

***Mohawk Trail Regional School District
After Care Program
At Mohawk Trail Middle School and High School***

Family Handbook



Program Director

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Mohawk Trail Regional School District

The Mohawk Trail Regional School District offers a district-wide after school program for their four elementary schools (Buckland Shelburne Elementary, Sanderson Academy, Colrain Elementary and Hawlemont Elementary). Students grades 3rd- 6th are bused daily from each of the schools to the Mohawk High School and Middle School. After care is available every school day including early release and half days (the program does not operate during holidays, vacations or snow days). The program runs from 3:00-5:30 and parents pick their children up at the High School.

The district will also offer an Enrichment program that runs for part of the school year (starting in October and ending in May). Enrichment programs will contain 4 sessions, offering a wide range of classes, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Students are bused from each of the schools to the High School. The program runs from 3:15-5:30 on a normal day, 1:50-5:30 on early release days and 12:30-5:30 on half days. Enrichment classes are the same day each week, from 4:30-5:30 and last a total of 6 weeks. After care and snacks will be provided as part of the enrichment program.

Statement of Purpose

The after care program was created to provide children in the district with a convenient and safe environment as well as deliver services that relate to the school day and meet the needs of children and families. Homework assistance will be provided as part of the program if requested.

In the regional school district after care program students will meet their future middle school classmates before attending the middle school. This will give students time to become comfortable and familiar in their future school environment.

Students will be able to participate in extracurricular activities through our Enrichment program. This provides access to programs such as sports and art that they might not get at their individual elementary schools.

Philosophy and Goals

We understand that families are busy and need a reliable and safe after school program. We believe children benefit from socializing with their peers in a structured after school program. Our program encourages leadership skills, community building and individual growth. Although the program has structured activities, there are times children will be given choices and allowed time for socializing and playing with their peers. We understand the need for children to get outside and be active. Our goal is to provide a fun, educational, developmentally appropriate program for all students in the district at an affordable price.

Staff

The program has a director, lead teacher, enrichment teachers and teenage assistants from the high school. We maintain a 1 to 13 ratio and provide aids for special need students as required by their IEP. The program always has at least one staff present that is trained in CPR and First Aid. The director serves as the program administrator and is responsible for the overall program design, philosophy, daily operation, development of policies and procedures, safety and well-being of children. The director supervises and evaluates staff, communicates with families and reviews evaluations of the program. The lead teacher is responsible for supervising children, daily attendance records, providing snacks, managing aids, communicating with families, leading and designing activities and awareness of whereabouts of every child in his/her charge. Enrichment teachers lead specialty classes that they design themselves and manage behavior. Assistants are high school students who role model appropriate behavior and assist the lead teacher as needed.

Staff Qualifications

Alia Woofenden is the director and program administrator for the program. Alia has over 10 years' experience working with elementary students in private and public schools as well as many local environmental organizations with an emphasis on after care and nature education. She has a BS in environmental sciences and a master's degree in Early Childhood Education with a focus on Science and the Environment and is a certified teacher.

A lead teacher with a bachelor's degree and at least 6 months' experience working with children will be hired.

Enrichment teachers are local community members with specialty skills and experience working with children.

Volunteers

Volunteers (such as SCA students) will be working with the after care and the enrichment program. All volunteers will complete a program orientation with the director. Volunteers are under the supervision of paid staff and are included in staff/child ratios only if they have a CORI and background check on file (such as the SCA students). All other volunteers are an extra set of hands, but will not be left alone with any students at any time.

After Care Schedule

3:15-4:00 Snack, homework and quiet activities; Students will be provided with a snack table, homework table and area for quiet activities (books, Legos, art).

4:15 Community Meeting; Students are gathered to share information, problem solve and express interests and ideas for the program.

4:30-5:15 Enrichment students will participate in the scheduled program. After care students will participate in recess and group activities. Unstructured, outdoor playtime will be offered

everyday unless the weather is unsafe to do so. Activity time will vary depending on the day and interests of the students. Games, hiking, art and science experiments are some of the activities that could happen during this time. Also, students will be a part of the planning process and at times decide what they would like to study.

