ and that all believers are members of His church.
6. We believe man was created by God, in His image, but born with a sinful nature because of the fall of man. We believe that all mankind is under God's righteous judgment.
7. We believe that Heaven is a real place where all people who believe in Christ as their personal Savior will enter and that Hell is a real place where those who die in unbelief will enter. We believe the Lord will come again to receive those who believe in Him.
8. We believe that all Christians are called by the Lord to live holy as He is holy, to be servants among men, and to win others to Christ.



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## Discipline Policy

### **POLICIES**

The purpose of any kind of behavioral management method is to educate and train the child in self-discipline. No type of behavioral management shall be allowed which violates the child's personal rights and damages self-esteem.

All discipline must be reasonable and responsible related to the child's understanding, need, and level of behavior. Encouragement and praise of good behavior is often more effective than punishment, and is a must in disciplining a child. The child's acceptance of discipline and his/her ability to profit by it depends largely upon his/her feeling that he/she is liked, accepted, and respected.

A copy of the Discipline Policy will be given to all residents, parents/guardians, and Staff.

The following forms of punishment must not be used:

- Cruel and unusual punishment
- Assignment of excessive or inappropriate work
- Denial of meals and daily needs
- Verbal abuse, ridicule, or humiliation
- Permitting a child to punish another child
- Chemical or mechanical restraints
- Yelling
- Threatening
- Shaking of a child
- Depriving a child of love or sleep
- Denial of planned visits, phone calls, or mail contacts with family

Kinds of behavioral management methods which are allowed include:

- Restriction of privileges
- Time out
- Meaningful work
- Natural and logical consequences
- Physical restraint
- Isolation
- Corporal correction

Because GSCCH has a corporal correction policy, there must be written consent of the child's parent/guardian before administering such corporal correction.



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## **PROCEDURES**

The purpose of teaching is to help the children mobilize and build upon their own strengths, to help them develop their own sense of right and wrong, and to help them learn that a life lived in accordance with certain standards of conduct is more fulfilling in the long run than a life lived merely by impulse.

Discipline includes all of the activities and techniques for helping a child grow into a self-directing individual. It includes teaching, explaining, rewarding and correcting.

Producing behavioral management will take into account what the child is capable of doing, what the child needs from adults, and what will help the child to learn and grow from the experience. To be effective as a manager of behavior, Staff must have a good awareness of self, good understanding of each child's stage of development, be an effective communicator and respond instead of react to the need of the child.

Once a Staff member decides that it is necessary to intervene due to a child's behavior, the following should be carried out:

1. The consequences of incidents shall be worked through at the time of the incidents to which they gave rise, or as soon as possible afterwards. Children must be told why they are being disciplined. Only the child who has committed an infraction should be present during the administration of discipline to minimize embarrassment. Should a child misbehave beyond childish pranks, the House Parents should meet with the child and discuss the prank and make the child aware of the disadvantages of his/her actions.
2. More severe misbehavior warrants that privileges are taken away and a child is sent to their room. Sometimes manual labor is warranted. The child may then be expected to scrub tiles, clean the yard or the bathroom, or do other "extra" household chores that the Staff member deems appropriate. The consequence should always match the offense.
3. Actively listen to the child and assure they will be safe and not harmed in any way.
4. Be consistent!
5. Give encouragement freely and use criticism sparingly.
6. Any behavior out of the scope of "normal" should be duly noted in a Progress Note and placed in the child's file. If the incident warrants, an Incident Report may also be filled out. If something seems odd, it probably is.

If a child's behavior warrants corporal correction, implementation of the punishment should be as follows:

1. The offense will be clearly discussed with the child.
2. A Staff member should discuss spiritual applications and pray with the child.
3. There should always be two Staff persons present in the room any time punishment is being administered to a child.
4. A reasonable number of firm strokes to the child's bottom, not to exceed five (5), will be administered by a Staff member, using a simple, flat paddle.
5. A Discipline Report should be filled out and placed in the child's file.

