

# Kirsten's After School Nature Program

Contract and Family Handbook

2025-2026 School Year

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## Kirsten's After School Nature Program

Dear After School Care Family,

Welcome to Kirsten's After School Nature Program! We know that choosing care for your child is a very difficult task and we truly hope that we can make it easier for you. Please know that we take this position very seriously and are honored that you have chosen our program. We can assure you that we are committed to providing the best quality care possible. Our goal is to help your child develop into a self-confident, caring, and competent individual.

We are a hands-on, outdoor-based program where children can relax, play, learn, and feel welcomed and accepted. We are a state-licensed, family childcare program with a cozy feel inside and beautiful park-like setting outside. We are licensed for only 12 children, which gives us the opportunity to give a lot of one-on-one care and form strong bonds with the children entrusted in our care. We pride ourselves in offering a nurturing environment for your children to learn and grow in a safe and loving environment.

It is our mission to provide quality care for children and families. Our staff members are carefully screened and trained. As a State-licensed program, we adhere to the highest standards of security, safety, cleanliness and teaching. We strive to give families the consistency and special touches that only a small in-home program can provide.

At Kirsten's After School Nature Program, we believe children feel and learn best when they are having fun and enjoying nature. We spend a significant amount of time outdoors playing in and observing nature. We develop many opportunities for children based off of their interests, as well as complementing what they are learning at school.

Kirsten's After School Nature Program reflects the spirit of children and supports their developmental needs. We prepare the environment so that it offers stimulating and challenging materials and activities. Every day, we work to make learning fun.

We provide excellent care and affordable rates to our families. We work in partnership with parents and families to build mutual understanding and we always welcome your participation.

Our staff are dedicated to providing the most comfortable and happy environment for your children. We not only stimulate educational growth but, more importantly, we do our best to ensure that they feel loved, accepted and safe.

Thank you for choosing Kirsten's After School Nature Program. We look forward to learning and growing with your little ones.

Sincerely,

*Kirsten Lukas*

Kirsten Lukas (she/her/hers), M. Ed

# Contract and Family Handbook Acknowledgement 2025-2026

## Enrollment

Enrollment in Kirsten's After School Nature Program meets all licensing requirements dictated by the Virginia Department of Education. Children in Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade are open to enrollment. We will not deny enrollment on the basis of gender, race, national origin or religion.

All parents/guardians must provide a birth certificate and a current immunization record for their child. The following forms are required to be completed, in full, to be enrolled and begin care.

- ❖ [Getting to Know You Form](#)
- ❖ [Privacy Permission Agreement](#)
- ❖ [Child's Record](#)
- ❖ [School Entrance Health Form](#)
- ❖ [Medication Administration-Decision to Administer](#)
- ❖ [Authorization to Apply ANY Non-Prescription Topical Skin Product](#)
  - ❖ A generic form is available if you would like to fill in the product name(s)
- ❖ [Provisions of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan](#)
- ❖ [General Permission for Regularly Scheduled Trips](#)

## Hours of Operation and Schedule

Kirsten's After School Nature Program follows the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) 2025-2026 standard school year calendar. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 3:20 p.m.-6:00 p.m. (This information is from 24-25 as this contract was written before the 25-26 times/days were determined) There is a possibility that the school will offer early release days again. If this happens, there will be a small additional fee. For 2024-25, there were seven early release Mondays and we were open from 12:20-5:30.

There are four two-hour early release days for quarter-ends. We will be open from 1:20-5:30.

We are not open on teacher workdays.

We will close whenever FPCS closes for snow or other emergencies.

## Daily Schedule

After a long day at school, students will be able to choose how they would like to spend their afternoon. We will start our afternoon with a nutritious snack. Afterwards, there will be places to relax and unwind, read, do homework, play games or do crafts both inside or outside, take a supervised walk, or do a special planned activity.

## Fee Schedule and Payment Policy

There is a one-time, **non-refundable** registration fee of \$100 for all new families. The monthly payment is \$540 from August through May. This fee includes all snacks and regular activities. Half of your August payment will be treated as a refundable security deposit and applied to June's services.

