



250-688-2797, info@mountainridgeacademy.ca
www.mountainridgeacademy.ca

Parent Handbook of Policies and Procedures

**Morning Learning Program &
Full-Day Care**

Welcome to Mountain Ridge Academy!

Thank you for entrusting your child in our care. We are committed to providing a nurturing early learning environment that inspires the development of the whole child – socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

Mountain Ridge Academy offers a unique hands-on approach where children are actively engaged in learning through play-based activities.

Our teachers foster respect, independence, and self-esteem in each child. In our peaceful and orderly environment, children will feel secure and be free to create, explore, and discover.

Mountain Ridge Academy recognizes the vital role that parents play in every aspect of child development, that home and family remain the centre of your child's life. We strive to compliment home and family life.

Please take some time to read through this handbook, as it explains the policies and procedures of our program.

If you have any questions or concerns please bring them to us, your feedback is much appreciated!

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1. Operations

1.1 Contact

- Facility address: 4726 North Street, Windermere B.C., V0B 2L2
- Phone number: 250-688-2797
- Manager name: Vassa Stein / Timm Stein
- Email address: info@mountainridgeacademy.ca
- Website: www.mountainridgeacademy.ca
- Business address: 4948 Timberview Place, Invermere, B.C., V0A 1K3

1.2 Days and Hours

We are open Monday through Thursday, from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, including local elementary school Pro-D days.

1.3 Closures

We are closed on public statutory holidays, on Easter Monday, and for Christmas break and spring break. Summer operations will be based on demand and staffing. Please inform Mountain Ridge Academy regarding your need for care during the summer well in advance of the summer break. Mountain Ridge Academy will be closed if SD#6 declares a "snow day" for the schools in Windermere and Invermere.

1.4 Daily Schedule

Mountain Ridge strives to provide a balance between structured and free play opportunities, as well as active and quiet times. Our goal is to maintain a balance of activities that foster every aspect of a child's development. Activities will include Montessori trays, puzzles, board games, a reading corner, arts and crafts, and block building. Group times will include storytelling, drama, music, games, reading, and baking. Active times will involve sports, gardening, animal care, and outdoor fun.

1.5 Active Play

Mountain Ridge recognizes the importance of being active daily. Active play is physical activity which includes moderate to vigorous bursts of high energy. It helps to develop gross motor and fundamental movement skills such as balance, coordination, and locomotor skills, improves concentration and learning ability as well as helps build strong bones and muscles. Active play is essential to healthy growth and development. It also establishes lifelong healthy habits of being active.

The outdoor activities will include, but not limited to organized games such as "What time is it Mr. Wolf", "Tag", "Red light, Green light", "Obstacle course", "Scavenger hunt", "Bubble chase", etc and free play. Children are encouraged to move around during free play, explore the yard and play with each other.

While we try to spend most of our active play outdoors, it is not always possible. If the group is not able to go outdoors for any reason, teachers will implement a combination of facilitated and unfacilitated activities such as music and movement at circle time, obstacle courses, dance freeze, balloon volleyball, yoga, etc. and free-play activities that encourage gross motor movement, etc. The stage area at the hall is dedicated to active play. Up to 8 students at a time will be taken onto the stage by one teacher, while the second teacher will remain in the main area of the hall with the remaining students doing journal work, crafts, puzzles, and other "table" activities. The groups will switch after a set period of time. On the stage we have Plasma cars, bouncy animals, crawling tunnels, and gym mats for active play.

Our goal is to achieve 120 minutes of daily active play for the full day program. Teachers will make an intentional effort to provide opportunities beyond the minimum for active play and will limit prolonged sitting activities, implementing frequent wiggle breaks.

1.6 Outdoor Play

With the exception of extreme weather, we endeavor to spend time outdoors every day. For full days, children will play outside twice a day. Our goal is to spend at least 40 minutes outdoor in the mornings and 40 minutes in the afternoons. Please ensure that your child is dressed for any type of weather. During winter months, parents are asked to provide warm clothing which includes boots, snow pants, hat and mittens. In the spring time, children should have rain pants and jackets. During the summer months, you are asked to provide your child with a hat and sunscreen, sunglasses, a bathing suit, and a towel. Please label all of your child's belongings.

1.7 Nutrition

Parents are responsible for providing their children with a nutritious morning snack. Please include at least two different food group options for your child. It is expected that all food will be handled with extreme care and sanitation, following Interior Health guidelines. For full day students, a balanced, healthy lunch and an afternoon snack are also required (following the Canada Food Guide). Please ensure that your child's food bag is clearly labeled. Mountain Ridge Academy will provide a water cup and commercially bottled water from our water dispenser. We also have a refrigerator for items that need to be kept cold and a microwave to warm up food.

