

Great After-School Place



Parent Policy Manual

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The Great After-School Place is a United Way Agency. Additional funding is provided through parent fees, grants, and gifts.

INTRODUCTION

The mission of G.A.P. is to develop the youth of our community by strengthening life skills in a safe, positive environment. The G.A.P. is licensed by the State of South Dakota Department of Social Services and can provide care for up to 300 children. The morning program is available for children K-14 years of age. The after school and summer programs are available for children K- 6th grade.

Through recreational, educational and developmental activities, children are given the optimum opportunity to grow physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. The G.A.P. serves the children in grades K-6 enrolled in the Brookings schools by providing quality care for children during the before and after-school hours. During the summer care is provided for any child living in Brookings or whose parents work in the Brookings community.

While at the G.A.P., children will be offered a planned program of activities, nutritious breakfasts and snacks, and accounting for their whereabouts after school and during the summer. The G.A.P. main office is in the Faith Reformed Church and can be reached at 692-8066.

Children attend at the following sites:

Hillcrest School - 696-4645

Medary School - 696-4369

Dakota Prairie School - 696-4909

Camelot Intermediate School - 696-4447

First United Methodist Church - 692-4399

The G.A.P. admits students of any race, color, handicap, national origin, or ethnic group. Additional paperwork may need to be completed to give optimal care.

The G.A.P. Director and staff are mandated by SDCL 26-10-10 to report any suspected incident involving child abuse or neglect to the South Dakota Department of Social Services and the local police department.

REGISTRATION AND ADMISSION TO G.A.P.

The application procedures include:

1. Completing the registration form.
2. Submitting the yearly \$10 per family registration fee for the school year programs or the petty cash deposit for the summer program. These fees are not refundable.
3. Completing the enrollment form and authorization forms.

To be admitted to the program, the following guidelines must be met:

Expectations:

1. Children will be enrolled in an accredited school and be at least 5 years old.
2. Parents must have a conversation with G.A.P. personnel prior to attendance.
3. Children will be able to communicate with staff.

Safety requirements:

1. Children will be able to function successfully under a staff to child ratio of 1:15.
2. Children's physical behaviors must be appropriate to the setting and not endanger others.
3. Immunization records must be kept current and on file at the child's school of attendance.

Unless a child has a physical and or medical condition, all children must be competent in their toileting skills. If a condition does exist, documentation must be on file with an explanation of the condition and how it is to be treated.

**Children and families new to the G.A.P. program will go through a four-week probationary period in order to allow the child to acclimate to the program. Communication between the family and staff is imperative

during this period. If after four weeks, the child has not adjusted to the expectations and safety requirements of the program, the family will be asked to find alternate care for their child.

The first children to complete the registration form and submit the fees will be the first to enter the program. Enrollment at each site is limited. If room is not available at the location of choice, children can participate at an alternative site or have their name placed on the waiting list. When openings do occur, the Director will contact the next applicant. Registration will be ongoing as space is available. Currently enrolled students have first option to participate in continued programming. Waiting lists are kept on file at the main office for future placement. Orientation takes place for the kindergarten program in an open house setting each fall. Participants at the school based sites have orientation during the school district fall registration. Site supervisors will complete orientation one-on-one with families joining G.A.P. at other times.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The G.A.P. site will be operational each day school is in session including teacher in-service days and conferences. Morning program hours are 5:45 AM to 7:45 AM. After school program hours begin when school is dismissed until 6:00 PM.

Students must sign up in advance for full day care on teacher in-service and conference days, with attendance being a first come-first serve basis. An extra fee is charged for non-school days.

Summer hours vary by site. Start time is dependent upon family needs. All sites close at 6:00 PM.

DAILY PROGRAM

The primary goal of the daily programming will be to provide appropriate developmental opportunities for the children. This age group thrives on challenge, stimulation, idea-exchanges and positive interaction with peers and adults. A curriculum will be developed where children can develop skills and interests as well as exert energy and exercise creativity. Manipulatives, books, board games, art materials, outdoor equipment, and sports equipment are available daily to assist in the curriculum development.