If registering prior to August 1, your \$270 refundable deposit will be due with \$100 registration fee and signed contract to hold your place. The remaining August balance of \$270 will be due on August 1.

If registering after August 1, your \$540 payment will be due with your \$100 security deposit and signed contract to hold your place.

The \$270 deposit is refundable if four weeks' notice is given. .

Zelle is the preferred method of payment.

Prices are effective through June, 2026.

Fees are due on the **first day of the month** in advance of services rendered.

**PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE AND THE PREVIOUS PAGE, SIGN IT, AND RETURN IT TO US WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FEE AND DEPOSIT. THE FORMS LISTED ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE YOU CHILD CAN START CARE.**

This contract and Kirsten's After School Nature Program handbook have been received, reviewed, understood, and agreed upon. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the family handbook and to ask questions if I do not understand anything.

Child(ren) Name(s)  
and Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: It may be necessary to make changes to this agreement. If this occurs, we will provide written notice as updates are implemented.

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## **ABOUT US**

### ***Philosophy***

At Kirsten's After School Nature Program, we will treat your child(ren) as if they were our own and we will strive daily to encourage them to be the best people they can be. We will provide opportunities for being with other children in a safe and nurturing environment conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships. We will provide appropriate educational and play experiences that contribute to the developmental needs of the child. We will provide opportunities for meaningful play that is based on the child's individual needs, interests and abilities that will build important foundations for future skills. Most importantly, we will provide an environment where your child feels safe, welcomed, loved and comfortable to be themselves.

### ***Kirsten's Education, Licenses, Certifications, and Other***

Masters Degree in Education, Virginia Tech, 2003

Licensed Teacher, Virginia 2002-2011

Fairfax County Public School Teacher 2000-2010

Licensed for child care by the Virginia Department of Education since 2012

CPR/First Aid Certified

A minimum of 16 hours of annual training

Al's Pals certified

Accepts Child Subsidy

### ***Kirsten's Additional Background Information***

I grew up in Arlington, VA and helped out in my mom's in-home day care. After high school, I couldn't decide if I wanted to be a teacher or accountant. My parents thought accounting was the more practical option. After receiving my business degree from Longwood College, I did accounting for ten years before realizing that I wanted to teach. I went back to school and received a Masters in Education from Virginia Tech. I taught for FCPS from 2001-2011. When my second child was born, I decided to open my own in-home day care. I have loved taking care of children for 20+ years!

I meet and exceed all state licensing requirements to be an in-home day care provider. This includes criminal background checks, CPS checks, unannounced inspections, trainings, CPR/First Aid certification and much more.

Continuing education includes training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, social and mental health, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, nutrition, and professionalism.

### ***Staff / Assistant / Substitute Qualifications.***

All staff, assistants, and substitutes that are employed by us will have appropriate qualifications in the child care industry and will meet or exceed the state requirements.. Whenever possible, we have better staff to child ratios than required by the VDOE. All

employees have passed a criminal background and child protective services check. They also receive continuing education.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

### ***Hours of Operation***

Kirsten's After School Nature Program follows the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) standard school year calendar. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 3:20 p.m.-6:00 p.m. (Exact times for 2025-26 may change slightly) For the four two-hour early release days for quarter-ends, we will be open from 1:20-5:30.

We are not open on teacher workdays.

We will close whenever FPCS closes for snow or other emergencies.

### ***Emergency Substitute Provider***

In the rare case of an emergency situation, we will call the emergency substitute provider. They will come to the facility to stay with the children during an absence. In the event that we cannot secure a qualified substitute during an emergency, you or your emergency contact will be asked to make arrangements to pick up your child(ren) and the program will close for the remainder of the day. Should this need arise, you or your emergency contact shall pick up their children within 60 minutes of receiving the call.