During snack and meal times, the children will eat as a group. The teachers will offer an environment that is positive and social, where acceptable manners and behaviours are encouraged. Teachers will sit with the children and model healthy eating habits. Teachers provide conversation to children, allowing students a positive eating experience. Children will not be forced to eat anything. Food will never be used as a reward or punishment. Children will dispose of their own garbage after snack.

Snack suggestions are:

- Fruit and vegetables, possibly with dip
- Cheese, yogurt, apple sauce
- Loaves, muffins, crackers
- Raisins
- Pancakes, pizza, quiche

If a child has insufficient or inappropriate foods on regular basis, a teacher will address the issue with a parent/guardian. In the meantime, a healthy food provided by Mountain Ridge will be offered to substitute or supplement a child's snack/lunch.

1.8 Baking Activities

Occasionally, we offer special cooking or baking days, following all health and sanitation guidelines from Interior Health. Recipes selected will only use ingredients on the Interior Health low risk list. Staff and teachers will follow proper handwashing and sanitation procedures (as outlined under *Health Matters*).

1.9 Sharing and Special Helper Day

Children will be allowed to bring a special, educational item for their special helper day. Please help your child choose something that is going to teach the other children about your child, an interest of your child or another article of educational purpose. Teachers will list special helper days on the school calendar by the sign-in book.

1.10 Quiet Time

On full days, children will have a period of rest after lunch. Children will be encouraged to choose a few books for quiet time. They are not expected to nap unless requested by the parent.

1.11 Screen Time

Apart from our special movie day (once per year) and short educational videos (such as a children's music or exercise videos), children will not be given access to screen time of any type. Staff will limit cell phone use to parent communication, facility operations, and program planning during school hours.

1.12 Field Trips and Walks

At Mountain Ridge Academy, we occasionally engage in neighbourhood walks and field trips. These outings may include playing at the Windermere Elementary School playground, nature exploration in the adjacent field, visits to local artisan/historical sites, and walks to the playground at Windermere Beach. As these walks are within a seven-block radius, we request general permission for your child to participate through the *Field Trip Permission* form. A note will be posted on the sign-in table informing you of where your child is, as well as an estimated departure and arrival time, a contact name and cell phone number.

Occasionally, we will organize field trips to further locations such as the fire hall, Edible Farms, Ozzie's Amusement Park, or Hopkins Harvest. In these cases, parents will be informed of the field trip at least a week in advance. Parent volunteers will be required to achieve a student-to-adult ratio of 5:1.

When walking within the community, children will be paired with a partner. The pairs of students will form an orderly line with a teacher in the lead. Students will follow the pair in front of them and will not be allowed to pass. The teacher will monitor the line, set the pace, and wait for the students at the end of the line if they fall behind. If two or more teachers are walking with a larger group of students, one teacher will take the lead while the other will walk at the end of the line. Any additional adults (support workers or parents) will be interspersed throughout the line.

When available, the group will make use of sidewalks. Since Windermere has many streets without walkways, the group will walk at the side of the road facing traffic if a sidewalk is not available. When traffic approaches, the group will move to the shoulder and stop. The teacher will stand between the children and the road as the vehicle passes.

When approaching an intersection, the teacher will stop and wait for the group to form a tight line. After informing the children that they are going to cross the road and need to be alert, the teacher will look for traffic and ensure that it is safe to cross. When the path is clear, the teacher will lead the children into the crosswalk. When the last child has entered the sidewalk, the teacher will move to the side of the group and station themselves in the middle of the crosswalk to alert drivers to the whole group. When the last child passes the middle of the crosswalk, the teacher will follow them until they exit the sidewalk. When everyone is safely across, the teacher will again take the lead.

At least one teacher attending the field trip will be CPR / First Aid certified. The proper student-to-teacher ratio will be maintained at all times. A backpack with a first aid kit, emergency medications as required by students (e.g. EpiPen), and a cell phone will always accompany the group.

2. Arrival and Departure

2.1 Arrival

Drop-off of children will occur outside the facility. Parents will not be permitted inside the facility unless absolutely necessary. Ill parents and caregivers will not be permitted inside the facility. If a parent must enter the facility, they must maintain physical distance from staff and other children present, and they must practice diligent hand hygiene. Drop-off times may be staggered, if necessary. If another child is being dropped off upon arrival, parents are expected to wait while maintaining physical distance until it is their turn to drop off their child. Staff will ask parents to confirm that their child does not have any symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory illness.