Transportation Plan

The Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) and the Hawlemont Regional School (HRS) will be responsible for contracting transportation services to transport children to the program. Management of transportation services will be handled through the office of the Superintendent by the Director of Transportation. The MTRSD will be responsible for providing students grades 3-6 with safe and efficient transportation to the program being held at the Mohawk Trail Regional High School. District staff will be responsible for helping students get on and off the bus. Bus routes will be established from the District elementary school (s) to the High School located at 26 Ashfield Rd. Shelburne Falls, MA. Elementary students will ride the bus no longer than one hour. All bus routes will follow public roads. Students participating in off campus curricular and extracurricular activities under the direction and supervision of school personnel shall be transported to and from such activities by vehicles owned and operated by MTRSD and HRS or under contract with responsible bus contractors or by volunteers.

Transportation Safety

The District will comply with all applicable state laws. All buses used by the program shall be constructed, equipped, inspected, and maintained in conformance with all applicable federal and state laws, and the regulations and rules of the Registry of Motor Vehicles and any subsequent amendments thereto. The attention of all concerned is particularly directed to the following sections of Chapter 90 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Parents and students will sign an annual agreement regarding rules for bus riding, which will be kept on file at the program.

School Bus Rules and Regulations

Bus Operators are in charge of the bus and the passengers. They are responsible for the safety of the pupils and for their conduct on the bus. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied temporarily or permanently, if a pupil's behavior warrants it. The operator reports to the bus company all violations of rules, and a pupil may become ineligible for transportation if his/her behavior creates a problem on the school bus. It is necessary for students to observe the rules listed below.

Any parent having concerns about school bus safety is encouraged to contact the transportation manager.

1. Be at the stopping places on time and ready to get into the bus with the least possible delay in order to keep the bus on schedule.

2. Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. Remain at least ten feet from the bus when it stops to pick up, and move toward the bus only when the door opens and the driver gives the THUMBS UP signal.
4. Students having to cross the road when boarding or leaving are to cross the road in front of the bus, NOT THE REAR, upon the driver's THUMBS UP signal. Students should cross far enough in front of the bus that the driver can see them even if they drop something. Students should make eye contact with the bus driver and use extreme caution by looking at traffic both ways before crossing the road. Students should be alert to the danger signal, HORN, as a warning that it is not safe to cross and they should return to a safe place on the side of the road they started from.
5. After boarding the bus, take a seat as quickly as possible. The driver may assign you a specific seat.
6. No students will be allowed to board or leave the bus at any place other than their regular stop without the written consent of their parent(s). Students 18 years of age or older can write their own note but need all notes signed by authorized school staff.
7. All elementary school students must provide the driver with written authorization in order to ride any bus other than that to which they are regularly assigned. Students 18 years of age or older may write their own note but they will need to have them signed by authorized school staff.
8. Obey the bus driver at all times while under his or her supervision.
9. Students are encouraged to keep papers, books, extra clothing, etc., in a book bag or backpack to decrease the chance of dropping items when boarding or leaving the bus.
10. Students and families should be aware of the danger of straps, strings, and other items dangling from clothing or backpacks becoming entangled and try to eliminate this danger.
11. Do not bring animals, firearms, explosives, or any dangerous object on the bus.
12. Maintain an acceptable manner of conduct at all times. Smoking, vulgarity, and loud, boisterous or other improper conduct will not be permitted.
13. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
14. Do not extend arms or head out of the bus windows at any time.
15. Keep aisles clear of backpacks, lunch boxes, musical instruments, books, etc.
16. Assist the bus driver in keeping the bus clean by not eating or drinking while on the bus.
17. Remain absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
18. Do not play any electronic devices without headphones while on bus.
19. Do not tamper with operating mechanism on the emergency door.
20. Do not operate the service (front) door; this is the responsibility of the driver.
21. Do not damage or deface any part of the bus. Parents can be held responsible for the cost of the repairs.

Safety Rules

1. Use crosswalks if they are available.
2. When walking on the road, walk on the left side of the road (so that you will face the oncoming traffic).

3. Remain seated if the bus is delayed on the road.
4. Use the emergency door only if there is an emergency.
5. Be helpful and of assistance to children who are smaller than you are.
6. When you leave the bus, do not stop in the roadway, and NEVER try to pick up anything that is under the bus.
7. Go home promptly after you leave the bus.

