

Out of School Care



Parent Handbook Policies Manual

**Northern Lights Public Schools
Revised September 2024**

Introduction

Northern Lights Public Schools offers Out Of School Care Programs for families in need of child care surrounding school hours. To be eligible for this program, children must be at minimum enrolled in Kindergarten. The goal of the Out of School Care Program is to fulfill a need for quality child care for families in our communities. Out of School Care is available throughout the school calendar year - and may be offered before school, after school and on Non School days. Pending staff availability and need we may also offer Out of School Care during school holidays. (Christmas, Spring Break)

The policies and guidelines outlined in this manual have been established to ensure that the experiences of the children who attend our programs are positive and safe. All parents are required to read and understand the policies and guidelines outlined in this manual and must acknowledge having done so by signing where indicated on their child's registration form.

Parents are invited to bring forth any questions or to discuss any concerns they have regarding the operation of this program and/or the well being of their child, with the Division Coordinator.

Registration Procedure

Information for registration can be found at www.nlpsab.ca Prior to attending Out of School Care programs parents must read the parent handbook and complete an online registration form for each child attending the program. A new registration form must be filled out at the beginning of each school year. Incomplete registration forms will not be accepted. Online registrations are accepted on a first come first served basis. In order to secure a space for your child you must complete the online registration form and pay the deposit on School Cash Online. Casual Care spaces may be available if space permits, please check with your school. In the event the program is full to capacity, full time registrants are accepted first.

Fees and Payments

Out of School Care is a non-profit program. Program salaries, supplies, and administrative costs are supported by the user fees. (Fees are subject to change) Please see attached flyer for the current fee structure for your school. All payments must be made on School Cash Online. Please see link at www.nlpsab.ca. Parents are reminded all payments are to be made **PRIOR** to the child starting the program and receipts for income tax purposes are available on your School Cash Online account.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO PARENTS:

The Government of Alberta has a child care subsidy program available whereby a portion of, or all of your Out of School Care Fees may be subsidized. There are a number of factors that determine if a family would qualify. Parents are responsible to pay the parent portion not covered by subsidy. Please note: subsidy may make adjustments to your approval and funding. Parents are responsible to cover any

discrepancies. Forms are available online at www.child.gov.ab.ca/childcaresubsidy. There is also an estimator tool on this website that will let you know how much, if any, of the subsidy you qualify for.

Upon registration, families are required to pay fees.

- **Users:** must provide first & last month's fees (equal to monthly user fees + admin fee)
- **Subsidized Users:** with approved funding, must provide last month's fees only (+ admin fee) prior to attending. Subsidized users are required to pay the balance between average monthly fees and child subsidy prior to the first of each month. Please note: subsidy funding is based on actual hours used. **Subsidized users - Last month fees for subsidized users will be held to cover any outstanding fees and will be returned to you after your last day of care and once the program receives final payment from subsidy. ** Please note: subsidy is approximately 4 months behind processing documents so refunds may take up to 4 months to receive from last day of care.
- **Casual Care Users:** must provide deposit (including administrative fee) which will be held until the last month of care. Once days have been registered and paid for they are not transferable or refundable.

Casual Care is based on availability. Please check with your site to check availability prior to purchasing Casual Care on School Cash Online. Site Supervisors will confirm availability. We understand last minute meetings and unforeseen circumstances arise. Please feel free to check with the Site Supervisor for last minute care, but please note space may not be available and there will be a \$25.00 late registration fee charge. (Plus School Cash Online fees)

The Out of School Care program requires **one month** (First day of the month to withdraw for the following month - 30 days notice) written notice to withdraw from Full-Time Care (AM/PM). Once you have registered and paid your deposit in June (or thereafter) for the upcoming school year, you may withdraw prior to August 1st and be refunded your full deposit (less a \$50 administrative fee & School Cash Online fees) If you withdraw on or after August 1, you will only be refunded your last month fee deposit, (less admin & School Cash Online fees) provided you have given one month's written notice.

Once OSC receives one month's notice you will be entitled to your deposit/last month fees back (less School Cash Online fees), provided you have no outstanding fees owing. You may withdraw anytime throughout the school year by providing one month's (as above) notice.

Procedure For Attending Out of School Care

Once a registration form has been submitted and payment has been at School Cash Online, your registration will be processed and your child may begin attending the program once the Site Supervisor contacts you with the details. For after school care when the last bell of the day rings children will go, with their personal belongings,

directly from their room to the designated Out of School Care area. If a child arrives at the program without prior arrangements, staff will call parents and request they pick up their child. Child will be taken to the office for pick up. Parents are reminded all payments are to be made **PRIOR** to the child starting the program.