Upon arrival, students will hang up their outerwear on hooks in their assigned area. Children will change into their indoor shoes and leave all outerwear neatly. Children will be allowed to complete these tasks independently, unless assistance is requested.

Hand washing is an important part of our daily arrival routine. All children will practice thorough hand washing for at least 20 seconds before becoming engaged in classroom activities.

Staff will be at the drop-off location and happily greet children and parents as they arrive. Parents should model and gently encourage children to make eye contact and greet the teachers.

If a child arrives late, the parent is expected to wait outside and call the manager or knock on the door. Please do not enter the facility.

2.2 Departure

Pick-up of children will occur outside the facility. Parents will not be permitted inside the facility unless absolutely necessary. Ill parents and caregivers will not be permitted inside the facility. If a parent must enter the facility, they must maintain physical distance from staff and other children present, and they must practice diligent hand hygiene. Pick-up times may be staggered, if necessary. If another child is being picked up upon arrival, parents are expected to wait while maintaining physical distance until it is their turn to pick up their child.

As required by Licensing, the adult who picks up the child must initial and note the times of departure in the sign in and sign out book.

Only people authorized in writing may pick up your child from Mountain Ridge Academy. Teachers are unable to release a child to any adult who has not been previously placed on the list. Emergencies can arise and plans often change, so please keep your list current.

We expect your child to be picked up on time. Thank you.

2.3 Failure to Pick Up

If a child is left at Mountain Ridge Academy, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Contact parents via all emergency contact methods.
2. If parents cannot be located, contact an authorized emergency contact person from the list on your child's registration form.
3. If no contacts are available, we will call Social Services.

2.4 Suspected Impairment

We cannot legally stop a parent from picking up their child for any reason. We can legally prevent an authorized person who is not a parent from picking up a child, if needed. If a parent or person authorized to pick up a child appears in any way to be incapable of operating a vehicle safely, we will abide by the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Health:

1. Advise the person that they appear incapable of driving and suggest calling a relative or friend.
2. Offer to call a TAXI.
3. Inform the person of possible measures to ensure the child's safety.
4. Advise the person that the RCMP will be notified if they insist on leaving with the child in the vehicle.
5. Immediately notify the RCMP and provide them with a description of the vehicle and direction the vehicle was heading.
6. Notify the Ministry of Children and Families.

2.5 Absences

Parents are asked to notify the school when their child is going to be absent from class or arriving late. Parents will not be financially reimbursed if their child misses a class due to illness or holiday.

2.6 Parental Access

Unfortunately, due to restrictions and guidelines related to COVID-19, parents and caregivers are not allowed to enter the facility unless it is an emergency.

3. Personal Matters

3.1 Clothing

A good motto to abide by is *Dress for Mess*. Please have your children come dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes. A variety of art medias are available daily, including paint.

All children are expected to have two sets of clothing (shirts, pants, socks and underwear) in case of a bathroom accident or a spill. **Please bring these clothes in a bag labelled with your child's name.**

Your child will require a pair of closed-toed rubber-soled indoor shoes, such as a pair of clogs. Please ensure that your child is able to put on their own shoes and do them up. **Please label shoes.**

Parents are expected to ensure weather appropriate outdoor clothing is available at the school for daily outdoor time. In winter this includes sweater, snow pants, winter boots, hats and mittens. In summer this includes a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. **Please label all of your children's belongings.**

3.2 Toileting

We require that all children enrolled be toilet trained. Teachers will encourage students to manage toileting on their own, and all children will be encouraged to sit down on the toilet at all times. Teachers will be available for children who are in need of assistance. Toilets are located in an area that teachers will be able to see and hear the child. Children will be taught to notify a teacher before using the toilet.

3.3 Toys

We recognize that toys from home can create an important link for children between home and their childcare centre. However, they can be distracting in the learning environment. We encourage children to be responsible for their own personal items by keeping them in their backpack. We cannot assume responsibility for lost and damaged items, or spend extra time looking for misplaced toys. Some toys from home may be appropriate for quiet play during rest time (e.g. stuffies).

Mountain Ridge does not permit toy guns, weapons, or items of a violent nature. Imaginative games involving shooting or guns will be discouraged. Children will be asked to use their imaginations in more positive endeavours.

