



School Year 2021-2022

Family Handbook

A program of



River Valley Child Development Services
611 7th Avenue
Huntington, WV 25701
304-523-3417
www.rvcds.org

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VAB

About School Age Connections

School Age Connections (SAC), established in 1986, provides a safe enriching environment for children ranging in age from 4 to 12 years. We offer after school programs as well as all-day child care programs when school is not in session. Our goal is to provide a safe facility that promotes hands-on learning. All of our after school programs include a healthy snack and teacher assistance with homework. Our all day child care program is open during days that Cabell County Schools are not in session (Spring Break, Winter Break, Summer Break, and OSE days) and include a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack. All of our programs provide enrichment activities and support the learning needs of the children enrolled.

Children Served: Pre-Kindergarten through thirteen years of age.

All River Valley Child Development Services programs provide an environment free from discrimination, intimidation and harassment because of race, gender, age, religion, handicap, or ethnic origin. RVCDS prohibits any physical, verbal, or visual harassment by any employee toward any family or child.

All River Valley Child Development Services programs are covered by liability insurance.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

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RVCDS MISSION STATEMENT

To provide quality services and support to children, families and the early childhood community.

SAC MISSION STATEMENT

To provide families with high quality care for their school aged children through positive adult interactions, engaging activities, and new experiences.

OUR VISION

All children in West Virginia will have access to quality early childhood services.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Site Supervisor of School Age Connection: Kenzie Phelps

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

Philosophy

We believe the purpose of school age care is two-fold:

- Children should be cared for in a safe, nurturing environment that parents can trust when children and parents are apart.
- Children should be involved in a developmentally appropriate program, which fully promotes each child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual skills.

We strive for an atmosphere that respects the individual differences of children and their parents, and yet appreciates the similarity in all of us. Additionally, we set high standards for our program as an example in our community of the quality childcare services that all children deserve.

Children are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis, without discrimination in regard to race, color, religion, gender, and socio-economic status based on availability.

Teacher/Student Ratio

For children ages 5-12, the ratio is 1 adult per 16 children. If there are Pre-K children who are 4 years of age, the ratio is 1 adult per 12 children.

Agency's Right to Refuse Admission

SAC strives to maintain an ample list of substitutes in anticipation of staff absences. However, there are times when substitutes are not available, and the number of students must be limited to maintain compliance with licensing regulations. Refusal will be based on a "first come, first served" basis when seeking to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios and/or closing programs.

Licensing/Enrollment

Maximum capacity is determined by a licensing specialist with the WVDHHR, based on square footage. The number of maximum children allowed at each location will vary.

Hours of Operations

Our afterschool programs typically run Monday through Friday, from the time school dismisses until 6:00pm. This is subject to the discretion of principals in the schools which house our programs. Our all day care programs during the school year, as well as the summer, typically operate from 7:30am-6:00pm. This is subject to change depending on several factors including the location of the program, weather conditions, staff availability, and needs of families.

Daily Schedule

Schedules are flexible to meet children's needs and may vary on a daily basis. Schedules will also vary from school to school depending on the space we are given to use and what we are allowed access to within each individual school. Schedules are also adjusted to accommodate inclement weather and special events.

In all of our programs, children are given time for meals, enrichment activities, gross motor play, outdoor play, free play, and quiet time. In our afterschool programs, children are also given time for homework help. During enrichment activities, children are more than welcome to play with any quiet, table activity if they do not wish to participate, but we do encourage them to participate.

Homework Help

The SAC afterschool programs offer homework help to any student who needs help with their school assignments. Students are sometimes reluctant to want to complete their homework in afterschool, because we have so many other fun activities going on. We do not force students to do homework, so if you would like your child to have their homework completed when you pick up in the evening, please help us and talk to your child about participating in homework time.

Parent Communication

Phone:

The Director of the program is available by phone during business hours 8:00am – 4:00pm, Monday through Friday at (304) 523-3417.

