



# Staff Handbook 2016-2017

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# Staff Handbook

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## **School's Out Mission Statement:**

School's Out provides children a safe environment where they are given an opportunity to express themselves and develop socially, physically, academically, artistically, emotionally, and creatively through a program that nurtures and respects the uniqueness of each and every child. We work to provide activities that will engage and attract each student. We partner with the school and family to ensure we are providing the best possible care for each child at the level that is developmentally appropriate for them.

## **School's Out Philosophy:**

School's Out will provide students and families with a safe, inclusive, friendly and nurturing environment where they feel respected and part of the community. School's Out will provide high quality reliable care so parents and guardians will feel confident that the needs of their child will be met when they are unable to be with them.

School's Out will also promote the social and emotional development of every student through a variety of activities that expands their thought processes and skills academically, creatively, physically and systematically as an individual and member of the School's Out community. Activities will open the doors to new, meaningful experiences and opportunities for the students using real life context to expand on the lessons being taught in the classroom. The School's Out program offerings will also include field trips, guest speakers, enrichment opportunities, community outreach, homework assistance and recreation time.

The School's Out staff are well-trained individuals who bring warmth and enthusiasm to the program. They care deeply about the students and build trusting and reliable relationships with them. They are the role models of positive character, respect, healthy habits and teamwork.

It is through all these components that School's Out will be a fun, safe, rewarding environment for each student and a place they will look forward to coming at the end of each school day.

## **School's Out Goals:**

- The children will be provided a safe environment from the time school dismisses to the time parents are able to pick them up.
- The children will have a program that will include activities to stimulate their curiosity and imagination.
- The children will be encouraged to have ownership of the rules and understand consequences of their behaviors or actions if the rules are broken.
- The children will be given the opportunity to provide suggestions for activities and program ideas.
- The children will learn appropriate social behavior through positive role modeling and constructive group games and activities.
- The children will be encouraged to spend at least a portion of their program time every day on an outdoor activity (weather permitting).
- The children will have fun!

## **Staff Expectations:**

### **Probationary Period**

All staff will have a probationary period of 1 month that will start on their first working day. During this period the program coordinator will come in to observe and evaluate all aspects of the directors/counselors work with the children. All items in this staff handbook will be taken into account when the coordinator comes for the visits. At the end of the probationary month the program coordinator will meet with the director to discuss accomplishments and areas needing improvements and plans for the future.

### **Absence Management**

This is the district site where all time off must be logged. Your login information will be given to you once your employment paperwork has been completed. School's Out will provide training on how to use the website.

### **Staff Meeting and In-service**

School's Out will have 5 mandatory' staff meetings and in-service training throughout the year. These meetings will be comprised of all three sites and run from 6:15 pm to 9:00 pm.

Site directors will be responsible for scheduling 1 to 2 hour meetings twice a month unless it falls on a month with a mandatory School's Out meeting, in which case they will be responsible for scheduling one meeting that month. During individual site meetings, staff will be given time to plan, discuss rough transition times, behavior issues interpersonal differences, program-wide activities and special events. Staff will be included in goal setting and short and long term planning. Site Directors and counselors may request to have a quick meeting at the end of any day to discuss issues that require immediate attention (family crises, medical concerns, or behavior issues). Staff will also have a period of time before the children arrive to plan activities or special events. Staff may use this time after the site has been set-up. All meeting and planning times will be paid. Staff may be required to attend weekend training if the need arises.

### **Involvement in Setting Program Policies and Staff Communication**

Staff will be included on most decisions regarding program policy. Staff meetings will serve as a forum for discussing necessary changes or improvements to the program. Staff members may request meetings if they have a concern about the program. The Program coordinator and director will be sure to include staff in any major changes regarding policy. Staff will be given an opportunity to serve on interview committees to hire new coworkers (including coordinator and director positions).

### **Staff Supervision**

Either the Program Director and/or the Site Director will supervise all staff. Head Counselors will assist in supervision of Counselors and Assistant Counselors. Supervisors will observe formally and informally and provide feedback often. Supervisors will be sure that staff members are keeping the children safe, practicing best methods of discipline and guidance and creating a harmonious environment.

## **Staff Assessments**

Staff will receive informal feedback from the site director on a daily basis and a formal evaluation twice a year (one mid-year and one end of the year). Staff will also participate in a self-assessment yearly.