4. Fire, Emergency Evacuation and Shelter Procedures

4.1 Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis and records kept in our staff binder. Fire extinguishers are checked monthly. A Fire Inspector does an occasional full inspection of fire extinguishers and alarms.

4.2 Emergency Protocol

1. When the alarm sounds, the children stop what they are doing and are quiet.
2. The teacher leads the children to the closest exterior door and evacuates them from the building. The teacher will take with them the attendance book and a cell phone.
3. Another teacher closes all classroom doors and checks for children still in the building. The teacher joins the others, bringing the first aid kit and Children's Emergency Information binder.
4. Once outside, children are led to a safe area away from the building and attendance is taken.

5. A teacher immediately contacts the local emergency services.
6. A teacher will meet the emergency response team while another teacher remains with the children in a safe place.
7. Building re-entry can occur when authorized by the fire official, or it has been determined that no emergency exists.
8. Debriefing with staff, students and parents. We discuss what happened, explaining to families and students the process that we followed and the next steps of action. We discuss any repairs that need to be made, and what happens next. For example, if the school is damaged, where will we go? Will there be school the following day? We decide what will happen next. We offer support to the families and students. If any counselling is required, we will make suggestion to local services such as local RCMP victim services.
9. Restocking of supplies, repairs, and evaluation of emergency plan, if necessary.

4.3 Re-Location of Students

1. Should a building fire, wildfire, power outage (during the cold months) or other emergency cause the building to be uninhabitable or unsafe to stay in, children will be moved to a safe place and parents will be notified to pick up their child. All staff persons on duty at the time will maintain the safety of the children, staying with them until all have been released to their parents.
2. The teachers will bring the first aid kit and Children's Emergency Information binder along with a cell phone. The calls on the phone will be limited to emergency only. Texting will be used as a primary way of communicating. If possible, a note will be left on the door with the location of where the children are being relocated to.
3. The primary location will be the Windermere Elementary School (East Kootenay F, BC, 250-342-9243), located directly east from the Windermere Hall. Staff will walk children to this location.
4. The second location will be Winderberry Nursery (1681 BC-95, Windermere, 250-342-3236). Staff will walk children to this location.
5. The third location will be the Sobeys Grocery Store in Invermere (750 4th St., Invermere, 250-342-6919). Children will be transported in staff vehicles to this location, and only in absolutely dire situations children may not all have a car seat or seat belt.
6. Parents should familiarize themselves with the Government of British Columbia's official channel for large-scale and provincial-level emergency information, alerts, and notifications (<http://www.emergencyinfbc.gov.bc.ca>).

4.4 Other Emergency Protocols

All staff and students will be trained on how to handle an emergency. An annual practice will be conducted to ensure everyone is familiar with the emergency plan. The staff will walk with the children to the emergency relocation place and double check the supplies and documentation available. Corrections to the plan will be made upon reflection on the practice. The outcome of the practice run will be documented in our staff binder.

If an emergency were to occur, a cell phone would be used for communication. Teachers will be trained to bring along a portable evacuation kit and a First Aid kit (containing snacks, water, activities and money) when exiting the building, along with daily attendance records of the students. Children will understand that the emergency protocol is effective year-round, and for all types of weather.

4.5 Shelter in Place

In the event of extreme weather or a highway closure, staff will be prepared to offer childcare for an extended period of time. A survival kit, including water, freeze dried meals, candles, waterproof matches, and a wind-up flashlight, is on site. If the situation continues for an extended period of time, help will be requested from the nearby fire station.

5. Financial Matters

5.1 Payment Terms

- A \$40 non-refundable administration fee is due at the time of a new student registration.
- A \$100 deposit is due at the time of registration to hold your child's space for the program year. This will be applied to your first month's fees. Should you withdraw your child from the program before September this fee is non-refundable.
- An administration fee of \$45 will apply to all NSF cheques.
- Full-time families are entitled to take holidays and remove their child from the program without losing their space if the fees are paid in full.
- There will be no financial reimbursement from Mountain Ridge Academy for missed classes due to holidays or illness.
- There will be no financial reimbursement from Mountain Ridge Academy should the business be closed due to extreme weather or other acts of god.
- If the business is unable to operate for more than 3 consecutive days due to employee illness that is not related to COVID-19, or other cause that is not related to COVID-19, parents are entitled to receive a prorated refund for each day that the business was unable to operate.