We will provide the emergency substitute provider with a brief orientation that will include the names and ages of children present, arrival and departure information for each child including the names of people authorized to pick up your child, the location of the children's files including emergency contact information, consent for emergency medical treatment and any special health care needs.

### ***Holidays/Closings***

We follow the FCPS calendar for all holidays and closures. This includes all weather and other related closures that arise throughout the year that are not already on the approved FCPS calendar. We reserve the right to close early if we feel there is a safety issue or other emergency. As much notice as possible will be given for any scheduled absence. If we initiate more than three personal closures during the year, the daily rate will be deducted from the following month's invoice.

### ***Admission & Enrollment***

Enrollments are reviewed for best fit, not necessarily first come, first served.

Registrations are not final until you have received an acceptance email. Prior to attendance, all enrollment forms must be completed and submitted with the registration fee and two-week deposit. Any and all changes in personal information must be updated as soon as possible. Parents are responsible for informing us of changes in address, phone numbers, doctor's information, emergency contact information, updated immunizations records, etc. in order to keep your child's file current. Please make the necessary changes as they arise.



A one-time registration fee of \$100 is due at the time of registration. This fee is non-refundable. The two-week deposit will be applied to your child's last two weeks of attendance. If the child is withdrawn prior to this, the deposit is refundable if four weeks' notice is given.

Our program admits children from kindergarten through sixth grade.

### ***Adjustment/Trial Period***

Our program is a fun and exciting place for children to experience and learn about their world and make new friends. However, it sometimes takes time for a child to adjust to a new setting. We will try to make the adjustment as easy as possible through communication with the children and parents, books, and a lot of guidance and patience. We also encourage you to discuss the new setting with your child and get them excited, or at least comfortable with it.

The first two (2) weeks of care are probationary for the provider, parent and child. During that time, the care agreement may be terminated at any time if things do not go as hoped. Your security deposit will be returned, as well as any unused fees.

### ***Inclusion***

We believe that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, it is important that all information relating to the special need is communicated with us so we can provide the best care possible. If we feel like your child may be showing some red flags in any areas, we will let you know and advise you to seek out an expert opinion. If we are not qualified to provide proper care for your child, we will discuss other options.

### ***Confidentiality***

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released, with the exception of that required by regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at my program are confidential.

### ***Liability Insurance Declaration***

In accordance with the requirements of 22.1-289.050 of the Code of Virginia, we acknowledge that we have liability insurance coverage in force on our family day home business in an amount that meets or exceeds the minimum amount established by the Virginia Department of Education (\$100,000 per occurrence and \$300,000 aggregate).

## COMMUNICATION & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

### ***Daily Communications***

The first couple weeks of care, you will receive regular communication with us regarding your child. As your child gets into a routine, we will provide verbal updates on any concerns, complements, changes in procedures, and reminders. The purpose of this communication is to ensure regular two-way communication between your family and us. We encourage you to share events and information from home that will better enable me to understand your child and to help strengthen our partnership in the care of your child.

We are always available to the parents of the children in our care and we believe in an open-door policy. Communication is essential for a healthy relationship to exist and will be something we will strive to do. It is often difficult to talk when many of the other children are still in our care, and we do not like to discuss personal information over the children's heads. Therefore, if you have questions/concerns and feel the need for a more private meeting, we are happy to schedule a conference with you.

***Bulletin Boards.*** We have a bulletin board with program news, upcoming events, holiday closing dates, pictures, announcements, etc.

***Email.*** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements and general updates.

***Family Activities.*** Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our care. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program.

***Other.*** It is critical to your child's success and well-being that you share IEPs and other important academic, behavioral, and emotional information, and/or family situations with us. We know that this is sensitive information, but if you cannot share this with us, we cannot provide the best care for your child. Some of these situations may also affect the other children in our care. A lack of such communication may preclude you from our services.

## CURRICULA & LEARNING

### ***Activities***

Creativity and individuality are the basis for all our activities. Creativity integrates physical, mental, emotional and social growth. It is fostered by a free, flexible, nurturing and open environment and by openly discovering, inventing and creating. In addition to having the opportunity for self-expression and discovery, children will be working on age-appropriate developmental stages through music, reading, dramatic play, free play, arts and crafts, outdoor play and field trips.