## **Professional Development**

All School's Out staff must complete the annual requirement of 16 hours of professional development. Professional Development can be in the form of workshops, conferences, college classes, or other venues sanctioned by the State. Many of our in house trainings will fulfill much of the Professional Development requirement. New staff will be assigned trainings during their first year to meet state regulations. This will be discussed in New Staff Orientation.

The State of Vermont offers certificates and credentials for individuals in the Afterschool field for going above and beyond the minimum professional development requirements. Many of these certificates and credentials come with financial incentives and are free of cost. School's Out will hold regular Professional Development staff meetings designed to help staff learn about and work on their professional development and to address any issues that may arise during the process.

Staff will also be responsible for completing an Individuals Professional Development Plan with the help of their Site Director. These plans will be used to help staff reflect on the current skills and areas they would like to improve on. Individual Professional Development Plans will also be utilized during twice yearly evaluations and daily feedback to reflect on progress and areas of need.

In addition to these trainings the South Burlington School District mandates online SafeSchools trainings. Directors will give you time to complete these trainings during program hours however there may be an occasional when you will be asked to complete them outside of your regularly scheduled hours.

## **Parent Communication**

Staff are expected to interact with parents and guardians in a courteous and professional manner. We encourage all staff to greet parents by name and engage in friendly and positive conversation. When discussing their child, counselors should focus on positive behavior and accomplishments. If there is a disciplinary or behavioral concern about a child, counselors are to discuss the issue with the site director and the director will determine if the issue is to be discussed with the parents. In most situations, the director will address these concerns with the parents.

## Important Dates:

### School's Out Calendar

See Calendar

School's Out will not be offered during these unscheduled closings:  
School Cancellations  
Emergency Dismissals

**\*\*Note: We are hopeful that School's Out staff will be able to work during the half and full day closings. Each site will be open during these closings. During vacation weeks, only one site will be open. Knowing and planning your schedule around these dates would be extremely beneficial to the program. \*\***

## Hours of Operation:

School's Out runs from school dismissal until 6:00 PM. The directors and counselors are only paid until 6:00 every evening. Parents whose children remain past 6:00 PM must pay overtime fees as follows:

**5 minutes overtime- \$5 per child  
each additional 1-10 minutes. \$5 per child**

Late fees are paid directly to the director or counselor who stay with the children.

## Typical Daily Schedule:

- Kids will arrive at the designated meeting area upon dismissal and place all belongings in an assigned spot
- Check in with assigned counselor
- Participate in outdoor free play (no more than 45 minutes)
- Join afternoon circle to go over activities and choices
- Enjoy a nutritional snack
- Choose between activities and choices 'announced
  - o Sample Activity Choices
    1. Enrichment
      - a) Help make cookies brownies and pies for a bake sale
      - b) Practicing and performing short skits and plays
      - c) Field Trips
    2. Athletic Games
      - a) Create and play a new version of a traditional game
      - b) Relay races, obstacle courses and scavenger hunts
    3. Academic
      - a) Listen to a book being read aloud in a quiet area
      - b) Complete homework assignments in a work room

#### 4. Arts and Crafts

- a) Create collages, necklaces, mobiles, masks and friendship beads/bracelets
- b) Make crafts related to a particular theme week (i.e. Paper mache pumpkins, nature mobiles flags of the world etc.)

#### 5. Social

- a) Grade level group time
- b) Group games that involve team building

- Once completed with an activity, children may clean up their working area and choose to go to another activity. It is our hope that every child will participate in at least 15 minutes of any given activity.

\*\* It is very important that the children learn to clean up their own activity area when they finish. This will build responsibility within them and will also save you time in the long run.

## **Attendance:**

### **Attendance – Entering the Program**

- 1) Children are dismissed from school
- 2) Arrive at School's Out- Check in with counselor/director

\* \*If a child is not present in the program and is not on the school's absent list, the coordinator will immediately find out the child's whereabouts. They will do so by checking in with the school secretary to see if the child received a bus pass to go home with a friend, the child went home sick or a parent came and picked up their child early. If the secretary hasn't received any information, the coordinator will next call the child's classroom teacher to see if he/she is catching up on extra work. If the child is still not found the coordinator will call the parents to ask if they have come to pick up their child or if they know if their child went home with a friend. Ninety nine percent of the time parents know where their child is and have forgotten to write a note to School's Out.