5.2 Fees

- Fees are due and payable on the first day of the month.
- Preferred payment is by regular e-transfers to info@mountainridgeacademy.ca (please use the password **MRAPayment**) or post-dated cheques. If e-transfers are late, post-dated cheques will be required for future payments.
- If fees are not paid on the first day of attendance in any month, a reminder will be sent. If fees are not paid within 3 business days after the reminder, suspension will result on that day. If fees are not paid within 3 business days after the suspension, your child's space will be cancelled and given to the next person on the waitlist.
- If you are going to be out-of-town for any reason at the start date of any month, advance notice is required. Payment is due on the first day that your child returns. Reimbursement will not be made for ill children; full payment is required. Reimbursement will not be made for holidays; full payment is required.
- Family Discount: When a family has more than one child enrolled, they will receive 10% off their second child's fees.
- Families can expect a 3 to 5% fee increase per year at the discretion of Mountain Ridge Academy to cover the cost of inflation.

5.3 Withdrawal Policy

Mountain Ridge Academy requires one month written notice to withdraw without penalty. Mountain Ridge Academy will be entitled to payment for one month following the receipt of one month written withdrawal notice. If applicable, all post-dated cheques will be returned at the time of the child's last day.

5.4 Affordable Child Care Benefit

If you have applied for the Affordable Child Care Benefit, you will be responsible to pay your child's fees in full, while in attendance, until the benefit is in place. You will be reimbursed, if applicable, once your Affordable Child Care Benefit has been approved and processed.

6. Student Files

6.1 Forms and Information Required for Student Files

We are required by law to keep a file on each child at Mountain Ridge Academy. All spaces must be completed on the forms, using N/A if it does not apply.

- Registration Form and Fee Agreement
- Emergency Information
- Field Trip Permission
- Immunization Records, if applicable
- Legal custody papers or restraining orders, if applicable
- Recent photo and specific information about the child (identifying characteristics)

6.2 Immunization

It is not required by law for children to be immunized. If your family has chosen not to immunize, please note this on your child's registration form. We are required to follow directions from the Ministry of Health; in the case of a serious outbreak, unimmunized children will be excluded from the school for a certain period of time. Immunized children are required by Licensing to have a complete and dated record of all their immunizations on file.

7. Health Matters

7.1 Sanitation

7.1.1 Staff Members

All staff members must take precautions to prevent the transmission of germs or disease. These include:

- Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds upon arrival and departure, before and after handling food, before and after giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self, after assisting a child to use the washroom, after contact with body fluids, after cleaning tasks, after removing gloves, after handling garbage, whenever hands are visibly dirty, and after using the washroom.
- Using a bleach solution or approved sanitation solution to clean tables before snack or lunch times.
- Using latex gloves when encountering bodily fluids.
- Using bleach or approved sanitation solutions to clean surfaces that have come in contact with bodily fluids.
- Regular washing and sanitizing of toys and equipment.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the facility at least once a day.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day.

7.1.2 Students

Immediately upon entering the facility, before and after eating and drinking, after being outdoors, after sneezing or coughing, whenever hands are visibly dirty, and after using the washroom the children will be guided to the washroom and supervised with hand washing in the following manner:

- Wet hands.
- Lather with one small squirt of liquid soap for at least 20 seconds.

- Rinse well.
- Dry hands on personal towel.

7.1.3 Dishwashing

Mountain Ridge Academy has a commercial kitchen on premises. All dishes that are dishwasher safe will be loaded into the dishwasher. All other items will be washed in the designated kitchen sink in the following manner:

- Wash in warm, soapy water.
- Rinse in clear warm water.
- Immerse for two minutes in sterilization bath of bleach and water (1 tsp bleach to 2 litres warm water).
- Allow clean items to air dry on a clean non-absorbent rack.

7.2. Off-Limits Areas

The children will be taught that the commercial kitchen is strictly off limits. The door to the kitchen will remain closed at all times.

All storage and utility areas will have doors closed and locked at all times, ensuring children do not have access to the rooms.

7.3 Ill Students

Parents are required to assess their children daily for any symptoms related to COVID-19 before sending them for childcare. Do not send your child for childcare if she/he has any symptoms of the common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease. At drop-off time, staff will ask all parents to confirm that they assessed their children in accordance with the guidelines of the BC Centre of Disease Control, and that the child does not have any symptoms of the common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.

Parents and staff, who are unsure if they or a child should self-isolate, should use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool, contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit, or their family physician to be assessed for COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

All parents, caregivers, children and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19, or who have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days, or who were identified by Public Health as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 must stay home and self-isolate. Children must be kept at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have completely resolved. Children who are ill, including children of essential service providers, will not be permitted to attend childcare. If a child is assessed by their family physician or nurse practitioner and it is determined that they do not have COVID-19, they may return to childcare once symptoms resolve.