Warning Ticket System

- A. 1st Ticket - Warning
2nd Ticket - Riding privilege suspended for three (3) school days
3rd Ticket – Riding privilege suspended for five (5) school days
4th Ticket - Riding privilege suspended indefinitely.
- B. If it is deemed necessary by the Superintendent of Schools, riding privileges may be suspended without using the above system.
- C. If a ticket is issued; the student must do the following in order to ride the bus:
 1. Have the ticket signed by the parent(s)
 2. Give the signed ticket to the bus driver.
 - If a warning, the next morning.
 - If a suspension, on the morning ridership privileges are reinstated (note date on the ticket).
- D. If the ticket has not been signed, the student's first attempt to ride the bus will be allowed. However, the student will be brought to the principal's office for parent notification.
If the student does not return the signed ticket the following day – the student will not be allowed to ride the bus.
- E. If a student refuses a ticket(s) she/he must report to the principal or the bus company for a new one before she/he will be allowed to ride the bus again.
- F. If a student rips up, loses or in any way destroys a ticket issued to her/him, she/he must report to the principal or the bus company for a new one before she/he will be allowed to ride the bus again.
- G. A parent or student may appeal to the school administration for a hearing if they have any questions.

First Aid and Transportation to the Hospital:

First aid is defined as the immediate and temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness, which enables the student to be taken safely home or to a physician. It does not include diagnosis or treatment. Any care beyond first aid will not be given.

1. All staff members will be trained in first aid.
2. All staff members responding to the emergency will remain calm and act in a responsible manner.

3. In the case of an emergency or illness (such as a seizure, a serious fall or cut), the teacher in charge will begin administration of emergency first aid while the other adult takes other students to another area or room.
4. The supervisor or another adult who is not with the injured/ill student or other students will contact the parent/guardian to come pick up the student. If the parent/guardian needs assistance, the teacher or director may offer to accompany the student.
5. In the event of a fractured bone, or life-threatening situation 911 will be called immediately. The parent/guardian will be called notifying them of the incident and that the student will be transferred to BFMC. Parent/guardian is instructed to meet the student at the hospital, unless parent/guardian can arrive to the school prior to transport.
6. If the student is transported to BFMC and the parent/guardian has not arrived at the school, the director or other designated staff member will go with the student in the ambulance. A copy of the student's medical update will need to be provided to the ambulance/hospital.
7. When the parent/guardian cannot be reached, those listed as emergency contacts will be called as a further attempt to reach the parent/guardian. In the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached immediately, a designated staff member will continue to attempt to reach the parent/guardian. If necessary, the student will be transported to the hospital (BFMC) by ambulance and the student's medical update will go with student.
8. The teacher or other staff member who is responsible for the student at the time an accident occurs will make out a report on an official form providing details about the accident. This will be required for every accident for which first aid is given. The report must be completed within 24 hours and a copy must be sent to the district nurse leader.
9. All accidents to students and staff members will be reported as soon as possible to the superintendent and district nurse leader. The district nurse leader will report any injury or illness which requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment to the Department of Early Education and Care.

Criteria for Excluding Students Due to Illness:

Students who exhibit symptoms of the following types of infectious diseases, such as gastrointestinal, respiratory and skin or direct contact infections, may be excluded from the after school program if it is determined that any of the following exist.

1. If your student has a fever of 100 degrees or higher. Your student must be fever free (under 100 degrees) for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Motrin.
2. If your student is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea. Symptoms must resolve for 24 hours and keep food and liquids down before student can return to the after school program.
3. If the illness prevents the student from participating in the program activities.
4. If the white part of the eye appears red and has a green or yellow discharge. Your student may have conjunctivitis and may need antibiotic eye ointment that needs to be used for 24 hours before your student can return to the program.

5. If your student has an unusual rash or a rash associated with fever. Your student will need to be evaluated by their primary care physician.
6. If your student has a contagious illness such as strep throat (may return after student has been on antibiotics for 24 hours), flu, impetigo (also needs to be treated for 24 hours) and chicken pox (may return when last blister has healed over).

A student who has been excluded from the program may return once the student has attended his/her normal school day.

If a student becomes ill while attending the after school program the student will be offered a place to rest. A parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up the student.

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the program, the director will consult with the district nurse leader immediately to see if parent/guardian notification is necessary per MDPH regulations. The district nurse leader will contact MDPH for any reportable communicable diseases.