Each afterschool site is assigned a cell phone to be used for business and emergency purposes. The phone number for your child's specific location will be given to you upon enrollment. This is the phone that will be used to contact you if there is an emergency so please save this number for future reference when it is given to you.

Email:

The Director will often send emails for program business so that there is documentation of all business matters. We also email invoices for tuition, so please, during enrollment, list a current, working email address on your contact information.

Social Media:

The SAC program has a group page on Facebook. The "Friends of SAC" page is searchable, but only members can see posts to the page. All members must be approved by the site supervisor. Only parents and staff of SAC programs are allowed access to the page.

This is to be used as a means of communication to make program-wide announcements for closings, fundraisers, upcoming events, etc. Parents may also use this as a means to communicate to staff when their child will be absent or late, or even for asking about a lost item of clothing or homework assignment. It is open communication meant to create a sense of community with our families and staff and keep parents updated quickly about anything important in the program. Access to the page will be terminated if it is used for any other reasons.

This Facebook group is the only acceptable place for parents and SAC staff to communicate outside of the afterschool site. Please do not contact SAC staff via phone, email or on any social media for personal reasons, as this is against RVCDS policy.

Arrival and Pick-Up Procedures

When students arrive at the program each day, they will be signed in by a staff member. When picking up, parents are required to walk into the school and sign their child out each day. Children may not be dismissed to exit the building without an adult. Be sure your signatures are legible and the time you record is accurate. Failure to sign in or out properly will result in a \$1.00 fee for each improper sign in/out.

Once parents sign their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising the child while on school premises. The parent shall not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are asked to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child, and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Alternate Pick-Up

Children will only be released to authorized individuals. Initial authorization will be made during the enrollment process via the Authorized Pick Up List.

In order to authorize any additional person, other than those listed on the original Authorized Pick Up List, parents must add authorization to the original form or start an additional form that is dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

All persons authorized to pick up a child must produce a government issued ID. When the newly authorized person arrives at the location for pick-up, the government issued photo ID will be checked and the child's file rechecked to verify information.

If there are any last minute changes needed for an authorized alternate pick-up person, please notify us as soon as possible by email, fax, or phone.

Emergency Pick-Up

In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will call the persons listed in the Emergency Information section of the Enrollment Form, and then persons listed on the Authorized Pick Up List until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the Authorized Pick Up List. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements may result in dismissal from the program.

Closing Information/Procedure

If the SAC program will be closed for any reason, the closing will be announced on the SAC Facebook page (Friends of SAC) and program staff will notify parents via telephone and/or email in a timely manner.

If the governor declares a safety State of Emergency in which roads are to stay clear except for emergency vehicles, RVCDS offices and SAC will be closed. SAC staff will notify families via phone, e-mail, and/or Facebook.

Should a site need to close in the middle of the program day, the staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the Authorized Pick Up List will be called until pick up arrangements are made. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of notification.

Staff will notify the parent or emergency contact person of the pickup location should the children need to be evacuated from their site. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Transportation Policy

SAC staff only transports children on foot or by city or chartered bus for the purpose of field trips or walks only. There are no exceptions.

All Day Release Program

All Day Release (ADR) is a program of SAC that serves children for a full day on days when school is not in session (such as Christmas break, Spring break, some holidays, ISE days, snow days, etc.) We do not operate on major holidays for which RVCDS is closed and if there is a state of emergency, ADR will be closed as well.

This program will operate a full day from roughly 7:30am-6:00pm (depending on road conditions, staff availability, and what time we are made aware of a closing, among other factors.) This day will include breakfast, lunch, and a snack. Parents will be notified throughout the school year of scheduled days that the ADR program will be operating. On snow days, parents will be notified as soon as possible whether or not the program is operating on that day.

ADR is a separate program from after school that operates at an off-site location that is not located at your child's regular school. The address is 2021 5th Ave. West. There is a separate daily fee for this program that is in addition to your regular monthly afterschool tuition amount.