Parents are expected to recognize when their child is ill and needs to stay home. Sending a sick child to the program puts other children at risk and can compromise your child's comfort and safety. Childcare staff do not have the resources to care for sick children. An ill child may display the following symptoms:

- Acts unwell while attending the program.
- Has an infectious condition, including severe cough.
- Has a temperature above normal.
- Has a severe rash or discharge of the eyes or nose.
- Has been vomiting.

Do not send your child if she/he has: Chicken Pox, diarrhea, discharge from the eyes, fever (over 100F/37C in the last 24 hours), hepatitis, impetigo, measles, mumps, pink eye, rash, ringworm, rubella, scabies, strep throat, tuberculosis, whooping cough, parasites, or is vomiting.

If a child becomes ill during class, parents will be notified immediately. An ill child must be picked up immediately. The ill child will be comforted until the parent arrives to pick up the child. In the event that the parent is unavailable, the emergency contact person on the registration form will be called.

To reduce the transmission of infectious illnesses, all children and staff will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds upon arrival. Illnesses will be reported to Disease Control and Licensing, if necessary.

Parents should inform the teachers of all chronic health problems, allergies or dietary restrictions that their child may have. It is also recommended to inform the teachers of any major changes in the home (death, move pending, separation, lost pet etc.). When teachers are informed, they are better prepared to respond appropriately to children's needs and behaviour. All information will be kept confidential.

If children need to miss school because of illness, there will be no financial reimbursement from Mountain Ridge Academy.

7.4 Medicines at Mountain Ridge Academy

A custodial parent must administer all prescribed and non-prescribed medications, including vitamins, to their child at all times at Mountain Ridge Academy. We will not have any medications kept on site. An exception may be made for a child who has a formal care plan approved by a doctor in place. All administration must be documented in the staff binder and include the date, time, medication, and dosage given.

7.5 Accident and Injury Procedure

Parents will be contacted immediately about any serious accident or injury. If necessary, an ambulance will be called. A record will be made, and the appropriate forms filled out. Injuries and accidents that are incidental but not serious will be tended to, recorded in the incident book and reported to parents at the time of pick-up. Serious injuries and communicable diseases will be reported to the proper authorities within 24 hours.

7.6 Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

We are required by law to report any suspected or disclosed incidents of abuse in our care.

Warning signs that may indicate child abuse or neglect, according to the Family and Child Services Act, are:

- Unexplained, ongoing bruises.
- Unexplained fractures.
- Constant complaints of sore throats or stomach aches that have no medical explanation.
- Lack of reasonable hygiene.
- Clothing extremely inappropriate for weather conditions.
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear.
- Irritation, bruising, bleeding, pain or itching near the genitals or anus.
- Sudden onset of continuous toilet accidents.
- Sudden change in attitude towards someone previously liked and trusted.
- Expressing sexual knowledge not usual for age and language skills, behaviour or play.
- Becoming anxious or fearful.

These signs do not necessarily mean abuse is happening, but if one or more signs are noticed there is cause for concern. Reporting procedures are designed to protect the child. The responsibility of the teacher is to report suspicious behaviour, not to determine if abuse has occurred.

8. Guidance and Behavior Management

8.1. Guidance Strategies

At Mountain Ridge Academy, we aim to encourage and guide children to learn to handle life situations in a way that allows the child to feel self-control, self-direction, self-respect and self-confidence. The teachers will follow a variety of strategies to prevent and maintain positive behaviours of each child.

Prevention by teacher:

- Set clear limits in simple language.
- State expected behaviours.
- Reinforce appropriate behaviours.
- Model appropriate behaviour.
- Encourage and invite children to activities.
- Be aware of problem behaviours before they progress.
- Provide interesting and engaging activities in the classroom.
- Model positive verbal communication.
- Encourage positive, kind and understanding ways.
- Offer a peaceful environment.

Maintaining by teacher:

- Redirection and offer alternate choices.
- Invite children to be near the teacher.
- Use touch to calm down.
- Model desired behaviour.
- Limit activity area.
- Change environment.

Any form of behaviour management that could harm a child physically or emotionally is unacceptable at Mountain Ridge Academy. Teachers must never shake, strike, pinch, rough handle, restrain, force feed, withhold snack, embarrass, ridicule, or leave a child alone. A teacher is only permitted to yell if it is a matter of safety.