Failure To Notify of Absence

In the event a full time or casual care user is absent on a scheduled day parents must notify the program or a \$25.00 (Plus School Cash Online fees) fine will be issued. Continued failure to notify may result in services being revoked. Please note this policy is for the safety of your child. If we are expecting your child, and haven't been told otherwise, we are still responsible for your child. Miscommunication occurs and a child may go on the bus when they are to be attending Out of School Care. We strive to ensure the safety of all children.

Late Payment of User Fees

Due to increased late monthly fee payments we have had to enforce an automatic late payment charge for monthly users. Fees are due prior to the first day of the month. An automatic \$25.00 (Plus School Cash Online fees) late charge will be added to your monthly fees, and must be paid on School Cash Online, if payment is not received at OSC before the first day of the month.

If late payment of monthly fees continues the parent will be asked to withdraw their child from the program. This applies to monthly subsidized users as well.

Late Pick Up Fees

Parents arriving after the program closes will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 (Plus School Cash Online Fees) for each ten-minute period (or portion thereof) per child for 1st – 3rd offenses. \$20 (Plus School Cash Online fees) for each ten-minute period (or portion thereof) will be charged subsequent offenses. Late fees are to be paid at School Cash Online prior to the child returning to the program. Continual late pick up may result in services being revoked.

Release of Children

To ensure the well being of all children in the program, times of arrivals and departures will be clearly indicated on a Sign In and Sign Out Form. Parents are responsible for signing the child(ren) out of the programs, and staff can not release students unless the parent comes to the building. We ask that those picking up come to the school door so the staff can communicate with the person picking up as this is an important time for staff and families to connect. Students will not be released to a parent waiting in the vehicle or not coming all the way to the building. (no exceptions)

Children will only be released to the parent or guardian of the child, or to the person(s) designated on the registration form. If the person is unknown to staff ID will be required before the student will be released.

Staffing

Out of School Care staff will be hired in accordance with Northern Lights Public Schools child care standards. All staff will be required to have a Criminal Record Check completed. Staff must also possess a valid First Aid Certificate. If teenage staff are present assisting the staff, they are not left alone with the children, but are there to assist with planned activities such as crafts, games, or sports.

If seven or more children are attending the out of school care program, there shall always be two supervisory staff in the building. A third staff will be on duty if there are 25 or more children attending. The Out of School Care program will offer a variety of age appropriate activities such as arts and crafts, sports, reading, toys, and games.

Facility

The indoor play space will be clean, in good repair, well organized, and meet the needs and interests of the children. The outdoor play space will be a healthy, safe, and secure environment that provides a choice of activities. Each program will have a designated area for administration, and a designated area for children to keep their personal belongings. Each program will have access to washroom facilities and telephone.

Equipment

All equipment will be age appropriate and meet the needs of the children enrolled. Equipment will be in good repair, safe, clean, and offer sufficient challenge to encourage meaningful involvement by the children. Equipment will encourage the development of small and large motor skills, social and emotional skills, cognitive, and creative skills. Equipment will be available and within reach of the children, be arranged to encourage small group activities, as well as to provide areas for quiet and solitary activities.

Health and Emergency Procedures

A first aid kit will be on site at all times, and will be taken when children move to another area or outside, along with the children's registration forms.

The program will be closed if there is a threat to the health and/or safety of the children (fire, failure of plumbing or heating, epidemics, flood, extreme weather, or other emergency conditions)

During the winter months, in the event of blizzard conditions or severe wind chill, Out of School Care may not operate when conditions warrant the cancellation of buses and/or regular school classes as per Northern Lights Public Schools policy. Full time users will be notified of any program closures.

Emergency Evacuations and Fire Procedures

Supervisors will be familiar with the school's fire drill / emergency evacuation procedures. A copy of the evacuation plan will be posted in each program's classroom or area.

Fire drill procedures will be regularly practiced as follows:

- children will line up in an orderly fashion
- Staff 1 will check room for children, close windows and doors.
- Staff 2 will take program registrations, attendance sheet, first aid, do a head count, and proceed to designated outside area.
- Staff 2 will take attendance once outside
- All will return to room only when it is clearly safe to do so
- In the event where the children cannot return to the program, parents will be notified and arrangements will be made to have them picked up

Clothing

Children must have indoor shoes to attend the Out of School Care Program. Proper clothing is essential for your child's comfort, health, and safety. Regular outdoor play is part of the program during summer and winter and children will require clothing for the day's weather. Children may go outdoors if the temperature is above -25 degrees. Time outdoors may be limited dependent on the temperature.