However, if the parents aren't sure of their child's whereabouts stay calm and reassure parents that their child is probably in the school or has gotten sidetracked on his/her way to the program. If the child is unable to be found the coordinator will call the local police and the School's Out Coordinator to inform them of the situation. Once the child is located the coordinator will immediately call the parents, police and program director. School's Out has implemented a finders fee of \$5.00 every time a child is absent from the program without oral or written notification from the parent.

### **Attendance – Leaving the Program**

- 1) Parent, Guardian or Pick-up person (on registration) comes to the program
- 2) Counselors greet the parent and discuss positives that happened that day
- 3) Child recognizes the person and gathers his/her belongings
- 4) Parent proceeds to the attendance book to sign their child out by 'initialing in the box provided (signifying that they have picked their child up for the day).

\* \*keeping an accurate attendance record will alleviate many stressful phone calls to parents during the course of the year. In order for a person to pick up a child that is neither a parent nor a person designated on the registration as "pick up person" the parent has to give permission by writing and signing a note or talking directly to the site director. If the child feels uncomfortable leaving with a different pick up person, he/she will not be forced to leave. They will be able to call their parent to discuss the situation together.

Only if we have received a restraining order from the site will we not allow a parent to pick up their child. It is not enough for one parent to tell us that the other is not allowed to pick their child up. Inform them that by law we are unable to prohibit parental pick up unless we have a certified letter from the State.

### **Dealing with Inebriated Parents**

If a staff member believes a parent to be inebriated the staff member will not permit the parent to leave with the child. Another parent or contact should be called to care for the child and parent. If the parent insists on taking the child, the police will be notified.

## **Supervision:**

The two top priorities for staff at School's Out are to ensure the children are safe and make certain they have fun. Safety and enjoyment are achieved through proper supervision. Supervision responsibilities differ greatly depending on the activity. Counselors are to supervise children to ensure Counselor to child ratios of 1:13 for children over six and 1:10 for any group including children five years old. Some activities may require a small group size. It may become necessary to split the children into smaller groups,

### **Outdoor Free Play**

- During outdoor free play, the counselors will be actively participating in the games the children are playing. Having the counselors actively engaged in outdoor free play will help alleviate many arguments about rules and fair play. Thee counselors will need to spread themselves out over the entire outdoor area to ensure that each group has an involved counselor with them.

Group Size: Any number of children (Kindergarteners: no more than 20)

### **Arts and Crafts / Free Choice**

- Once the counselor has set up an activity their main responsibility is to make sure the children have all of the supplies they need and are using the supplies as intended. Their role is that of a facilitator during this time, helping children with their activity as needed. During this time the counselors will not make a project themselves as children will compare their work with that of the counselors and feel they have not succeeded in their project.

Furthermore, the child may give up and ask the counselor to finish their project for them because they feel they're unable. We do not want to take away a child's creativity.

Group size: 1 -10 children

### **Athletic Games**

- Athletic games are potentially the number one risk for injuries. With proper supervision and gamesmanship, they could also be potentially one of the lower risk areas. Much like your role during outdoor free play, your main responsibility is that of an active participant and referee during these games. Keeping a friendly noncompetitive game going is an arduous task. While participating in the game, be aware the children are looking to you as a role model. If they see you playing aggressive and cutthroat, they will tend to play that way as well. If they see you play in a noncompetitive and enjoyable manner they will emulate you and play to have fun and not to win.

Group Size: 1 -20 children

### **Snack Time**

- Snack time is the perfect opportunity for counselors to get to know the children of the program. What are their interests? What is their favorite thing to do on the weekend? Talking with children during snack goes much beyond a simple dialogue between two people. You start to build relationships, and much more important you start earning the respect of the children. This respect will carry over to the other parts of the program and will make everything much easier to handle. During this time it's imperative that you don't ignore the children and instead talk with the other counselors. If this happens, the children again will see that they are not liked as much as others around them. We want to avoid these feelings of self-doubt at any and all costs.

Group Size: Any number of Children

### **Homework Club**

- School's Out provides a quiet space for students who are looking to complete their homework during their time at our program. School's Out also *encourages* students to complete their homework when parents put in a request for them to do so during their time at our program. Staff will praise students when they complete an assignment and then ask what they would like to do as their next activity. Encouraging children to do something fun and exciting when their homework is completed will instill good studying habits down the road. Staff will be available to help children with their homework and will not be engrossed in activities of their own (i.e. surfing the web, reading, or doing their own homework)

Group Size: 1-20 Children

### **CIT Program**

- The School's Out CIT (Counselors in Training) group is comprised of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. CITs are given responsibilities that include helping with activities, mentoring younger children, cleaning, mediation and role modeling. CITs earn special privileges and rewards for their efforts. The program is designed to teach the older children how to be responsible and compassionate citizens.