8.2. Behavioral Concerns

The teacher will keep record of specific incidents and inform parents of ongoing behaviour concerns. Together, the teacher and the parents will inform and implement a positive plan to manage undesirable behaviours. If the plan is in effect and the behaviour persists after one month:

1. The teacher may request parental agreement for a support worker for the child; this would include a letter with parents' signatures.
2. The teacher or the parents may decide that Mountain Ridge Academy is not the best environment for their child.
3. Two weeks written notice will be provided to the parents upon dismissal of their child from the program.
4. Upon dismissal from Mountain Ridge Academy, any remaining post-dated cheques or applicable refund will be returned to the parent and/or child subsidy notified, effective the date of the written notification.

8.3 Supervision Policy and Procedures

In the classroom

The children in care shall never be left alone. During class time, the duty of the teacher is to interact with the children. It is not acceptable for the teacher to be involved with non-classroom duties and activities during class time. It is expected that the teacher places the safety of the children above all else.

During class time

At the beginning of class time, a teacher will take daily attendance and inform other teachers of absent children. If a child arrives late, it will be noted in attendance and teachers will be notified. A teacher will ensure that children can be seen at all times in the classroom. Periodic counting of the children will take place daily. Doors to the classroom will be left closed. A teacher may take a small group of children to another area, leaving the other children in the classroom with another teacher. This will be done abiding to the child-to-teacher ratio set out by Licensing. The current ratio for Mountain Ridge Academy is 1 teacher per 8 children. We will have 2 teachers at all times, and never more than 16 children. Afternoon Care has a ratio of 1 teacher per 8 children.

On the playground

Outdoor playtime will be within the fenced area. The children will be kept within the teacher's sight at all times and are never to be left alone. The teacher will make note of children, who often wander from the group or choose to play in a not-so-visible area, and plan for those behaviours to ensure their safety. When children are playing on structures that exceed eighteen inches (0.46m) in height, a teacher will offer close supervision to ensure that children are following safe play procedures.

If a child needs to go inside the building during outdoor play time, a teacher will bring in 8 students to the classroom, while the other teacher remains outside with the remaining 8 children. Periodic counting of the children will take place. The child-to-teacher ratio will always remain at 1 teacher per 8 children in accordance with Licensing.

Off-site playground

Occasionally, the children may visit the Windermere Elementary School playground for a portion of their outdoor time. The school is located to the east of the Mountain Ridge Academy facility and offers play equipment and a large, fenced green space. Children will not be allowed to use the teeter totters or climbing dome as these structures are not appropriate for young children. Students will follow transportation procedures as outlined in Section 1.11 *Field Trips and Walks*. A teacher will instruct students to line up next to the main side gate in the Mountain Ridge Academy yard. Once students have been assigned to pairs and are lined up in an orderly fashion, the teacher will look for approaching vehicles in the parking lot. If the area is deemed safe, the teacher will open the gate and lead students from the Mountain Ridge Academy yard through the small side parking lot and across to the Windermere Elementary School playground entrance.

Once students are at the Windermere Elementary School playground, they are required to stay with the group and play within a defined area. The defined areas are the playground equipment, the side paved play area, the flat area of the yard and the hill area. Students will not be allowed to spread out over all four areas at one time. The teacher will give specific instructions regarding the area that the students may play in. Children will engage in both free play (on the playground) and structured sport/movement activities (e.g. tag, soccer, games). When it is time to leave, the teacher will signal the children to line up next to the Windermere Elementary School playground gate. Once the children have found their pairs and are lined up in an orderly fashion, the teacher will assess the adjacent parking lot for moving vehicles. When the area is safe, the staff member will lead the children back to the Mountain Ridge Academy yard.

In preparation for the case of an emergency, the teacher will take the First Aid kit and the cell phone when leaving the Mountain Ridge Academy yard.

If a child becomes lost

1. The teacher will remain calm and ask all children if they know where the missing child went, and quickly look in that area.
2. If within a few minutes the child is not found, the police will be called.
3. The child's parents will be notified.

8.4 Developmentally Appropriate Care for Students

Mountain Ridge Academy will offer elements of Montessori education and will have a planned daily curriculum focusing on kindergarten readiness. We will have an emphasis on practical life activities. Kindergarten readiness will include math, language and phonetic pre-reading activities. Our curriculum will also cover social studies, science and nature, health, safety and nutrition. Imaginary play opportunities and skills for social, environmental and community connections will be available. We will offer daily music and creative movement. Each day will include outdoor time to play and discover nature, while meeting the physical needs of the child. We believe in the right to a happy and peaceful childhood, unique to each individual.