Each child reacts to situations differently. From time to time, the emotional baggage that children carry happens to get the best of them. That's when a child needs help from the Staff to manage his/her feelings and often his/her behavior.



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Each Staff member providing supervision of children is responsible for dealing with the child in an appropriate way when situation calls for the Staff person to intervene. Although each Staff member stands as an authority figure, the discipline of the children is the responsibility of the House Parents and, as necessary, the Director.

#### Running Away From the Home

In the case of children running away, the Police are to be immediately notified. After the Police are notified, the Director should be notified and an Incident Report placed in the child's file. Once the child is found and if they are willing to abide by the rules and guidelines of the Home, they may be allowed to return at the discretion of the Director and House Parents. Should there be a repeat incident within a short period of time, it is advised that a more suitable placement be found for the child, as the Home will not tolerate such behavior to be repeated. Not only does this kind of behavior inconvenience the Staff, but it also causes unnecessary stress on other residents of the Home.

Each child has the privilege of staying at the Home as long as they respect authority, their peers, and themselves. The Home strives to educate and train the children in self-discipline, and to create a safe, positive, loving, caring and Christ-centered environment for children. The ultimate goal is to help each child develop his or her own sense of right and wrong.

#### Criminal Behavior

In the event any child commits a crime (e.g. robbery, assault, threat, etc.), the Police are to be notified immediately. Subsequently, the Director should be notified and an Incident Report placed in the child's file.

Each violation will be reviewed by the Director and House Parents to determine appropriate punishment. In some cases, a more suitable placement may be found for the child.

#### Substance Abuse

The Good Shepherd Children's Home reserves the right to administer random drug testing on any child placed at the Home.

In the event any child is found to be in possession of or have used drugs or alcohol (to include illegal drugs, prescription drugs, pot/weed, huffing, and/or other forms of recreational drug use), that child is subject to immediate dismissal from the Home. The Director should be notified at once and an Incident Report should be placed in the child's file. Once the decision has been made to remove the child from the Home, the parents/guardians who placed the child at the Home should be notified to come pick up the child.

#### Sexual Misconduct

Due to the fact that the Good Shepherd Children's Home is a family-style home, the Home maintains a strict policy relating to interaction between boys and girls.

At no time should boys and girls ever be left alone for any length of time without proper supervision of a Staff member. Children should be supervised not only at the Home, but during events and outings away from the Home as well.

In the event of sexual misconduct by a child at the Home, the Director should be notified and an Incident Report placed in the child's file. The Director and House Parents shall determine appropriate punishment for the offense. If the behavior becomes problematic, that child's behavior will be reviewed by the Director and House Parents to determine if a more suitable placement will need to be found for the child.



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## Visitation Guidelines

1. Children are permitted to leave the GSCH residence only with persons on their Approved Visitors List, or persons the Director and/or House Parents deem appropriate.
2. Children in the care of Good Shepherd Children's Home will not be released to anyone who cannot safely care for the child(ren). GSCH will deny off-campus visitation if the driver of the vehicle transporting the child(ren) does not have a valid driver's license and/or is under the age of 21. Visitation may be denied if there is suspicion of drug or alcohol use by any person in the vehicle. No person who is suspected of being under the influence of such a substance will be allowed to operate a vehicle on the GSCH campus.
3. Gifts given are to be approved by the Director/House Parents prior to gifting to any child.
4. Children are to be properly secured in an individual seat belt or in a child passenger restraint system. The child restraint system is to be appropriate to the height, weight, and physical condition of the child, according to the manufacturer's instructions and should be properly installed and maintained. Each seat belt is to fit snugly across the child's hips or securely anchored car seat.