### **Last Half-Hour**

- The last half-hour of the program is usually a time when you have a very low counselor/student ratio. Again, it can be very tempting to allow a child to complete an art activity by himself/herself or play in the gym alone or possibly with one other friend, but it is crucial that we do not allow this to happen. Every child must be involved in an activity or game with at least one counselor. If every child is with a counselor and there are other counselors still at the site, they will be able to use that time to start cleaning and securing the building. It is also of high importance that the building is cleaner than when the program started. Once all of the children leave, all of the counselors stay and help clean until the job is done to the satisfaction of the director.

### **Higher Risk Activities/Accident Prevention Procedures**

- Higher risk activities include but are not limited to: swimming, sledding, hiking, ice-skating, carpentry, cooking, biking, roller-skating, and skateboarding. The following plan is to be

followed when supervising high-risk activities. For higher risk activities a ratio of one counselor to five children may need to be maintained.

- 1) Discuss the rules with the children. Be sure they understand any safety risks that might be involved in the activity as well as any boundaries that need to be observed. Let them know that the rules will be enforced very strictly to be sure that safety is maintained. It may be necessary to demonstrate your expectations.
- 2) Discuss that it may be necessary to stop the activity quickly if there is an accident or emergency. If this is to happen, the children are to cease the activity and meet at a predetermined area.
- 3) Be sure there is proper supervision. For high-risk activities a lower counselor to child ratio must be maintained. There must be at least two counselors present to supervise a high risk activity. For some activities it may be necessary to have supervision by a person with specialized training, for example: When swimming it is necessary to have certified lifeguards supervising the children.
- 4) Supervise the children. Be sure you are in an area where all children can be supervised at all times. If a counselor is engaging in the activity, at least one another counselor should be observing. The observing counselor should do a periodic head count to be sure all children are accounted for. If there is an emergency or injury, have all of the kids cease doing the activity and meet at the predetermined area. One counselor is to stay with the children while another is to assist a hurt child call an ambulance or take other emergency action. The counselor remaining with the children should take attendance.

Group Size: varying

## **Health & Safety Policies:**

### Child:

If a child has a known medical condition (asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, etc.) please contact the parents to be sure you understand how to handle a situation if one comes up. Please make sure that proper medication is available and that the parent has completed the appropriate forms for its use. If a child has any one of the following conditions the parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately: **Contagious disease, Fever over 100 F Vomiting or Diarrhea.**

In case of accident or illness parents of the child will be called immediately. In serious cases the child will be taken to one of the local hospitals by emergency vehicle for treatment and the parents will be called as soon as possible.

Outdoor play will not be allowed when temperatures including wind chill falls below 0 degrees Fahrenheit or heat index is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

### Staff:

If you have any one of the following conditions please notify your Director immediately as stated in Staff Expectations: **Contagious disease, Fever over 100\* F Vomiting or Diarrhea.**

## **Distribution of Medication**

Whenever a child is to be given prescription or over-the-counter medicine the parent must provide to the program director a completed signed medication authorization form. The medication must be provided in the original or duplicate container or a container accompanied by the doctor's directions.

If medication is to be kept at School's Out for treatment of a chronic condition no more than a one-month supply should remain at the program at any time. Staff will be sure the medication kept at School's Out will be kept in a locked cabinet or container and kept out of the reach of our children.

## **Injuries/Administering First-Aid/Medical Emergencies**

In the event that a child gets injured during his/her time at the program, the counselor will first assess the situation. If the child has a minor scrape or minor injury, the counselor will treat the child with an ice pack and a band-aid if needed. Ice packs are only required to reduce swelling. The site director will notify the parent when he/she arrives to pick their child up for the day. If the child has a more severe injury (possible broken bone, deep cut, head injury, etc.), the site director will first try to reach the parents/guardians. If the parents/guardians are not available the site director will call the emergency contact person on the child's registration sheet. If they are still not able to get in contact with anyone, he/she (if deemed necessary) may call a paramedic or ambulance. The program coordinator needs to be informed immediately of the situation. During the course of our program, children will get hurt it is inevitable. Handling the situation calmly and with care will help ease the suffering of the child and will help the people around you stay focused and on task.