Our program has been designed with the goals of social, emotional, intellectual, physical and musical development of each individual child. We strive to encourage children to develop respect, security, self-confidence and self-control. We believe in a hands-on approach to learning for children and we will encourage children to broaden their experiences. Teachers and students will model a respectful, caring and peaceful environment.

9. Conduct

9.1 Professionalism

9.1.1 Language and Behaviour

Since Mountain Ridge Academy serves children and families, all staff and persons coming onto the premises must use appropriate language and behavior. Threatening behavior or coercive discipline will not be tolerated or permitted anywhere in the vicinity. Staff may be required to confront, escort persons off the premises, or notify the local police regarding anyone displaying undesirable conduct. Disrespectful communication and verbal abuse, including electronic communication, will not be tolerated at Mountain Ridge Academy.

9.1.2 No Smoking Policy

Smoking, vaping, the consumption of cannabis, and other drug use is absolutely not permitted on or near the premises of Mountain Ridge Academy, including the parking lots surrounding the building.

9.2. Unauthorized Persons

All visitors to the centre, excluding parents / guardians of children enrolled in the centre, must introduce themselves to the centre staff. Visitors are not allowed to wander, at liberty, around or on the premises. If they do so, they will be asked to leave and if necessary, the local police will be notified for assistance.

9.3 Communication

If there is any concern either from the parent, the child, or the teacher, it should be addressed as soon as possible. Teachers are available at drop-off and pick-up, or via phone or email. Please note that all communication must comply with Section 9.1.1 of this Handbook.

If a parent / guardian has an issue or concern with another child and / or parent at the centre, they are encouraged to talk to a permanent staff member. If a parent / guardian has a grievance against one of the staff members, they are asked to contact the manager. Please note that all communication must comply with Section 9.1.1 of this Handbook.

For daily communication please look at the notice board at Mountain Ridge Academy. We offer a newsletter via email, as well as a regularly updated website.

10. Afternoon Care Details

The Mountain Ridge Academy Policies and Procedures refer to both our morning early learning program and our full-day care program. Children attending may stay on for extended care from 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Additional afternoon care details are as follows:

- Our early learning program will end at 12:15 pm, at which time parents will pick up any child that is enrolled for just the morning session. Full-day students will be asked to come into the school, as the morning session ends with outside time. After removing outerwear, children will be reminded to go to the bathroom, if needed. All children will wash their hands, following the safe hand washing practices outlined above.
- Next, children will sit down together for lunch. Mountain Ridge Academy afternoon child care will not provide any lunches to the students; all food will be brought from home. Children will be seated and will follow all eating guidelines as outlined above. The ECE teacher will sit with students while they eat their lunch. Children will be encouraged to clean up their lunch. Any perishable food will be returned to the refrigerator.
- After lunch has ended, students will spend a few minutes reading a book or doing a puzzle until quiet time commences. At that time, children will be instructed to find their cot provided by Mountain Ridge Academy. Children will each have a blanket and pillow, provided by their parents, which they are to use for resting time. The ECE teacher will supervise all children. Any child who still naps, will sleep during this time. If a child no longer naps, they will be allowed to quietly look at books on their mat. Gentle music will play in the background. Quiet time will last for 30 minutes, or until all children have awakened from their sleep.
- After quiet time, children will benefit from free activity time. Children will be able to play and explore the activities throughout the classroom. There will be less structure compared to the morning program. Teachers will use this time to play with students and encourage games, art, science experiments, building activities and imaginary play. There will be less focus on letters and numbers than in the morning portion of the program. Free play time will last for a large amount of the afternoon.
- When the bell has rung, children will be asked to tidy up their activities and meet on the carpet for story time. The ECE teacher will read a few stories to the children as a group. After story time, children will be asked to go the bathroom. All children are expected to go to the bathroom and wash their hands, as outlined above. The children will then have their afternoon snack following the procedures outlined above for the morning snack.
- After snack time, children will put their outside clothing on and prepare for the end of class, gathering all belongings into their bags. The ECE teacher will get ready for outside time and take all children outside into the fenced area of the centre, following all supervision guidelines outlined above. Many of the children will be picked up outside. If the weather is cool, children may return indoors for more free play before their parents arrive for pick-up.
- At pick-up, all dismissal procedures will follow our policies outlined above, including if a child is left at Mountain Ridge Academy and pick-up by an intoxicated parent or adult.