The G.A.P. provides ample materials and activities for the children's involvement. Unless a special day or activity is planned, personal property should not be brought to G.A.P., and G.A.P. can not be held responsible if a personal item is lost or broken.

The G.A.P. participates in the state's child care food program. Nutritious breakfasts and snacks, planned to meet part of the daily nutrition requirement, will be served each day. Breakfast is served buffet style and is available each morning until 7:05 AM. Snack is served each afternoon between 3:15 PM and 3:45 PM. Monthly menus are posted. During full days and summer a morning snack is served close to 9:00 AM. Sack lunches need to be brought from home when care is provided all day. Coolers are available for lunch storage during the summer program.

Children with special dietary needs must have a doctor's written note detailing that need. The site supervisor should be consulted if special accommodations are needed. Food allergies should be brought to the attention of the staff and noted on the enrollment form.

Parent message boards or tables are at each site, posting current information concerning the program. It is the parent's responsibility to check the area regularly for timely newsletters, receipts, and messages from the staff. This is also where the sign in/sign out forms are located. Email is used often for parent letters and email contact information is appreciated.

Children and parents may also recommend special programs or activities to the staff. Parents are always welcome to visit and take part in the G.A.P. day. If there are any talents or experiences that parents would like to share with the children, they may speak with any staff person. The children and their parents will also be included in yearly survey evaluations of the programs.

STAFF

The Great After-School Place is governed by a Board of Directors who are responsible for the funding and operation of all sites. A Director is responsible for daily operation and overseeing of all sites. Each site is staffed by one qualified site supervisor, supplemented by support staff, volunteers, and special interest instructors. Staff are first aid trained and complete a minimum of ten training hours per year to meet the requirements of Child Care Services. The daily program of each site is determined by the site supervisor.

The Board of Directors governs the program, being responsible for the hiring of a Director, budget review, and approval of all policies and procedures. The program and staff will be evaluated periodically by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors consists of a representative from the following:

1. A person representing each site and facility (5)
2. Parents from each site (5)
3. SDSU (1)
4. Community Member (1)
5. Director (1)

If you are interested in being a representative on the G.A.P. Board, please contact the Director. This is an excellent way for parents to be involved with the policies of G.A.P.

VACATION/INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

G.A.P. will not operate on the following school holidays or vacation days: Thanksgiving, Christmas, President's Day, Easter/Spring break, Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day. Additional vacation days may be added (ie. Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day) depending on the school calendar. G.A.P. may also be closed several days at the end of the school year and before school starts to allow time for training and preparation for the new session. A listing of specific dates is available upon request and a calendar will be available on our website.

If school is cancelled due to weather, the following action will be taken:

If school is cancelled before the start of the school day, there will be no G.A.P.

If school is dismissed before lunch is served, there will be no G.A.P.

If school is dismissed after lunch is served, G.A.P. will open at dismissal time until 6:00 PM.

If the schools have a late start, the morning program will be open for any G.A.P. child that needs care. Brookings Radio will announce alternative scheduling for G.A.P.

If children are at Morning G.A.P. when schools are closing, staff will contact parents to inform them of the closure. Parents will be given a reasonable time frame to come and pick up their child

TRANSPORTATION

Morning G.A.P. children will be bussed to their respective schools via the school district bus system. A staff person will assist the children in the bus loading area and see that each child boards the appropriate bus.

For the afternoon G.A.P. program, kindergarten children needing transportation will travel by school district buses. G.A.P. staff will be at Dakota Prairie, Hillcrest, and Medary schools to ensure the children board the correct bus and will be met at their pick-up location by another staff person. Children attending their school-based location should report immediately to their school's multi-purpose rooms.

The G.A.P. program contracts with the Brookings Area Transit Authority, or BATA for summer and field trip transportation. Summer bussing will be provided for field trips and a minimal number of Parks and Recreation activities. During the summer, children walk to a number of activities, so appropriate foot wear is essential.

FEES

All fees are based on your family's eligibility for the federal school lunch program. These guidelines are available at each site or by calling the main office. Fees are determined yearly (in November for the following calendar year) based on the program's financial need. An updated fees schedule is available at each site and through parent letters. Assistance with child care costs may be available through Child Care Services (call 1-800-227-3020 for further information). Some scholarships are available and applications may be obtained from Site Supervisors or the Director.