Meals and Snacks

Parents are responsible for providing their children with all necessary snacks and meals while attending Out of School Care. As part of our efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle, we ask that the snacks and meals consist of healthy foods from the Canada Food Guide food groups. A healthy drink is also necessary - milk, chocolate milk, 100% juice, or water. Unhealthy snacks and drinks will be returned to parents upon pick up of their child.

Food containing peanut, nut, or fish products may or may not be allowed. Please check with your child's school policy regarding these foods.

Application of Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Any time skin is exposed to the sun, especially during the summer and when the weather is warm, we ask that children come to the program with sunscreen already applied on exposed skin. An additional bottle of sunscreen (labeled with the child's name) may be left in child's cubby for re-application later in the day. We are unable to administer any sunscreen without signed consent from parents.

We consciously avoid or minimize exposure to mosquitoes; however, we cannot guarantee that locations for play are mosquito-free. Therefore, parents may wish to send a bottle of Insect Repellent for your child. We are unable to administer any bug repellent without signed consent from parents. Parents are asked to sign a Consent Form at the time of registration.

Medication

Medication will not be administered by Out of School Care staff, with the exception of emergency medication (ie. Epi-pen, asthma medication). Parents are required to leave detailed instructions on how to administer any emergency medication by completing the required forms. The emergency medication and special instructions will be kept with the First Aid Kit in an area not accessible to the children.

Communicable Disease

If it is suspected that a child has a communicable disease (i.e. pink eye, measles, mumps, chicken pox, tuberculosis, etc.), the child will be isolated, under supervision, from the other children in a quiet, separate area. The parents will be notified and the child must be picked up from the school immediately. A staff member will contact the local Health Unit and follow the recommended response procedures.

Lice

If there are suspicions that a child may have lice, the child will be taken aside and checked for lice by one of the staff members.

If nits and/or live lice are found, parents will be notified and must pick up their child immediately, and have treatment applied that same day. A letter from the Health authority will be given, showing treatment and explaining lice.

The child may return to the Out of School Care program after there are NO live lice or nits. When a child is sent home upon finding lice or nits, a letter will be sent home with all children in the program stating that lice was found. All recommended cleaning procedures on the toys and equipment in the Out of School Care program will be followed.

Out of School Care Transition Procedures

Arrival

Children need a warm, welcoming, and pleasant atmosphere to make the daily greeting routine a happy one. Kindergarten and first graders need special consideration for their safety as they transition from classrooms to Out of School Care. Although older, school age children are more independent, they still need to feel welcome and an active part of their afterschool program. Arrival is a time when program staff can check in with the children to get a sense of how their day has been.

It is during this time that the adult determines how each child is feeling after a day at school and can then respond to the children's needs in an appropriate manner.

Changing Activities

Staff will encourage the children to clean up their previous activity before moving on to the next.

Changing Rooms

Transitioning to a different location in the building often causes problems for school aged children. Staff will plan effective transition activities for the group to decrease the amount of time it takes to line up and move as a group. Gathering students by grade level or interest in activity assists with speeding up the transition. Staff may also time the group as they line up and move to the new room. Staff and students can track the times on a chart, encouraging the students to beat the current best time.

Snack Time

Snack time provides staff and children with a social time when they can form strong relationships while conversing at the table. Often the conversation at snack can become very informative and can lead to ideas for play and project experiences. Free flow snack is ideally suited for school age children. Free-flow snack means that not all children in the program eat snack at the same time. Children are not always ready to eat at the same time, for various reasons, and in situations where it can be accommodated; a free flow snack time can be an appropriate way to meet the nutritional needs of the children without interrupting their play. A free flow snack allows the children to determine when they will eat, within a certain time frame. This allows for a longer period of uninterrupted free choice play time. Children go to the snack table when they are ready and when a space is available. As with any type of snack or meal time situation, the children would be seated while eating and would follow the required health and safety procedures.

Departure Transitions

Children thrive on having a consistent routine. In order to guarantee safety of the children during the transition between school and afterschool care and to adequately maintain the continuity between parents, school, and caregiver, recording attendance is a necessary requirement of the program. Procedures for absentee notification are in place. Authorized adults must sign the child out. In cases where children are bussed home, caregivers will escort children to and from the bus. Departure time also provides program staff with the opportunity to chat with parents or other family members. It is at this time when staff can share information with the parents on the child's day and parents can share any relevant information with the program staff. It is important to remember that this is often a very hurried time of day for parents and for staff so if there are any issues of concern to be discussed it is better to set up a mutually convenient time to discuss them.