## **First-Aid Requirements**

All staff must be trained in first-aid. School's Out will pay for this training and provide an opportunity for group training every three years.

## **Accident Reports**

When a child does get hurt, there are certain procedures that need to be taken. If an injury occurs to a child during the course of the program, but doesn't leave a visible mark inform his/her parents upon arrival what had happened and how you treated the injury. No paperwork needs to be filled out in those cases. If a child gets injured and has a visible mark showing, an accident report needs to be filled out within 24 hours and turned in to the program coordinator. It is best to fill out the report once the injury has been attended to. Additionally a phone call to the parent describing the injury and how it occurred will also take place when the situation has been handled. If another child in the program caused the injury, the other child's name will not be used in the accident report or in the verbal report given to the parent upon their arrival. Parents who insist on knowing the exact details of the situation may be referred to the program coordinator. Site directors will have accident reports on site at all times.

## **Handling of Blood Spills**

As required by VOSHA regulations, all employees must be reminded of the potential risk of blood borne pathogens, which exist in our workplace. Blood spills shall be treated cautiously and be decontaminated promptly. Disposable gloves will be worn while handling any blood spill, bloody diarrhea, bloody nose, etc., and discarded after each use in the appropriate blood spill bag located at your program. A solution will be provided to wipe up any surfaces contaminated by blood. Hand washing with soap and water will occur after cleaning of any spill involving a bodily secretion. Whenever possible, please have the child clean up his/her own bloody nose and small wound with staff guidance.

## **Maintenance of the Facility/ Playground**

School's Out staff will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of all areas used by the program. We are to leave each space exactly how we found it. If something is in need of repair, the head custodian or a custodian on duty will be notified as soon as possible. This includes the playground. Staff will periodically check the playground for safety hazards. If something is in need of repair the children are to stay away from the object. It may be required to shut down an entire structure if it is deemed unsafe.

## **Handling of Toxic Materials**

See S.E,P Plan

## **Child Abuse & Neglect:**

As a state licensed after school program, all staff at School's Out are Mandated Reporters. This requires them to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect. If suspected incidences are observed staff will contact the program coordinator immediately and together they will submit the report to Department of Children & Families, DCF. Reports must be made within 24 hours of the observed incident. Call **1-800-649-5285** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). **If a child is in immediate danger, dial 911 or call your local police first.**

## **Inclusion Policy:**

Children with special needs are enthusiastically accepted into the School's Out program. School's Out staff will work closely with families and school employees and specialists to meet the needs of each child. It may be required for School's Out to collaborate with others to create a plan for children with special needs. School's Out will adapt the physical space, train staff and provide extra assistance when necessary. Students who can not successfully participate in planned activities with a 1:10 counselor to child ratio due to behavioral or physical characteristics may be required to be accompanied by an aid. The School's Out program does not cover the extra cost of employing this person, but will work very closely with this person to be sure that the needs of the child are met. School's Out is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children and will not discriminate based on behavioral or physical needs.

## **Non Discrimination Policy:**

School's Out practices non-discrimination employment practices and in the provision of services to its clients. School's Out does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, orientation, disability, nationality or ethnic origin. All students regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin have equal access to School's Out and will receive equal access to the program, activities and scholarship funds.

## **Behavior Policy:**

### **Discipline procedures and Child Guidance**

Staff at School's Out will use positive behavior guidance when handling the behaviors of children in the program. Children are entitled to a pleasant and harmonious environment. School's Out will use an

approach when dealing with discipline that focuses on keeping the children engaged in interesting and enjoyable activities during their time at the program. If the children are being stimulated with exciting activities, they will not have time to engage in an inappropriate behavior. It is also necessary for staff to teach the children appropriate behavior. This is done most effectively through role modeling and encouragement. When a child makes the choice to misbehave he/she will be given a verbal warning and told what the logical consequence will be if the behavior should continue. At this time a counselor should take the time to discuss the behavior with the child. Explain why the behavior is unacceptable and guide them towards better decision making. If the child chooses to make more appropriate decisions compliment their good behavior and encourage them to keep making positive choices. If the inappropriate behavior continues to occur the child will have to adhere to the aforementioned consequence. In the event the child continues to engage in inappropriate behaviors that day, or if the child is causing harm to him/herself or others in the program, the site director will call the parents and have them come and pick up their child promptly. When the parent arrives to pick their child up the site director will have a brief meeting with the parent and child (if deemed appropriate) to discuss what happened and what would be a positive way to change the behavior in the future.