Fees are collected monthly for the school year program and are due by the 10th of each month when using cash or check. ACH (automatic withdrawal from your account) is done on the 10th or 25th of each month. Bills are not prepared as costs are consistent. Full days have an additional fee (i.e. in-service and conference days), and need to be paid in advance with the monthly fee or at the time of attendance. Summer fees may be paid on a monthly or twice monthly basis, whichever is best for the family. ACH withdrawals during the summer are on both the 10th and the 25th of the month. Families can request a receipt for each payment, which can be used for dependent care reimbursement proof and tax receipts.

Delinquent Fees

The site supervisor will make personal contact with the family when fees are delinquent for 30 days. If no payment has been made for 60 days the child(ren) will be removed from the G.A.P. program until payment has been made in full or until an agreeable payment plan is developed. If a check payment does not clear the bank, the family will be required to make the following two payments using cash or money orders and encouraged to participate in ACH. If a family's bill becomes consistently delinquent, it may be forwarded to debt collections for restitution.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

All children must be picked up by 6:00 PM. Parents will be charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute per child for children picked up after 6:00 PM, payable to the staff. Site Supervisors will communicate with the G.A.P. Director when a late fee is incurred, and parents will be notified concerning payment. Late pick-up fees must be paid by the end of each quarter for the child to continue participation in the G.A.P. program. The Brookings Police will be contacted at 6:30 PM if a child has not been picked up, and parents and emergency contact numbers prove unsuccessful.

SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT

Sign-in/Sign-out sheets are posted at each G.A.P. site. Children in the morning program will be checked in and out by the staff. Children in the after school program will be checked in by staff, but must be checked out by the individual picking them up. Summer participants must be signed in and out each day by parents/guardians. Please be sure your child's **arrival or departure time is recorded, along with the initials of the person picking up your child.**

Individuals approved for picking up your child should be listed on the enrollment form. Parents must make changes to this in writing. Children will not be released to individuals if they are not listed on the enrollment form. Individuals picking up a child not familiar to the staff may be asked to show a picture ID.

ABSENCES

If a child attends morning G.A.P. and will be absent from G.A.P., no phone call is necessary. It is assumed that all parents will be dropping their child off at the care site unless G.A.P. staff is otherwise informed. Therefore, children not reporting to the care site should be in their parents care.

If a child attends afternoon G.A.P. and will be absent for any reason, parents must call their child's G.A.P. site before 3:00 on the day of their absence. Please leave a message on the answering machine. **The schools do not inform G.A.P. of children that are absent.**

Summer schedules are extremely variable. Open communication between staff and parents helps to keep everyone informed of events. If there is a change in a family routine, staff appreciate being notified in advance. During the summer program, absences are a concern if the child gets to the site by walking or riding their bike. If your child is responsible for getting him/herself to the site, parents should contact the site if they will be absent. It is also recommended for other parents to call the care site if their child will be absent. This is greatly appreciated by the staff.

G.A.P. is accountable for all children. During the school year parents will be notified at work if their child does not appear at G.A.P. and a message has not been received concerning the child. The site phone numbers are available from your Site Supervisors, in the phone directory under "Great After-School Place", on our website, or by calling the G.A.P. office - 692-8066.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the purpose of the Great After-School Place to:

1. Provide an environment in which each child can develop a positive image and bolster self-esteem, a climate in which each child feels safe and secure
2. Help each child behave in a responsible manner
3. Reward positive behavior
4. Help develop/guide social skills

It is expected that all G.A.P. participants will show respect to each other, use appropriate language at all times, and use materials in the manner for which they were designed. Parents and staff are expected to communicate with one another and work cooperatively.

In an attempt to establish general discipline guidelines, the following actions have no place at G.A.P.:

1. fighting and/or physical abuse of another child
2. defiance of authority
3. disrespectful or abusive language
4. destruction of property
5. fighting or physical abuse of staff

Discipline options may include, but are not limited to:

- a. warning
- b. time out
- c. note from child and staff
- d. talk with parents
- e. conference with Director, staff, and parent to determine boundaries for child
- f. suspension
- g. expulsion from G.A.P.