Immunization Record:

The after school program director will contact the student's school nurse, who will forward immunization records to the after school program. The program requires, on admission a physician's certificate that each student has been successfully immunized in accordance with the MDPH recommended schedule. No student shall be required, under 102 CMR 7.00 to have any such immunization if his parent/guardian objects, in writing, claiming it conflicts with their religious beliefs or if the student's primary care physician submits documentation that such a procedure is contraindicated. The student's school nurse will provide the required documentation to the after school program director.

Procedures for Administration of Medication:

Only staff members who have been trained and are in compliance with the MTSD medication delegation policy will be allowed to dispense medication. They will dispense only medication that is prescribed by a student's primary care physician. If a student requires medication during the after school program hours, the following must be completed:

1. The parent/guardian will inform the director.
2. The parent/guardian and primary care physician will fill out the medication order form.
3. The director will consult with the district nurse leader regarding medication administration before the medication is being administered.
4. The director and the parent/guardian will fill out the medication receipt form.
5. A medication log will be filled out as well as a medication care plan and kept in a binder where medication is being kept (locked at all times).
6. The medication will be given to the student as the designated time, documented on the medication log and the medication will be returned to the parent or authorized adult when the student goes home at the end of the day.
7. Nonprescription (over-the-counter) medication, such as Tylenol, ibuprofen, tums will be not given to students during the after school program hours.

8. Sunscreen and insect repellent will not be administered by staff without written permission from the parent/guardian and primary care physician.
9. The program will meet the medical and allergy needs of children including the administration of inhalers and EpiPens. These medications do require a written order from the student's primary care physician and consent by parent/guardian to administer these medications.

Evaluations

Staff observes students on a daily basis and shares experiences with families verbally on an ongoing basis. Families who require written observations can request documentation from the director.

The director will provide program evaluations quarterly to families to identify areas needing improvement. Families do not write any personal information to keep them confidential and a box will be put out for collection. Personally identifiable information about children or families is not used for program evaluation purposes.

All staff is evaluated quarterly by the director.

Snack

Students are provided with a healthy snack and water upon arrival to the program (at no extra cost to families). Children with allergies will be given food that meets their special diet. Also, families can send in a snack for their child if they have specific dietary requirements. At least one adult sits with children during mealtime and is a good role model, encourages conversation and social interactions. The program stores, prepares and serves all food and beverages in a sanitary manner as to be clean, free from spoilage and safe for human consumption.

Field Trips/Off Property Walks

The school has permission from local owners to walk the trails in the woods behind the school. Parents/guardians must sign a permission slip saying they are fine with students at times being off school property. If the program is doing a special walk (say to the river), a separate form will be sent home that informs family of the dates and times they will be at the site.

Registration Procedures

All students must have a completed registration form and transportation form on file before attending the program. Each school will provide registration paperwork to families and an online copy can be found on the program's website. Families may use the program in a drop-in manner, but only if paperwork is on file. All changes to a child's after care schedule must be done by 2:00. If families are unsure whether they will need the program, they should fill out the paperwork just in case. Children without paperwork will not be put on the list given to schools and will not be able to get on the bus.

Payments

The after care program has weekly invoices. Families are only charged for days their child attends. If a child is sick, then no charge is made. Every Friday bills will be provided, and

families have 5 business days to pay in full. Families may request an electronic bill and the director will email a copy. After 5 days the program will charge a \$20 late fee. If payment is not received in full after 10 business days, children will not be able to return to the program until the bill is paid.

Families can pay cash, check written to MTRSD after care program or make an online payment. To make an online payment go to the High School site and click on After Care at Mohawk.

The enrichment program is paid for upfront in full. Classes are limited by space and families reserve a spot for their child by completing the registration form and paying in full.

Parent/guardians will be notified of enrichment programs in advance. Programs will require a minimum number of students, registered and paid in advance, to be provided. If the minimum numbers are not met, the program may not be offered.

Students may join a class last minute only if their families **have contacted the director** to check availability and provided the proper paperwork and payment.

Refunds

If families have an after care balance and no longer require after care they may request a refund from the billing department. If a student is terminated from the program and the family has a balance, the director will request a refund from the billing department.

The enrichment program does not offer refunds. If students miss a class or don't finish the session families are not refunded money. However, if a class has low enrollment and the class is canceled, checks will be returned to families.