## ***Outdoor Play***

We will be playing outdoors every day that the weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play at all times, including shoes that protect the feet and have a rubber sole. Our outdoor play will include backyard playground, water play, bike/toy riding, obstacle courses, sensory play and more.

We will observe special days with activities (e.g. birthdays, Halloween, Valentine's Day, Easter, etc.). You are welcome to bring decorations, games, or treats to help celebrate as long as there is enough for everyone. This can be discussed with the provider in advance. If you have any objection to your child participating in any of these holidays, please discuss this with the provider, in advance.

## ***Learning Environment***

We provide a rich learning environment with developmentally appropriate activities for the specific ages of the children in care. We incorporate social and emotional learning in every aspect of our program. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas.

Creativity and individuality are the basis for all activities. Creativity is fostered by a free, flexible, nurturing and open environment and by openly discovering, inventing and creating through self-expression and discovery. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the following developmental areas: small muscle, large muscle, creative play, arts & crafts, music, math, language arts, and reading.

## ***Outings & Field Trips***

Weather permitting, we may conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking field trips is included in the enrollment package.

## ***Screen Time***

Our normal daily routine does not include any screen time. For special occasions, we will occasionally watch a television show or movie. We may also watch short video clips or sound clips on our phones. Students may not use their own technology unless it is for required school work. If the student has a screen, it must be in his cubby and turned off. If they need it for something important, they must first get permission.

## ***Multiculturalism and Religion***

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we live in. I utilize books, music, games, toys, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it. Assistance from the families that would like to share the traditions, customs, and celebrations of their culture and/or religion is not only welcomed, but encouraged. Kirsten is Christian and will celebrate Christian holidays during after school care.

## ***Special Events***

On early release days, we will occasionally have activities planned, like music, a movie, or presentation.

## ***Rest Time***

If a child needs to take an occasional nap, we will have mats and a blanket for them. If a child regularly needs to have a nap, we will have to have a discussion about how best to handle it.

## **GUIDANCE**

### ***General Procedure***

Thoughtful direction, distraction, positive reinforcement, and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving students in problem solving helps them develop their ability to become confident and self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people and property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

If those techniques are not effective, we use Dr. Phelan's 1, 2, 3, Magic approach, for which you can find more information on-line. When appropriate, children may be given short periods of "time out". This period will never exceed their age (5 minute for a 5-year-old, 6 minutes for a 6 year old, etc.) and will only be used when redirecting is not successful. Time out is not meant as punishment but to remove the child from the scene of conflict and help them regain control of themselves and their behavior.

### ***Challenging Behavior***

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

### ***Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, we will immediately communicate our concerns with you. We will work together to understand the causes and brainstorm a solution.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to himself or others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### ***Payment***

A one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is due per child before enrollment.

Monthly fees are due on the first day of the month, unless otherwise noted or agreed upon in writing. Fees may be paid in the form of cash, check, or Zelle (preferred).

Payment is always due in advance with no refunds for absences. This includes closures due to the student's illness, vacation, or any other reason. This also includes closures due to inclement weather, power outages, unforeseen emergencies, situations beyond our control or absences due to our illness or our family's illness. Credit will only be given for closings in excess of three personal sick days or other planned closures.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

The late payment fee is \$35. If you know that your payment will be late and we agree upon a different date in advance, the fee may be waived. However, we can only accommodate this if there is open communication so we can plan accordingly and create some form of payment plan. If the plan is not met or if late payments become a regular occurrence, care could be terminated.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or other rejected payments will be charged a fee of \$35. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence and done with as much notice as possible. A late fee of \$15.00 for every fifteen minutes, or any part thereof, will be charged for each late pickup. The late fee will be included in the next month's invoice. If you notify us before 5:30 p.m., you will be allowed one (1) late pickup (no more than 10 minutes) per month before the late fee is charged. If you do not notify us, the fee will not be waived for the first late pick-up. Chronic late pick-ups will result in termination of services.