If a child's behavior becomes inappropriate and continues to be of concern, a two-week probationary period will follow a parent conference. If positive changes have not occurred during this probationary period, suspension from the G.A.P. program will occur. Expulsion from G.A.P. will occur if improved behavior does not occur after suspension.

***If a child is engaged in a behavior that is potentially dangerous to him/herself or another, and that child does not immediately stop upon request from the site supervisor, the parents of that child will be called immediately and are expected to pick up their child without delay.

If a child is witnessed by staff purposely destroying toys or property of G.A.P., church or school, the parents will be responsible for repair or replacement of the property.

The G.A.P. discipline plan encourages the use of logical and natural consequences for inappropriate behavior. One of the goals of the staff is that each student maintains his/her own dignity while learning these lifelong skills. The children are encouraged to remember:

1. I have more than one choice.
2. I have the power to pick the best choice.
3. I cause my own outcomes.

HEALTH

It is important to keep the children at G.A.P. healthy. If a child shows evidence of a childhood disease (mumps, chicken pox, measles, pinkeye, impetigo), upset stomach, diarrhea, a serious cold, or a temperature over 100°F, the child will not be allowed to remain at G.A.P. If a child attends the PM G.A.P. and will not be attending school or G.A.P. on their designated day, parents are requested to call and leave a message at the site. The school does not contact G.A.P. concerning absences.

If a minor injury occurs while attending G.A.P., an accident form is completed for parent information. If a child becomes ill while at G.A.P., parents will be notified and expected to pick their child up immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, calls will be made to the emergency contacts listed on the enrollment form. Sick children will be isolated from the other children until they are picked up.

If a child comes down with a contagious disease, other parents and the Health Department will be notified.

Prescription drugs will be administered only when it is not possible for the parent or school to dispense the medication. The following guidelines exist:

1. Written permission from the parent or guardian and the time and dosage to be given is required.
2. Medication must be kept in its original container properly labeled with the name and strength of the medication, name of the patient, name of the physician, date of prescription, and directions for use.
3. Selected G.A.P. staff will dispense medication.
4. Storage of the medication will be in a safe place agreed upon by the parent and G.A.P. staff.

In case of an emergency, serious accident, or illness, G.A.P. will contact the parent immediately. If the parents or other designated persons cannot be reached, G.A.P. will contact the clinic/hospital listed on the enrollment form. If possible the physician specified on the child's medical release form will be consulted. Parents are required to sign an emergency release statement and to keep contact information current.

If a child has a chronic illness (allergies, asthma, etc) that needs special care, the parent must prepare an instruction sheet explaining the necessary care procedure. If your child has an epi pen prescribed for use, one must be available at G.A.P. The school nurse's office is not accessible to G.A.P. personnel.

EVACUATION

Each year 4 fire drills and 1 tornado drill will be conducted at the sites. Evacuation diagrams are posted. In case of an emergency, an alternate site will house the children until parents can pick them up. Alternative sites are:

Hillcrest Site: Ascension Lutheran Church

Medary Site: Brookings High School

Dakota Prairie Site: Faith Reformed Church

Camelot Site: Mickelson Middle School

Methodist Church Site: First Presbyterian Church

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

Each site has an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan that provides direction during a natural weather, intruder emergency, or other sudden, disruptive event that requires immediate, appropriate response. This plan is posted at each site and is available upon request.

TERMINATING ENROLLMENT

Parents who wish to withdraw their child from G.A.P. must give the Director two-weeks notice. An exit interview may be conducted. The monthly fee will not be refunded if the withdrawal comes before the end of a month.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PARENT POLICY MANUAL

I have read and understood all of the contents of the parent handbook. I also understand that at any time I have questions or feel that a certain subject does not seem clear, I can call or visit with a Site Supervisor or the Director at any time for further clarification and details.

Name of child(ren) _____

Parent/Guardian printed name _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____

Date _____