If you wish to enroll in the ADR program, you must fill out the All Day Release Enrollment form specifically for this aspect of the program.

Please contact the site supervisor for more information on enrollment, expectations, policies, and availability.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Enrollment Procedures/Forms

All paperwork must be completely filled out and returned to RVCDs/SAC personnel before a child can be enrolled. If any section is left blank, your child will not be able to enroll until all information is provided. Once enrolled, parents are responsible for keeping all forms updated with current information concerning changes of address, phone, medical needs, etc.

The following forms are included in the enrollment packet:

- Fee and Attendance Agreement
- Enrollment Form
- Authorized Pick-Up List
- Health Assessment
- WV Department of Education Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals
- Signature Page from the Family Handbook

The following forms are to be completed on an as-needed basis:

- Special Dietary Needs Packet
- Medication Authorization Form
- Seizure Action Plan Form
- All Day Release Enrollment Form

Tuition

Private Pay Families:

For private pay families, the monthly fee is due whether or not your child is physically present all of the days you have signed up for, thereby retaining your child's space within the program. Tuition is set via the fee and attendance agreement, to be filled out and signed by the parent during enrollment.

Subsidy Families:

Families are encouraged to contact Link Child Care Resource and Referral to determine eligibility for tuition assistance.

Families are personally responsible for payment of tuition in the event they become ineligible to receive child care subsidies. Link Child Care Resource and Referral will be notified of delinquent accounts.

According to the Dept. of Health and Human Resources, if your child care fees are paid by the State of WV, your child must attend up to the number of days printed on the Child Care Certificate while you are working, attending school or other approved activity. If your child attends less than 90% of enrolled days, you risk losing your child's space. You will be billed the first day of the month for the entire current month, and any over charges will be credited to the following month.

All Families:

All custodial parents/legal guardians are required to sign a Fee and Attendance Agreement. This form obligates parents/guardians on a "joint and serviceable" basis, meaning either or both parents/guardians are liable.

Tuition may not include fees for field trips and extracurricular activities.

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$15.00 is due at the time of enrollment. (Enrollment fees may be waived when enrolling in additional, consecutive SAC programs.) A \$10.00 Supply Fee is due for each child when enrolling in each separate SAC program.

Fees that are not paid in a timely manner may be sent to collections, and children may not return to the center until fee is paid in full.

Invoices will be mailed, hand delivered, and/or sent via email at the beginning of each month.

Payment Schedule

Tuition is due by the 1st of each month, for that current money. Late fees will be assessed on the 15th of each month for any past due accounts in the amount of \$10 per week, per child. If your monthly fees become two weeks delinquent, a closure notice will be sent giving you two weeks to make payment arrangements, or your child will be dismissed effective the said closure date.

Payments are to be made online through River Valley's website (www.rvcds.org.) Money orders, personal checks, and cash are not accepted.

Late Pick-Up Fee

With the exception of an emergency, late fees will be charged when your child is not picked up by closing time, as follows:

- a) \$5.00 for the first five minutes-according to the center's consistent clock, and
- b) \$2.50 for each minute thereafter.

A child's services may be terminated should late pick up become habitual. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure someone (either a parent or emergency person) is available to pick up the child on time.

Dismissal

SAC reserves the right to dismiss a child at any time, with or without cause. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period will be referred for collection.

Following dismissal, any adult or child who harasses, threatens, or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing or any other means, may be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Withdrawal

Once a child is withdrawn from the program, the parents and child are not permitted to re-enter agency property without prior permission of the SAC Director. The parents/guardians of a withdrawn child are required to call and request an appointment with the SAC Director if they wish to return to agency property following the last day of enrollment at any SAC programs. Appointments are made at the discretion of the SAC Director.

If the parent/guardian withdraws a child, the space is not guaranteed should the parent/guardian wish to re-enroll the child at a later date. The child's name will be placed on a waiting list and spaces will be filled in the order they become available.