If the behavior continues to hinder the effectiveness of the program, and all avenues have been exhausted to correct the behavior a parent, the child, director and coordinator meeting will be arranged to discuss the situation and determine what actions need to be taken. Finally, if after repeated chances and opportunities to correct the behaviors the child continues to show they cannot correct their actions the child will be removed from the program.

**Important Discipline Notes:**

- Never embarrass a child in front of other children.
- When speaking to a child get down to his/her level and speak clearly and calmly.
- Do not yell or raise your voice unless a child is in immediate danger.
- Refrain from physically removing a child from an area.
- Allow children to talk out their problems with each other while acting as a mediator
- After the consequence has been served go to the child in a positive manner and tell them that everything will be ok.

**Snack & Nutritional Policies:**

School's Out will provide nutritious snacks in the afternoon. Snack must be served to students within 1 hour of them arriving at program. As part of the parent newsletter for the month a snack calendar will be provided to the parents to help them decide if they need to provide an additional snack for their child on a particular day. Parents may want to provide a treat in honor of a child's birthday. In this case, they should contact the director to determine the number of children to be served and plan the date. Staff will prepare snack for the children. Before doing so, they will wash their hands. Children will be directed to wash their hands before consuming snack, preview the registration forms of the children in your program to see if any child has an allergy to certain foods. Children may be required to wash their hands after snack as well.

Please make sure to read the Nutrition section of the State Licensing Regulations for more information on proper handling and preparation of foods as well as appropriate foods and portions to serve.

## **Emergency Procedures:**

Monthly drills will be conducted to practice the emergency procedures for Evacuations, Clear the Halls and Secure the School. For more information on protocols for these drills see S.E.P. Plan hanging in the doorway of every room.

For example: In case of a fire, children will line up at the nearest exit and evacuate the building. One counselor will be at the front of the line and one at the end. The director will take the attendance sheet and meet the children on the playground at the assigned meeting place. The children will remain quiet as the director takes attendance. The evacuation procedure will be practiced at least five times a year. (For more information, see S.E.P. Plan)

### **Plan for Coverage During Emergencies**

School's Out maintains a counselor to child ratio of 1:10 or lower at all times. This allows for there to be an extra staff person on hand in case of an emergency. If a child is injured or seriously ill report the incident immediately to the director (use of a two-way radio may be required) who will provide coverage. If a child is injured or ill a staff member will remain with the child until a parent or guardian is present. If the child requires immediate medical attention, a staff member will ride in the ambulance with the child and remain at the hospital with the child until a parent is present. If a staff member becomes ill or injured, there will be adequate coverage to maintain an appropriate staff to child ratio.

### **Emergency Closing Policy**

In the event of an emergency requiring the program to close early such as a weather related emergency, each parent will be called and asked to pick up his/her children) as soon as possible. Staff members will be allowed to leave as ratios decrease. Appropriate staff to child ratios must be maintained. (For more information see S.E.P. Plan)

## **Family Orientation:**

At the beginning of each school year, School's Out will hold a round table discussion for new and returning parents. New parents will be given opportunities to ask questions to staff and returning parents. New parents will also be given a walk-through of the facility and an explanation of the daily routine. Staff are encouraged but not required to attend this event. Staff are required to orient new children and parents to the program during the first couple weeks of the program. Staff are to provide extra attention to new children to be sure they are comfortable and understand the rules and routine. Parents will be greeted enthusiastically by the staff and will be available to answer question and explain the program.

## **Parent Involvement:**

With all of our critical responsibilities to the children in our program, we still cannot overlook the importance of the relationship between School's Out and the parents. Children are the parent's number one priority and knowing who is caring for their children is extremely important to them. Starting on the first day of the program, introduce yourself to parents that come in to pick up the children. Getting to know all of

the parents by name will seem like a daunting task at first but once you know them by name you will feel more comfortable going to them to initiate a conversation. Communicating with the parents in a positive way daily will help build your professional relationship.

Along with the everyday interactions between parents and staff the program will look for parents to come and spend time at our program. Volunteering, demonstrating a special talent, chaperoning field trips, or just coming in and helping out during the regular activity times are all options for parental involvement at School's Out. It will be up to the site director at each site to determine whether they would like parents to come in to volunteer during a particular activity. When a parent does come in to assist it is essential that the activity is well planned out and the parent knows exactly what his/her role is during the activity. Having this structure will also make the parents more comfortable coming in to help.