### ***Pandemics and Other Extended Closures***

In the case that the childcare program needs to be closed for up to a month due to an emergency beyond our control, there will be no credits or refunds. For such an emergency that extends beyond one month, tuition will be reduced to 50% of the monthly payment in order to reserve your child's space in the program upon re-opening. Credit will not be given for unplanned closings, including contagious disease deep cleanings.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### ***Absences***

If your child is going to be absent, please let us know in writing (text or email) as soon as possible. We plan meals, activities, and employees based off of your child being here. Furthermore, we will be concerned about you and your child if we do not hear from you. Regular routines and attendance are important for children's social, emotional and academic success.

### ***Withdrawals***

Written notice given 30 days in advance is required when a child is being withdrawn. If timely notice is not given, your two-week refundable deposit will not be refunded.

### ***Emergency Closings***

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of electricity or water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be given as soon as possible. We follow FCPS closures, however, we reserve the right to use our own judgement if we feel is in order.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### ***General Procedure***

Please drive very carefully through our neighborhood. It is a privilege for Kirsten's After School Nature Program to operate in a residential neighborhood and we try our best to minimize any negative effects that may occur from having a business in a residential neighborhood. Please park across the street, perpendicular to the road. If there is no street parking, you may park in our driveway, but please be careful of the landscaping and hardscaping and do not block cars. There are usually two open spaces in the driveway if families pull all the way up to the garage skirt, instead of staying in the bottleneck. Be very aware of your surroundings. After-school children, my children, pets, and neighbors regularly walk by our house and they can be unpredictable. Please do not park on any grass or immediately behind our neighbor's driveway, which makes it difficult for them to back out.

Kirsten or an authorized assistant will pick up the children from Wakefield Forest and walk them back to her home. We will work with Wakefield Forest administration to determine the best way to do this. Please be sure to provide my information to Wakefield Forest school.

We close at 6:00 PM. Families must make contact with a provider and sign their child out before leaving with their child.

Please do not allow any children to play in our front yard. Not only are there some dangers, particularly with the stone wall, but we work very hard to keep the landscaping looking beautiful for everyone's enjoyment. Repairs to the lighting and plants are costly.

If siblings are in attendance at drop-off or pick-up, please carefully monitor them. For safety reasons, they must follow our rules, and maybe additional rules, since they are different ages than the children in care.

Always close the gate behind you, even if you see another parent parking. It only takes a couple seconds for a child (or our dog) to get out of our sight and out the gate.

### ***Authorized Pick-ups and Missed Pick-ups***

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of my policies.

If your child has not been picked up by closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. We will stay with your child as long as possible. If we have not been able to reach you or any person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact within two hours of closing, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### ***Right to Refuse Child Release***

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger your child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up your child. If no one else can pick up your child and you insist, we will call the police and/or child protective services to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from our program.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### ***What to Bring and What Not to Bring***

Parents are responsible for providing one complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing (if you deem necessary). Children should bring a water bottle every day. We will provide sunscreen and insect repellent, but you may provide your own, if you prefer.

Please do NOT bring any toys or other special items. They are likely to get lost or damaged and can cause issues between the children.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, coats, backpacks etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We highly recommend [www.namebubbles.com](http://www.namebubbles.com) for items such as water bottles. Permanent markers usually wash off of these items and the name bubble stickers stay on through many dishwasher uses. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag for laundering.

## ***Cubbies***

Each child will be assigned a “cubby.” Cubbies are labeled with your child’s name. Please check your child’s cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home. Please be sure that extra clothes are updated seasonally, as your child grows, and as the clothes are used.

## **NUTRITION**

### ***Snacks***

Nutritious snacks will be served daily at no additional charge. Students must remain seated until they have been excused. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are emailed out and posted for viewing by families. Except for special occasions or illness requiring a special diet, please do not send any food with your child.