Collection Fee

If you leave our program – whether by withdrawal, dismissal, end of school year, end of summer, etc. – and you have an outstanding balance, your account will be sent to a collection agency. Before the account is turned over to collections, RVCDS will add an additional \$50 collection fee to your past due balance.

Change in Enrollment Status

If a parent wishes to change their child's enrollment status, they will need to complete a new Fee & Attendance Agreement. Changes in enrollment will only be granted if there is space available to accommodate the change in days of attendance.

Changes in enrollment status will only be made on the 1st of a month. Parents are still responsible to pay their tuition based on their prior Fee & Attendance Agreement during the month of the request for a change. The new Fee & Attendance Agreement (and new tuition amount) will go into effect the 1st of the following month.

Pro-Rated Tuition

In some cases, monthly tuition is subject to pro-rating, depending on the date of enrollment or withdrawal.

If enrolling:

1st through 15th of a month = full monthly tuition

16th through 31st of a month = half monthly tuition

If withdrawing:

1st through 15th of a month = half monthly tuition

16th through 31st of a month = full monthly tuition

Parent's Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at School Age Connections, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order, School Age Connections must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent court order and all amendments thereto.

In the absence of a court order on file with School Age Connections, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law.

Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order or Protection from Abuse Order) SAC must be provided a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The order of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order via a notarized letter. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign, and have notarized, the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with SAC, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. SAC cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to the child, SAC suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. SAC staff will contact police should a conflict arise.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed. Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, SAC is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of SAC cannot, at the request of anyone except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. SAC will report any violations of these orders to the court.

SAC strongly advises parents to serve the local police department, within the jurisdiction of any SAC program, a certified copy of the court order as applicable.

HEALTH/SAFETY INFORMATION

Notification of Absence

If your child is ill, especially in the case of a communicable disease, we ask that you notify the SAC site supervisor not only of the absence, but also the diagnosis. This information will be shared with staff members on a need-to-know basis.

If your child has a communicable disease, parents of the children in the program will be notified that a communicable disease is present. Only the communicable disease information will be shared, not the name of the child - SAC will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.

Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your enrollment will not be based on your decision to share (or not to share) the reason for your child's absence from the center. This is merely a request to try to keep as many children free from illness as possible.

DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD IF HE/SHE HAS:

- Fever of over 100 degrees
- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Inflamed eyes or drainage from eyes
- Lice or nits
- Any illness which prevents a child from participating in routine activities, including outdoor play

Communicable Disease

If a child in the program is found to have any of the above listed symptoms while under the care of SAC, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of phone notification. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick his or her child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for an alternate pick up person. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the Authorized Pick Up List once a parent is reached.

If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the Authorized Pick Up List until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up. While waiting to be picked up, children will be excluded from participation in activities and isolated from other children.

Re-admittance After Illness

Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program.

In the absence of a doctor's note, the following guidelines are to be used in determining when a child may return to the program after an illness.

- 24 hours AFTER a fever has disappeared
- 24 hours AFTER the stool or urine has returned to normal color or consistency
- 24 hours AFTER vomiting has ceased
- 24 hours AFTER beginning a prescription medication of any kind
- When the child is completely lice and nit free

SAC reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Director or Site Supervisor believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Please see our Site Supervisor for information, procedure, and policies about Covid-19.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Children who are found to have lice or nits will be sent home and will not be permitted to return to the program as long as lice or nits are present.

Center Responsibility:

- Exclude children found to have lice
- Isolate children's coat and belongings (inside plastic bags)
- Bag dress up clothes, hats, wigs, stuffed animals, and other fabrics in plastic bag for 2 weeks
- Screen siblings immediately and close contacts of affected students as soon as possible
- Screen when signs of head lice are present, i.e. intense scratching of scalp
- Notify parents if nits/lice are found, and have them picked up
- Screen children before permitting them to return to the classroom
- Maintain confidentiality among students/staff

Family Responsibility:

- Pick up the affected child/children from the program within 45 minutes of notification
- Treat children appropriately - remove all nits, treat other affected family members, and do all appropriate house cleaning to rid the house of lice
- Check children daily/weekly for a period of time for signs of head lice recurrence