Child Guidance

Children are entitled to a pleasant and harmonious environment during their attendance in the Out of School Care program. Children will be expected to behave with the same rules of respect that their school provides. The Staff will give children clear, simple, and consistent guidelines to follow. The activities provided, as well as the Staff's words and actions will be purposefully designed to promote positive behavior.

If a child is having difficulty:

- Staff will remind child about the guidelines for behaviour
- Alternate choices may be offered
- Assistance in problem solving will be offered
- The use of equipment may be limited
- A time away may be given if child continues to disrupt others

In the OSC the goal is to assist the children in developing friendship skills and have opportunities to demonstrate caring and make a contribution to others. They learn to express their feelings in socially acceptable ways and show respect and a positive caring attitude toward others. Specifically, children will be supported in a kind and caring manner to:

- Develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards others
- Accept and practice responsibility
- Demonstrate and practice independence
- Experience and express feelings in socially appropriate ways
- Demonstrate awareness of qualities such as sharing and turn taking, that contribute to positive relationships with family and friends
- Contribute to group activities in a cooperative manner

If a child continues to have problems with no resolution, parents will be contacted to become involved in helping solve the problem.

The Site Supervisor may consult the Division Coordinator for assistance in implementing a behaviour plan if necessary. If inappropriate behaviour continues and all other steps have been exhausted, parents may be asked to find alternate care for the wellbeing of the child and the program.

Illness

Each child must be in a state of health to attend Out of School Care.

They must be able to go outdoors, and take part in active play. The common cold is always cause for debate. If your child has a mild cold, with no alteration in their activity level or behavior, they may be healthy enough to attend.

As per government licensing regulations (<http://www.child.gov.ab.ca>) a child should remain at home if any of the following occur:

If your child has a fever

- if your child has a harsh, dry, or forced cough, or a "croupy" cough

- if your child is congested to the point it is altering their activity
- if your child is pale, tired, crying, not eating very well, complaining of a sore tummy or head, is laying around, or has diarrhea
- is suffering from a communicable disease

As per government licensing regulations (<http://www.child.gov.ab.ca>) if a child becomes ill during the program, the parents or guardians will be notified promptly, and the child must be picked up promptly. The child will be removed to a quiet area to rest until parent/guardian or designate arrives. A child who is exhibiting any signs of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting;
- Fever (temperature greater than 38 degrees Celsius)
- Diarrhea; and/or
- A new and unexplained rash or cough;
- Requires greater care and attention that can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program;
- Has other symptoms that leads a staff member to believe that the child poses a health risk.

When a caregiver knows or has reason to believe a child is ill the child's parent will be contacted to arrange immediate removal from the program premises.

Prior to returning to the program, the caregiver must be satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to others. ***The child must be symptom free for at least 24 hours or the parent must provide a note from the child's physician prior to return to the program.***

Programs will follow all COVID protocols as per the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Health Services. OSC will provide families with the most up to date Daily Screening Checklist and required procedures as made available. Children with allergies or ongoing medical conditions should include that information on their registration form. We ask that you please keep your child at home if they are ill or have any cold or flu symptoms.

Accidents and Emergencies

Every precaution will be taken to keep all children safe, however, should an accident occur, the Out of School Care program, its staff and Supervisors cannot be held responsible.

In case of an accident, first aid procedures will be applied as necessary. Parents will be contacted (or emergency designate if parents can't be reached) It will be at the Supervisor's discretion, as per his/her first aid training, as to whether the injury requires immediate medical attention. If it is necessary for the child to be transported to the hospital by ambulance, staff will go with the child if a parent/guardian has not yet arrived. The parents/guardians will be responsible for ambulance costs. Staff will complete an accident report, to be read and signed by parent(s).

Child Assistant Requirements

Children attending school with an educational assistant due to physical/developmental or behavioral disabilities are also required to have an aide while attending the Out of School Care program. Support may be provided through the program for this. Please contact the Site Supervisor for more details.

Grievance Procedure

Although the NLPS Out Of School Care Program makes every attempt to offer the highest quality care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events, situations or staff.

All concerns brought forward to the Division Coordinator, Site Supervisor or staff will be addressed in a timely manner.

- Parents are encouraged to talk to their child's direct caregiver and OSC Site Supervisor as a first point of contact.
- If they have tried this without satisfactory results, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate administrative review, parents are encouraged to contact the Division Coordinator.
- The Division Coordinator will then schedule meetings as necessary with appropriate parties to gather relevant information before deciding on a course of action.
- Parents will be informed, as appropriate within confidentiality requirements, as to the result of the Division Coordinator's inquiry and action taken.

All final decisions which vary from the statements of this manual will be made at the discretion of Northern Light Public Schools.