Discipline

Mutual respect: Adults model firmness by respecting themselves and the needs of the situation, and kindness by respecting the needs of the child.

Identify the belief behind the behavior: Effective discipline recognizes the reasons children do what they do and works to change those beliefs, rather than attempting to change behavior.

Effective communication and problem solving: We will model this in our group meetings.

Focusing on solutions instead of punishment.

Encouragement: We should focus on effort and improvement (not perfection) that builds long-term self-esteem and empowerment (instead of praise).

Rules

Students are expected to be safe and treat others with respect. Students will participate in formulating the program rules. Each student will sign an agreement to follow the rules. The rules will be posted in the classroom where everyone can see it. Reminders will be given, and problem-solving time will be offered at our group meetings. If a student is being dangerous or violent, they may be removed from the group and isolated with the director to ensure

everyone's safety. Families will be notified at pick up and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss behavior.

Termination from the Program

If challenging behavior is frequent, causes difficulty maintaining the program or is a danger to other students, families will be asked to come in for a meeting. A plan will be written, and a follow-up meeting planned.

If this process is unsuccessful, the director will contact the school's principal, special education teacher or other relevant staff to come assist in the next meeting.

If by the third meeting a solution is unsuccessful, the director will contact the superintendent. If the superintendent cannot resolve the problem, he/she can decide that the student is terminated from the program. Parents/guardians will be informed in writing and any payments made in advance will be reimbursed by the district.

Notwithstanding the process above, a student may be terminated from the program immediately if deemed necessary by the director.

Electronic Policy

Use of handheld personal electronic devices, such as iPods, iPhones and the like, are not allowed at after care. Teachers will give specific guidance on the use of devices for educational purposes (such as homework help). Staff will follow the district policy for internet use to ensure children are protected. Such items, if brought to after care, will be safeguarded by the director or lead teacher as necessary.

Snow Policy

In the event that school is closed, or students are released early due to snow, there will be no after care that day to ensure children arrive home safely. These decisions are made when weather conditions deteriorate during the school day. A School Reach call will be made to parents/guardians if school is closed early. Please have a plan for someone to meet your child(ren) upon their arrival home.

Homework Policy

Students in both the after care and enrichment program will be given time to complete homework. Students are not required to work on homework, but we strongly encourage it as we have the space and staff available. Families will receive a homework form where they will be asked if they want their child to complete homework during the program.

Photographs

Students at times may be photographed for purposes of documenting after care projects. At times the program might use these photos for making brochures and flyers for promoting the program. Also, pictures will be posted on the

program's Facebook page using first names only. Families will be provided with a waiver giving the program permission to do so.

Parent Visits/Conferences/Input Program Policy

Families are welcome to visit the program to observe or volunteer. The director is available for individual conferences with families and/or teachers at the family's request. Families will be asked to complete a program evaluation quarterly so the director can improve the quality of the program. These will be anonymous as to ensure the family's privacy. Families are also welcome to schedule an appointment with the director to express any concerns or ideas about the program.

Referrals, Social Service, and Community Resources

As required by EEC regulation 7.04(17)(h), all programs must have a plan for referral of a child to another agency. In the event the program staff has concern for a child's emotional, social, cognitive and or physical well-being or development, they will discuss the situation with the family. Alternatively, parents/guardians may also address their concerns about their child with the staff as part of ongoing communication or parent conferences and join in the process of seeking a referral.

When necessary, and with the written permission of the parent/guardian, the director will make a referral to an appropriate agency or the program will give contact information to the parent/guardian if parental inquiry is required by the agency. The director will assist the parent/guardian with making the contact if this is requested by the parent/guardian.

We ask that parent/guardian inform us if their child ever receives services from the school or another agency so that we can all work together. We have forms for parents/guardians to sign so that we can have permission to speak to the people who serve your child. This helps us all support your child.

Pick-Up Policy

The program ends promptly at 5:30. If a parent/guardian is more than 10 minutes late a warning may be issued by the director. If a parent/guardian is late again, they may be charged \$10. If a parent/guardian is consistently late, they must meet with the director to discuss a new pick-up plan. If families refuse to meet with the director or continue to be late after a new plan is in place, **their child will be terminated from the program.**