Outdoor Play

Licensing requires that children spend a minimum of 1 hour, daily, engaging in gross motor play. This should be in a natural environment, such as the outdoors whenever possible. Please dress your child accordingly in comfortable clothing with appropriate footwear. Parents should expect and prepare for all weather possibilities. Outdoor play is healthy for all children. If your child is too sick to go outside, he or she should not come to the center. In extreme heat or cold, the time outdoors will be limited. If temperatures rise above 90 degrees or fall below 32 degrees, then gross motor play will be indoors.

Incident Reports

Incident Reports are used for 2 purposes in the SAC program. The main purpose is to document any accident or injury a child sustains while in care of SAC staff. Should your child be involved in an accident or injured during the course of the day, a staff member will complete an Incident Report, detailing the date, time, place, type and location of injury, and a brief summary of what happened. If an incident was involving more than 1 child, each child's parents will receive a separate Incident Report that only names their child. All other children's names are kept confidential.

Parents will sign the report and it is then retained in the child's file. A copy can be provided at the parent's request. Parents are required to sign the Incident Report on the day it occurred, at pickup. Should a person other than the parent pick-up the child, a parent must sign the Incident Report on the following day. The Incident Report cannot be removed from the site. Failure to sign an Incident Report within this time period may result in your child's exclusion from the program until such time as the report is signed.

Incident Reports may also be used to document behavior problems. Severe behavior issues such as cursing, fighting, theft, gross disobedience, and damage to school and/or program property are some examples in which an Incident Report may be deemed necessary.

Administering Medication

If a child needs to have medication administered while in the care of SAC staff, parents are to submit a prescription and will also need to complete a Child Care Medication Authorization Form. This form is completed and signed by both the parent and the child's doctor. A separate form must be completed for each medication. All medications must be provided to SAC staff in a separate, original, properly labeled container from the pharmacy. If necessary, an appropriate measuring device for dispensing the medication must also be provided.

Non-prescription medicines, such as fever reducers, cold medicines, antihistamines, eardrops, sore throat sprays, etc. will not be given unless they are accompanied by a written order with explicit directions from a physician that do not require independent judgment to be made by the staff. No medication ordered to be given "as needed" may be administered. Non-prescription medication must also be in the original and appropriately labeled container with the child's name on it.

Staff will count and record the amount of medication left on site by the parent. Each time a child is given medication, it will be documented. Staff will administer ALL medication given to them by the parent, unless otherwise stated on the Child Care Medication Authorization Form. If applicable, any leftover medications will be returned to the parent.

Orders for ongoing medication are to be updated every six months by the prescribing health care professional and parent.

Medication is never to be given to a child other than the one for whom it is prescribed (not even a family member.)

Only authorized staff who have successfully completed Medication Administration Training will administer medications.

Allergies

For child safety, parents are required to indicate any allergies – food or otherwise – from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or as soon as the allergy is discovered.

An up-to-date list of children's allergies is posted in the child's classroom at all times. A list will also be kept in the kitchen and office. This information will be kept posted, but covered, to keep information confidential. This list is only accessible to relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

For children with food specific allergies, the following steps will be taken:

- a. Parents must complete a Special Dietary Needs Packet. These forms are to be completed and signed by the parent as well as the child's doctor. They will indicate what food the child is allergic to and will list substitutions to be made. These forms must be updated yearly.
- b. A copy of the Special Dietary Needs Medical Statement will be kept in the kitchen to indicate the child's name, their allergy, and the appropriate substitution. The original will be kept in the child's file. Menu adaptations can only be made once a Special Dietary Needs Packet has been completed.
- c. In the case of a severe allergy, prior to attendance at SAC, the parents of a child with allergies will meet with the cook, the Director, the teachers, and the child (when age appropriate), to discuss a food allergy avoidance plan. The parents will provide a list of foods

and ingredients to avoid, and will discuss a strategy for avoidance. The parents will be given a copy of the scheduled menu weekly. The parents and staff will review the avoidance plan yearly.