### ***Foods Brought from Home***

We request that you do not bring any food from home into our program unless we have pre-arranged something. All outside food must be finished before entering our home. This is due to food safety, allergies, and potential child conflicts.

### ***Food Allergies***

If your child has a food allergy (or requires a different diet for medical reasons), you will be required to provide or supplement their food. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. A copy should be given to us prior to enrollment.

## **HEALTH**

### ***Immunizations***

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). If a child is not going to be immunized for medical or religious reasons, the parent will be asked to complete a form required by state regulations. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the State health department. Proof of Immunization must be given to me after all immunizations.

It is highly recommended that immunizations be given on Fridays. Children often have fevers and are uncomfortable, which could preclude them from care. It is also best to monitor them one on one for any side effects from the vaccines.

### ***Physicals***

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child’s physical must be received before your child begins our program.



## ***Illness***

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect your child and other children, you may not bring a sick child to our program. If a child becomes sick while in our care, the family or an emergency contact must pick up the child within one hour.

If a visit to the doctor is required and the illness is determined to be contagious, please contact us as soon as possible so we can inform the other parents, as needed. Your privacy is very important, and you and your child will not be named.

Please notify us when your child will be absent due to illness. There are no refunds for when your child is absent due to illness or other reason.

If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, or develops them during care, your child will need to go home as soon as possible. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
- Fever above 100.5 degrees
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- A cold that causes excessive discomfort or concerning coughing, wheezing, or mucus
- Any contagious infection or communicable disease
- Any child who cannot be comforted, needs one-on-one care, or at our discretion

## ***Returning to Care***

Children who have been ill may return when all conditions below have been met:

- They are free of fever and have not had vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours, without the aid of medication
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious

## ***Communicable Diseases***

When a child in our program has a suspected reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will

take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

We will follow all guidelines recommended to keep everyone safe. Procedures such as isolating, quarantining, and masking are subject to change. Notice of any policy changes will be given in writing.

### ***Allergies***

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing your child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care.

### ***Medications***

Our facility is not MAT certified and may not dispense any medications. Children who use an inhaler may carry it with them or leave it in their backpack if the inhaler authorization form has been completed.

Non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., sunscreen and insect repellent) require an authorization form signed by the family

- Children are generally in the shade at our home. If we will be in the sun for more than 30 minutes, we will encourage children to apply sunscreen. If you do not approve of the sunscreen, you may bring your own.
- If requested, insect repellent may be applied on your children, according to the label. We use insect repellent with DEET. If you do not approve of the insect repellent, you may bring your own.

### ***Bathrooms/Accidents***

There is a bathroom in the after-school space. Students must be able to clean themselves after using the bathroom. If an accident occurs, we can give them some assistance, but if this becomes a regular occurrence, we will have to determine the causes and solutions to the situation. All students should have a change of clothing in their cubby in case of any type of accident. If an accident occurs, we will send home soiled clothes in a plastic bag.

## **SAFETY**

### ***Security for a Safe and Healthy Environment***

Upon enrolling, you will be asked to provide a list of people permitted to pick up your child from care. Your child will only be released to these persons, so please update this list as necessary. If the regular person will not be coming and an approved substitute person will be picking up your child, please let us know in writing.

We have security cameras throughout our home, both inside and outside. There are no cameras in places where one might expect privacy, such as bathrooms.

### ***Accidents***

All possible care is taken to provide a safe and healthy environment; however, children do have accidents. I am certified in adult and pediatric CPR and first aid. If your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee), we will administer first aid. You will receive

a report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Our program is equipped with a first aid kit meeting State regulations.

If your child has a medical emergency, an ambulance will be called for transportation. If there is more than one caregiver here, the provider or assistant will escort the child to the hospital. The caregiver will remain with your child as long as possible.

### ***Smoke Free and Drug-Free Environment***

There is no smoking, vaping, tobacco-use or drug-use of any kind anywhere on the premises. Any adult who appears to be intoxicated or otherwise under the influence of drugs or alcohol is required to leave the premises immediately. Another person will have to pick up your child.