Following are the Seat Belt Laws for the State of Tennessee:

- Children age 12 years and younger are prohibited from sitting in the front seat of an airbag-equipped passenger vehicle unless an airbag cut-off switch is installed and activated or if the vehicle has airbags equipped with weight sensitive devices.
  - Children **under 1** year of age (or any child weighing 20 pounds or less) must be secured in a child passenger restraint system in a rear facing position, in a rear seat (if available).
  - Children **ages 1-3** and weighing *more than* 20 pounds must be secured in a child safety seat in a forward facing position in the rear seat (if available), or according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
  - Children **ages 4-8** who measure less than 4'9" in height must be secured in a belt-positioning booster seat system in the rear seat of the vehicle (if available). If the child is not between the ages of 4-8, but is less than four 4'9" in height, he/she must still use a seat belt.
  - Children **ages 9-12** (or any child through 12 years of age) measuring 4'9" or more in height must be secured in a seat belt. It is recommended that any child under age 12 be placed in the rear seat (if available). If the child is not between the ages of 9-12, but is 4'9" or more in height, he/she must still use a seat belt.
  - Children **age 13-18** must wear seat belts.
5. The GSCH Administration has a policy against taking children to secular music concerts and movies. We ask that anyone taking a child for visitation please abide by this policy as well.
  6. The Children's Home dress code should be followed by the children while on visitation.
  7. The first Saturday of every month is set aside as a Visitors Saturday. Children are to be picked up by 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and returned to the Home (preferably fed) by 6:00 p.m. the same day. We do understand that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances, but please call to let us know if they will be late. Failure to call, or being habitually late may result in the loss of this privilege. Children are not permitted to spend the night and should be returned to the Home at the scheduled time unless given permission from the Director and/or House Parents. Visits on other days must be scheduled in advance and approved by the House Parents and/or Director.
  8. We are responsible for the welfare of the children placed in our care. If we suspect that any child is endangered or is in an atmosphere that is unsuitable for children, the Children's Home has the right to forbid anyone to take a child or children on visitation. This includes parents and grandparents.
  9. Because of the easy accessibility to material of an inappropriate nature, the GSCH has a strict policy regarding the use of internet-ready devices and cell phones. When a child is away from the Home for visits, we ask that they not have unsupervised access to computers, laptops, tablets, iPods, cell phones, or other internet-ready devices.



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## Visit/Call Schedule

**The first Saturday of every month is a Visitors Saturday, unless given prior notice by the Director or House Parents.**

Parents or guardians are expected to pick up their children by 9 a.m. and drop them off by 6 p.m. on the first Saturday of every month. Parents/guardians should feed their children dinner before bringing them back to the Home.

On rare occasions, the Director and/or House Parents will choose to move a Visitors Saturday to a different week, but will not do so without giving at least one full week's notice to the parents or guardians.

Children here at the Home stay busy. Please abide by the following rules regarding visits with your child:

- There is to be NO SMOKING on the GSCH campus.
- Please keep to the scheduled visits and pick up times and contact us if your plans change.
- Visitation is only with those persons listed on the Approved Visitation List completed at admission. Changes to the Approved Visitation List can be made throughout the child's stay with us. NO ONE will be allowed to visit or pick up if they are not approved. Court ordered contact is strictly enforced, so please abide by court rulings.

**Two times each year, your children will return home for an extended visit.**

These dates will be determined by the Director and/or House Parents. These are generally:

- One week visit during the summer
- One to two weeks at Christmas break (depending on the school schedule)

**Your child should receive a telephone call from you once each week.**

Parents or guardians are expected to call on their appointed day at their appointed time.

These visits and phone calls are very important to your children, and we have found that children who do not receive these visits and calls often exhibit poor behavior. Your cooperation is strongly recommended for the best interests of your child.

Communication with your child is very important, but unscheduled phone calls can be disruptive to campus life. Keep phone calls short and during approved call times. Whenever possible, the Staff of the GSCH will ensure that your child is free to talk during your predetermined call time. If it is not a good time to talk or you get the Home's answering machine, a Staff member will return your call or inform you of a better time to call when your child can talk. Longer calls may be arranged through the House Parents of the GSCH.

**The number you should call to speak with your child(ren) is: [615-896-1459](tel:615-896-1459)**

**Your Appointed Call Day / Time will be determined on day of Admittance.**