Food

The SAC program participates in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program allows SAC to be reimbursed for serving meals and snacks to all the children enrolled. In order to receive the reimbursement, the SAC program must serve well-balanced and nutritional foods that satisfy the requirements of the CACFP. These requirements limit sugar and high amounts of fats and salts. New foods are introduced regularly and children are encouraged to try them.

Food will never be used as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in meals for behavior reasons. Weekly menus are posted on site.

Meals will be offered to all children, but no one will be forced to eat what is served. No special meals will be provided unless accompanied by a Special Dietary Needs form. Food from home is not allowed.

Fire/Emergency Drills

School Age Connections conducts regular fire, lock down, and shelter in place drills. Evacuation drills are conducted monthly, and lock down and shelter-in-place drills are conducted twice a year – to be rotated on a quarterly basis.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency situation in which an evacuation is necessary, parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by phone of the situation. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the phone call.

In the case of a shelter-in-place or lockdown, SAC Emergency procedures direct SAC staff to keep themselves and the children in their designated lock down and shelter-in-place locations until notified by law enforcement and/or the Director.

Please do not come to the site until you are called. Your presence in a real emergency situation could put you, your child, and others at risk. Staff will do their best to keep parents notified of the most current information, however, our top priority is keeping the children safe. Please understand that information may not always be communicated to parents until after an emergency situation has ended.

Alternate Safe Location

Should the evacuation site be deemed insufficient to keep staff and children out of danger, the staff will take the children to an alternative safe location. Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the phone call. Staff will notify parents of the safe location.

GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct

SAC requires the parents/guardians of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect. One of the goals of SAC is to provide an environment in which children can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees but also is the responsibility of each and every adult who enters a center. Adults are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Individuals who violate the Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Additionally, certain behaviors will result in dismissal from SAC, and we reserve the right to cease services, with or without cause at any time.

Confidentiality

Within the School Age Connections, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees on a “need to know” basis in order to most appropriately and safely care for the children in our care. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and medical information of anyone associated with School Age Connections.

Outside of SAC, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law.

Violations of Confidentiality

SAC takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with SAC. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, or who pressures employees or other parents for information, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy. Violations may result in dismissal from the program.

Dress Code for Parents

Parents are asked to dress in appropriate clothing while at the center, or involved in any SAC sponsored events. Inappropriate clothing would include, revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn (in inappropriate places), and /or see through articles of clothing. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

Dress Code for Children

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day. Some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in daily outdoor play, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing, and preferably something that the parent does not mind being potentially ruined.

Children are discouraged from wearing open toed and/or open backed shoes (i.e. flip flops) at all times. The most appropriate type of shoe for participation in center activities is rubber-soled sneakers/tennis shoes.

SAC is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Touch Policy

Touch is necessary for normal social and emotional development of young children. Research has shown that children who do not receive affection do not learn to trust and have difficulty forming relationships later in life. Just as young children learn about their world through hands-on experiences, including touch, children must be shown love with touching.

One of the first rules children learn when they enter the program is that they may not touch another person in a way that is not wanted. This covers harmful touching like hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, etc. but also includes “nice” touching like hugging or patting. Both staff and children are expected to respect this rule. The only exception is when a staff member must gain control of a child to prevent injury/harm to others or themselves.

In order to maintain a healthy touch policy, these are some guidelines:

- Staff will be seen giving spontaneous hugs and pats on arms, shoulders and back.
- Children are given help with clothing whenever they request; however, staff encourage children to try to manage clothing alone.
- Children are taught that kissing is a family activity.
- The SAC program has an open door policy. Parents are welcome any time.
- At least 2 staff members are always present at the center.