At each site there will be a parent board with important information pertaining to the program. Please point this information out to the parents when they arrive. Parents are often in a hurry when they pick their child up and may miss significant dates for field trips, special events and activities that may be taking place during the course of the weeks and months to come. Please be understanding of the parent's schedule and try to remind them daily to check the parent board for important announcements. Parents can also be directed to the School's Out website to obtain information about the program (<http://district.sbschools.net/schoolsout>) The website also provides a forum for parents to make suggestion and provide feedback about the program.

It is also very important to discuss with the parents how their child is developing in the program. They are eager to know how their child interacts with the other children, what their interests are and any concerns you might have.

It is also necessary to let the parents know if there are any disciplinary concerns you might have but it is equally, if not more important, to share positive happenings. It may be necessary to schedule a private meeting to discuss concerns or a child's growth and development. If you feel like a meeting would be beneficial inform the director and he/she will arrange a meeting.

If there is a concern about behavior or a child's health or safety, a call home may be required. The director should make phone calls to parents. Parents may be called if their child is showing repeated inappropriate behavior showing aggressive behavior or is ill.

Building a working relationship between parents and the counselors will strengthen the bond and ability to run an effective after school program.

## **Community Involvement:**

School's Out will play an active role in the South Burlington Community in many ways. We will create links to local organizations by seeking volunteers and volunteering ourselves. The program will allow children to meet and learn from members of the community by hosting visitations and scheduling field trips. Children will have opportunities to participate in local events and activities (such as fund raising local clean-up campaigns, sports clubs.-etc.).

## **Field Trips/Transportation:**

Children will be transported to field trips by bus only. Staff are not to bring children in their personal vehicles.

The bus will be driven by a licensed bus driver. Attendance will be taken upon boarding the bus.

## **Cell Phone Policy:**

Staff may have cell phones on them during program hours. However, they are not to be used to make or receive incoming calls nor should they be used for text messaging. If you know ahead of time that you'll need to make or receive a call during program hours please check with the site director to make sure it is ok.

The first offense will result in a verbal warning. The second offense will result in a written warning and the site director will hold onto the cell phone during program hours. The site director may alter this policy as needed.

## **Miscellaneous Notes:**

- Staff will dress for School's Out in appropriate clothing that will allow them to participate in any and all activities.
- Staff are not allowed to smoke during after school hours. If you are a smoker, please make sure your clothes are smoke free before coming to our program.
- Any type of substance abuse that is substantiated will be grounds for dismissal.
- Each staff member is expected to be at their site every day they are scheduled unless otherwise authorized by the site coordinator. Unexcused absences will result in docking of pay and potential dismissal from the program.
- Any private childcare done between School's Out parents and staff will be unaffiliated and separate from School's Out.
- Any information that you may learn about any child during your time at School's Out is confidential and is not to be shared with anyone outside of the program.
- Staff members that work 5 (five) or more continuous hours must take a 30 minute paid break.
- Children should not bring money, toys, food or other items unnecessary for after school activities to School's Out without checking with the director. Although School's Out attempts to help children stay organized, we cannot be responsible for lost personal property.

**Handbook Agreement**

All of the above policies were set forth to ensure the highest quality of after school care. By signing below, I indicate that I agree to the policies and procedures set forth in this staff handbook-

Name (please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Understanding of Being a Mandated Reporter of Child Abuse**

As Vermont Adults, we have a moral obligation to keep our children safe. With this comes the civic duty to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Certain people, as *mandated reporters*, are legally required to do so – within 24 hours. To make a report Call 1-800-649-5285 — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As a childcare worker in the state of Vermont you are a *mandated reporter* and are required to report suspected child abuse within 24 hours.

By signing below, I indicate that I understand that I am a mandated reporter of child abuse and agree to report abuse or neglect if it is suspected.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**Understanding of the Afterschool Child Care Licensing Regulations**

The *Afterschool Child Care Licensing Regulations* was created to promote a positive and developmentally appropriate child care environment for Vermont Children, to establish and monitor compliance to regulations in order to ensure health, safety and well-being of children and to encourage a working partnership among parents, providers and Licensing by promoting professionalism in child care.

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and the *Afterschool Child Care Licensing Regulations*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date