### ***Insurance***

Kirsten's Day Care has liability insurance in force meeting the requirements of the State of Virginia, section 63.2-1809.1.

### ***Home Safety***

We pride ourselves in having a warm, loving and safe environment in which your child can explore, learn and experience many different things. Some features that help ensure your child's safety are:

- ☐ Working smoke detectors on each floor and near cooking and sleeping areas
- ☐ Adequate ventilation throughout the home
- ☐ Fire extinguishers are maintained properly
- ☐ Toys are age appropriate and in good repair
- ☐ Cleaners, chemicals, matches and fire starters are out of reach
- ☐ The hot water heater is regulated at 120°F
- ☐ A well-stocked first aid kit is maintained, and expiration dates are observed
- ☐ Children are properly immunized and in good health.
- ☐ At least one provider certified in Infant & Child CPR and Pediatric First Aid will be present at all times
- ☐ Yard routinely treated to deter insects
- ☐ Outside areas where children play are fenced and gates locked. Families must always close the gate behind them, even if they're just quickly running in and you believe all the children and the dog(s) are inside
- ☐ Children do not play outside unsupervised
- ☐ Tool sheds and other hazards are fenced or closed off
- ☐ Fireplaces are inspected annually.

### ***Clothing and Shoes***

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other activities. Our yard is used as an extension of my program, and daily activities are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for program play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play will be very limited if the outside temperature is greater than 95 °F or less than 32 °F. In temperatures close to that range with or without the heat index or wind chill, outdoor playtime may be limited. Please always bring appropriate clothing for the weather. If we do not have extra staff to stay inside with a child who is not prepared for the weather, they may be sent home or the parent may be asked to return with appropriate clothing.

### ***Pets/Animals***

There are two dogs on the premises: Star (a ~30 pound Cockapoo) and Freyja (a ~80+ pound Wolfadoodle). Both dogs are very friendly. Star is an old man, but still very happy to see adults (he couldn't care less about most kids) and he sometimes jumps. He has Immune-Mediated Hemolytic Anemia (IMHA). Due to this disease, our veterinarian is following standard IMHA treatment and has received a waiver from the State for all of his required immunizations since they are known to trigger relapses of this deadly disease. Freyja is still a puppy (DOB 10/5/2023) and will likely get up to about 90 pounds. She is becoming a well-trained dog, but she is still a puppy, with some puppy behaviors. Due to her size, she could knock someone over if she is overly excited. Children and families are never allowed to get her riled up or allow her to jump on them, even if they don't mind. Having such a large dog requires a lot of discipline and safety protocols. Both dogs will interact with children and families on a regular basis.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your child from our care.

Please respect our home. There are plenty of places for children to play. However, the front yard, other landscaped areas, green house, porches, decks, and a few other areas are off limits to the children. Injuries might occur to children and damages may occur to our property. Damages in these areas are the responsibility of the family.

### ***Dangerous Weapons***

Families, children or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on my premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### ***Child Custody***

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

If we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred, we are required by law to report it to the appropriate state authorities. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. Our program will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### ***Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan***

All families must sign off that they have received and reviewed our emergency preparedness and response plan. It is also hanging on the bulletin board for further reference. The plan describes various reasons that we might evacuate, where we might evacuate to, and how parents will be notified. It also discusses shelter-in-place and more. Please review the plan for further information.

### ***Fire Safety and Emergency Drills***

Our home is fully equipped with smoke detectors, a fire extinguisher, and two or more exits from every room (except bathrooms) in the house.

We conduct a fire drill with the students at least once a month.

We conduct the following drills with the students at least once a year: tornado, earthquake, and shelter-in-place.

### ***Medical and Other Emergencies***

In the event of an emergency, we will dial 911 and follow the recommendations of emergency personnel.

### ***Changes to this Handbook***

Information in this Policy and Procedure Manual may be subject to change at any time. We will do our best to give one month's notice before any major changes become effective.