Guidance Techniques

Techniques commonly used:

- Redirection - interest a child in another activity
- Positive intervention - adding an idea to a play situation that renews a child's constructive participation
- Logical and natural consequences – example, if a child spills something, they will help clean it up
- Restatement of rules
- Restructure of environment

Techniques never used by staff or families:

- Spanking, shaking, slapping
- Use of sarcasm, belittling, screaming

Corporal punishment (e.g., spanking, shaking, slapping, etc.) by staff or parent/guardian will NOT be permitted or tolerated at any of the SAC programs.

Physical/Verbal Punishment

While SAC does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents/guardians to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are welcome to discuss behavior issues with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents/guardians are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. No parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their child, it is appropriate for the parent to direct their concerns to the Site Supervisor or Director.

It is inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the Site Supervisor or Director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such discussion, teachers and/or center director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with other families visiting the center.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of SAC are considered mandated reporters under this law. The employees of SAC are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. SAC takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of SAC cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services, or appropriate authorities, which are later determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, and/or season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Firearms and Weapons Policy

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunitions and/or weapon on agency property. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Smoking

For the health of all SAC employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on agency property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building or on the grounds of where SAC is present. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the property. SAC staff are required to be non-smokers per RVCDS policy.

Swearing/Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be permitted to be directed towards members of the staff.

Threatening/Confrontational Interactions

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

We understand parents will not always agree with the employees of SAC or other families. It is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Violations of the Safety Procedures

Families are required to follow safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as inconveniences, but to protect the welfare of the staff and children. Please be particularly mindful of SAC entrance procedures. We must not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Please do not hold doors open for others following you, or open doors for someone you see waiting. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Site Supervisor or Director.

OTHER INFORMATION

Toys/Electronics from Home

Children are not permitted to bring toys or electronics from home. If students have these items, we ask that they remain in their book bags. SAC staff reserves the right to monitor and disapprove any/all electronic media that is utilized while children are in the program.

Gifts

River Valley Child Development Services asks parents to refrain from giving personal gifts to the staff. Should you decide to give a personal gift, please limit the value to \$50.00 or less. Staff are not permitted to accept cash gifts.

Birthdays/Special Occasions

Should a parent want to provide food for a special occasion, arrangements are to be made in advance with the child's teacher, who will help the parent plan nutritious foods that can be enjoyed by all in the classroom. The CACFP requires that food brought in by families be store bought, not homemade.

Parent Participation/Volunteers

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's SAC activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, assist staff, and/or coordinate special events.

Any parent who volunteers at the Connections on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer in accordance with their custody/visitation rights outlined in the court order.

Field Trips

Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend field trips as part of the enrollment process. Parents will be given ample notice in the event of a field trip with all information including destination, date, time, and cost.

If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the SAC director or staff member on site. SAC provides all required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes parents to attend. Parents will not be permitted to transport children, other than their own, on any SAC sponsored trip.

Staff Child Care Outside of Work Hours

Any parent or guardian wishing to have RVCDs Staff care for their children currently enrolled in the program outside of the center, outside of working hours, and either inside or outside of the child's or parent's home, must sign a "Consent to Hold River Valley Child Development Services Harmless" form. In addition, the employee must sign a "Conflict of Interest" form and a "Release of Liability" form. These forms are available at the centers or in the main office.

Grievance Procedures

Families are a vital component in support of our mission and are encouraged to be involved in School Age Connection's service delivery, which is based on the principles of equity and accountability. This means that families have the right to comment on or appeal against any action or decision which has consequences for themselves and/or their child. Each family has a right to a positive response from CARE- its staff and management – to meeting the family's particular needs. SAC seeks to balance the interests of the child, the family and its staff. In some instances, parents may make demands which cannot be fully met or which seem unreasonable given the need to also balance the rights of other families or even their own child. Parents may need to accept a compromise, or may need to accept their needs cannot be met by School Age Connection. The goal of the grievance process is to be responsive to the needs and concerns of its families and children receiving services while adhering to established policies and procedures; and to protect the rights of the staff.

RVCDS School Age Connection's grievance procedure is formal recognition, promotion and protection of each family's rights:

- **Complaint**

If appropriate and family members feels comfortable doing so, the family may approach the staff member involved and if needed , set a time where the matter can be discussed appropriately. Complaints at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the family or by clarification by the staff member of SAC's procedures or polices. The complaint and its outcome will be documented.

- **Grievance**

The family may choose to directly address the grievance to the executive director. If another staff member is approached, they will immediately refer the family to the executive director. The executive director will research the grievance/situation and work towards reaching a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved. Again, grievances at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the family or by clarification by the executive director of RVCDS procedures or polices. Resolution may also involve the development of new policy if it is a situation that has not been addressed. The executive director will follow up all grievances with a written letter to the grievant and document all pertinent information.

- **Appeal**

Families are entitled to appeal any decision made by the executive director. Such appeals will be made to the board of directors. The board will conduct further review, final disposition, and a written follow-up letter to the grievant.

- **Contact**

Please contact Executive Director, Suzi Brodof at (304)-523 3417 if you have any questions or concerns regarding RVCDS School Age Connection's grievance procedure.

Agency Contact Information

Birth to Three –RAU Region IV
432 2nd Street
Huntington, WV 25701
Ph: 304-523-5444 / 886-982-8855
Fax: 304-523-5556

WV Birth to Three –RAU Region IV Logan
19 Circle Drive
Logan WV 25601
Ph: 304-752-1710
Fax: 304-752-2897

Birth to Three –RAU Region III
Family Enrichment Center
1701 5th Avenue
Box 14
Charleston WV 25312-1911
Ph: 304-414-4460
Fax: 304-414-4461

Choices CCR&R
315 N. Ohio Avenue
Clarksburg WV 26301
Ph: 304-622-6528 / 866-622-6528
Fax: 304-622-6092

Choices CCR&R
4421 Emerson Avenue
Suite 102
Parkersburg WV 26104
Ph: 304-485-2668 / 866-966-2668
Fax: 304-485-7024

Connect CCR&R
Family Enrichment Center
1701 5th Avenue
Box 4
Charleston, WV 25387
Ph: 304-414-4488/ 888-595-8290
Fax: 304-595-6402

Family Child Care Food Program
611 7th Avenue
Suite 201
Huntington WV 25701
Ph: 304-523-3031 / 800-581-3031
Fax: 304-523-3064

Link CCR&R
611 7th Avenue
Suite 100
Huntington WV 25701
Ph: 304-523-9540 / 800-894-9540
Fax: 304-697-4821

Link CCR&R Logan
19 Circle Drive
Logan WV 25601
Ph: 304-752-3932
Fax: 304-752-2897

School Age Connections
432 2nd Street
Huntington WV 25701
Ph: 304-523-3417
Fax: 304-523-2678

ACDS
611 7th Avenue
Suite 208
Huntington, WV 25701
Ph: 304-523-0433 / 866-982-2237
Fax: 304-697-6613

WV ECTCR
611 7th Avenue
Suite 322
Huntington WV 25701
Ph: 304-529-7603 / 888-983-2827
Fax: 304-529-2535

Signature Page

This Signature Page serves as the contract between myself and School Age Connection's, a program of River Valley Child Development Services, concerning all information included within the Family Handbook. I understand I may be asked to sign additional Signature Pages as updates, amendments, and future revisions are incorporated within RVCDS. The Family Handbook is available to me for review anytime, in print and online.

My signature below places into effect this contract, understanding of, and acceptance of the Family Handbook.

- I have received the School Age Family Handbook, and I will keep in my possession each current version as long as my child is enrolled in the School Age Connections program.
- I have read the Family Handbook, and I was given the opportunity to ask questions.
- I agree to abide by the Family Handbook.
- Although the program carries liability insurance, this insurance does not include medical coverage for expenses incurred as a result of an accident or injury. These expenses are my responsibility.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Program Director/Site Supervisor Signature

Date

Original Signed Page – Child Permanent File